THE Wire

February 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

HONOURS AND AWARDS

We congratulate the following Royal Signals personnel who received Honours in the New Year's Honours List:

Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE)

Brig NAW Pope 1 Sig Bde

Officers of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Lt Col JJ Cole 2 Sig Regt
Lt Col EC Dale DCOS DISC

Members of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE)

WO2 D Boughen Exeter UOTC
Maj M Cosgrove 97 Sig Sqn, 37 Sig Regt
Sgt DP Gale 251 Sig Sqn
Sgt D King 16 Sig Regt
Maj T Smith 22 Sig Regt

We also congratulate the following who were recognised in the November 2007 Meritorious Service Medal List:

Capt TJ Lappin 22 Sig Regt
SSgt SM Pattenden UKSU SHAPE

LEGACY OF THE LATE MAJ BARCLAY HANKIN

Maj Barclay Hankin was commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals in the early days of WW2, serving in North Africa, Italy, the War Office and Germany. On leaving the Army, he spent many years in operational research for the Army and London Transport before retirement in London and Chichester.

He was a pupil at Christ's Hospital in Horsham and in his will **Barclay** left a most generous and significant legacy to The Officers' Association; the terms of which are to fund a place at Christ's Hospital for the children of officers who are serving or have served in Royal Signals and who have lost their parent through death or serious injury. This bequest typifies **Barclay's** generosity and his continued and strong loyalty to the Corps.

In addition to meeting the requirement of the will, potential candidates will also have to meet the entry standards for the School. Further details can be obtained from the Regimental Secretary in Regimental Headquarters Royal Signals on Blandford Camp Military 2081 or 01258 482081.

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In the first instance, contact 94381 2626//01985 22 26 26

Or

Land Web: http:www.land.army.r.mil.uk/lwc/pages/opsp&dg/default.htm

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EDITORIAL

I am pleased to report that despite the run up to the Christmas leave period, there was no reduction in the number, size or quality of unit submissions. Despite this, I am pleased to have been able to include items in support of TA recruiting, the Royal Signals Museum, Adventure Training and the 1 Signal Brigade Boxing finals.

I would encourage the serving Corps to read the article on Page 2 on the future of command, leadership and management training in Royal Signals. The changes described are key to the careers of all our soldiers and the article provides information and guidance on the implementation of the new policy.

For the benefit of the unlucky few who have been tasked with either writing or compiling submissions to *The Wire* this year, I have included some Guidance Notes on Page 91. These notes will be posted on the web site in the near future at:
http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/thewire

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FRONT COVER

The Canadian Cemetery at Brookwood. Jane Knight lays the RSA Aldershot Branch wreath. Fred Bridges with the Branch Standard is in the background.

BACK COVER

"Combat Outpost" - the new painting commissioned by 16 Air Assault Brigade.

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

THE FUTURE OF COMMAND, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (CLM) TRAINING IN ROYAL SIGNALS

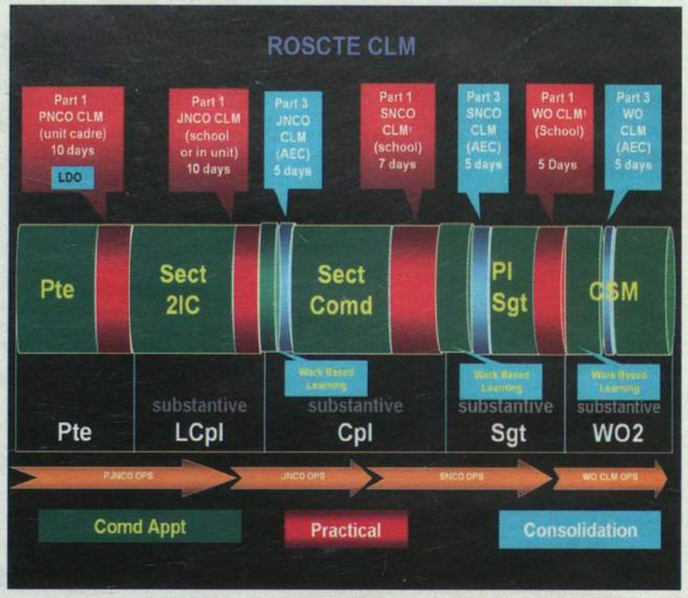
- by Lt Col DG Proctor SO1 Trg Pol

INTRODUCTION

In 2006 the Army Planning and Resources Committee (APRC) in MOD initiated a review into Soldier Career Trg and Education, better known as RoSCTE. The study team, based on the then DITrg staff at Upavon and closely supported by DETS(A), A&SDs and Defence Trg Establishments (DTE), had clear direction. That was to capture the precise Individual Trg requirement after years of overspends, excessive risks and failure to provide new trg. Stage 1 was an audit of individual career trg and education. From that report of September 06, the APRC identified where trg needed to be enhanced or made more efficient and laid the rules for Stage 2.

Stage 2 was a review of a number of options to adjust current trg, specifically within Leadership, Driver Trg, Phase 1, TA Trg, Return on Investment of long courses, current Career Groups, Evaluation, Basic Skills, Accreditation, Blended Trg and of course, the ability to resource and implement change. That report was published in July 2007. We are now in Stage 3, Implementation. Understandably not everything can be done at once and ACGS has set 3 priorities to be dealt with immediately: leadership, driver trg and Phase 1 trg. For those in the Field Army, the Phase 1 change is a 14 rather than 12 week course and more focus on Basic Close Combat Skills (BCCS), changes brought about from our experiences on Ops TELIC and HERRICK. For the Corps, licence acquisition is retained at Phase 2, although there are some interim measures to support more numbers at Leconfield that will affect some of the Corps, both individuals and Units.

The diagram shows the new route to be adopted from April 2008.



The table shows the Implementation dates:

Level	Promotion Board Announced	Promotion Year Starts	Current A&S & AEC courses cease	New A&S & AEC courses start	EC Workbook available
PNCO	Oct 08	1 Oct	N/A	1 Apr 08	N/A
JNCO	Aug 08	1 Oct	31 Jul 08	1 Aug 08	1 Jun 08
SNCO	Jun 08	1 Oct	30 May 08	1 Jun 08	1 Mar 08
WO	Feb 09	1 Apr	31 Jan 08	1 Feb 09	1 Nov 08

The major change will be to leadership, currently delivered for the majority of the Corps, Regular and TA, by attendance on the JNCO, SNCO and WO modules at 4 Sqn, 11 Sig Regt or in a local AEC when selected for promotion. In short these are the major changes:

- A mandated Potential NCO course (PNCO) will be introduced for those selected for promotion to LCpl.
- There will be a greater operational focus. Development of BCCS will be the norm.
- It will be values based leadership.
- There will be improved Cultural Awareness.
- Coaching and Mentoring skills will be developed.

THE CLM CHANGES

The Corps is well poised. On the introduction of CLM trg in 2004, we added a Field Command Course. Much of the content of each of the courses developed by the HQLF Trg Div Trg Development Team exists already in our joint CLM/FCC which many of you will have attended. The major changes are associated with the introduction of the PNCO, shorter AEC modules and Work Base Learning phases that come prior to the AEC module. That aspect is also not new to the Corps, as we use workbooks for Class 3 – 2 and as Part 1 of Class 1 courses. In addition, the betterment of BCCS, Values, Cultural Awareness, and Coaching and Mentoring of subordinates.

What are the questions, issues and concerns that spring to mind? Without adopting a full blown Q&A process, I hope the following will allay any fears and provide most of the answers:

- To manage the process for the Corps, HQ SOinC(A) has set up a CLM WG to introduce the changes. It met in November 07 and February 08. POC is Trg Policy Branch.
- For the trg gurus, HQLF Trg Div TDT have developed the OPS, FTS, ISPEC and ASPEC to make the course Defence Systems Approach to Trg (DSAT) compliant. Actual course design has been passed to A&SD and DTEs, in our case DCCIS and 4 Mil Trg Sqn.
- The course lengths shown above do not equate to our own interpretation. Where we agree with PNCO and WO, the JNCO and SNCO will remain 20 and 15 days respectively for Royal Signals. The former includes the 5 day DIT module.
- Individuals who have completed any of the modules on changeover, A&S or AEC, do not repeat the new equivalent module, only attend what they are missing.
- The workbooks for Work Based Learning are to be requested from AECs by the Unit on the return of an individual from the A&S module and are a prerequisite to start the new AEC module.
- Loading onto the JNCO, SNCO and WO course will continue to be done by MCM Div Royal Signals Soldiers Wing. For AEC modules it is a Unit responsibility to request a vacancy.
- The intent by HQLF Trg Div for the TA CLM is to revise the present JNCO and SNCO courses in early 08 with introduction in 2009. Royal Signals opinion is that re-alignment should take place parallel to the Regular courses being changed. This will be our aim. Note that the TA will have no workbook or AEC module.
- We will run a joint Regular and TA WO cadre, starting in January/February 09. The TA will be provided additional, relevant modules as required during that phase.
- NCOs will be given substantive rank on completion of the A&S module and if a pass is achieved. If some remedial trg is required it will be conducted in Units after which substantive rank will be given.
- After the success of 2007, 4 Sqn will run a JNCO and SNCO Lower Medical Category (LMC) course in the September/October annually for the Regulars. This will not be adopted for the PNCO and WO. The policy for the TA is yet to be defined by HQLF Trg Div.
- The first Regular PNCO course will be run by 4 Sqn in DCCIS for the first course of the new Comm Sys Engrs. This will be a permanent requirement to train soldiers leaving Phase 2 as LCpls. Those that are LMC will complete a course within 6 months in a Field Unit selected to run this trg.
- All those soldiers in Field Units selected for LCpl will attend from October 08 a course at one of the Royal Signals Unit Centres of Excellence chosen to host the course. There will be 2 in Germany, and for UK, 2 in the North and 2 in the South. Loading will be done either by Soldier Wg, HQ SOinC(A) or Units. This is yet to be confirmed.
- The Royal Signals TA PNCO will also be 10 days long but split into 6 days of weekend and evening modules and 4 days of mil trg on the Unit Annual Camp.
- A revised CLM Policy Handbook with a specific Royal Signals Annex and details on Assessment, Reporting, Remediation, Evaluation and Accreditation, is being developed and will be published before April 08. The changes will also be briefed to current CLM courses, on MCM Div Roadshows and to key courses/conferences at DCCIS.

SUMMARY

The timelines are tight but we are well placed because of current course lengths and content, and the excellent work by DCCIS to deliver the course design and support the distributed PNCO module. Individuals should benefit from more relevant trg in better co-ordinated modules. There are no additional hurdles and most importantly, we will continue to retain parity where possible between the Regulars and TA. Finally, like all things new in Defence, this all comes with a small health warning. Some adjustments will be made but all the key stakeholders in the Royal Signals chain of command will remain engaged with developing this policy and introducing the changes.

MOVEMENTS

OFFICERS OCTOBER 2007

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Capt CG Jackson	22 Sig Regt

OFFICERS NOVEMBER 2007

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Capt RM Dilnot	30 Sig Regt
Capt JVB Thomson	1(RBY) Sig Sqn (SC)(V)

OFFICERS DECEMBER 2007

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Capt PC Asplen	RSS
Capt S Bill	30 Sig Regt
Capt M Eastbrook	PJHQ-J3
Capt SL Goldsmith	22 Sig Regt
Capt EJ Greenwood	OCE_ISAF
Capt HJP Hebblethwaite	PJHQ-J6
Capt KL Oldridge	ATR Pirbright
Capt JAM Watt	7 Sig Regt
2Lt HH Barter	2 Sig Regt
2Lt EA Holmstrom	21 Sig Regt
2Lt CM Karumba	3 (UK) Div
2Lt SJ O'Toole	16 Sig Regt
2Lt KJ Richardson	22 Sig Regt
2Lt EM Thomas	16 Sig Regt
2Lt S Tucker	14 Sig Regt (EW)
2Lt RG Tudhope	2 Sig Regt
2Lt CL Van Der Merwe	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
2Lt ES Vickers	14 Sig Regt (EW)
2Lt ME Williams	16 Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
Lt LH Champion	AFC Harrogate

OFFICERS JANUARY 2008

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Maj P Whitehouse	31 Sig Regt
Capt PA Buckley	2 Sig Regt
Capt L Griffiths	16 Sig Regt
Capt JKR Hawkins	RSS
Capt S Howe	GCS IPT
Capt M Jones	G6 CBM HQ Land
Capt DJ Kelly	38 Sig Regt (V)
Capt CG Milne	22 Sig Regt
Capt IJ Peers	7 Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
Lt SLR Gray	10 Sig Regt
Lt CSE Moody	DE&S-CCU

OFFICERS FEBRUARY 2008

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Lt Col G Pickersgill	2 Sig Regt (Temp)
Maj Sj Whytock	J6CBM
Capt JS Farrow	HQ SOINC(A)- CSD
Capt PA Leach	Bowman SST(G)
Lt ASA MacIntyre	AFC

OFFICERS MARCH 2008

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
Capt D J Corcoran	2 Sig Regt
Capt GM Dorrington	10 Sig Regt
Capt RA Lowe	OCE - MND (SE)

RETIREMENTS

OFFICERS JANUARY 2008

Name and Rank	*Date*
Wardle - Capt AF Wardle	16 Jan 08

OFFICERS MARCH 2008

Name and Rank	*Date*
Gaul - Maj DC Gaul	26 Mar 08

NEWS OF TRAINING

ARMY TRAINING PIRBRIGHT

LIFE IN AN ARMY TRAINING REGIMENT - *Capt JEG Barr*

To most people the name 'Pirbright' is synonymous with a rampant agricultural disease but to me different associations come to mind. The Army Training Regiment (Pirbright) (ATR(P)) is the home and heart of Phase 1 Standard Entry Soldier trg, found in an idyllic leafy borough in Surrey. On telling my colleagues that I wanted to be posted to an ATR as a Tp Comd, they looked at me as if I'd put my 'foot in their mouth' and was perhaps not making the best move. I soon confirmed that this view was as outdated as it was inaccurate. Having worked at ATR(P) for 4 months, I can report from the 'horse's mouth' the following on life as a Tp Comd in an ATR.

It's a multi-capbadge environment which brings with it both challenges and perks. Working with Officers, SNCOs and JNCOs from different Corps and Regts has proved insightful into how the rest of the Army operates and does business. You can expect your Tp trg team to be a healthy mixture of Inf, Armr or any of the Corps. Luckily, there is an ever growing contingent of our own 'Scalybacks' from the Corps. The formation of 97 (Duchess of Kent) Sqn RLC soon to be titled 1 (Fowler) Sqn Royal Signals, commanded by **Maj Ben Howarth**, has been one of the main achievements at ATR(P) this year. The Sqn 2IC, **Capt Kelly Griffiths,** has been key to the development of the Sqn, particularly it's morale, by ensuring our evening socials go ahead as planned.

One of our more entertaining evenings was the Sqn Outing to Guildford Ice Rink, where **WO2(SSM) Paul Millington's** talent for 'Dancing on Ice' was discovered.

My main reason for working at an ATR was to get to the grass roots of soldier trg. Aware that my trg was different to that of my Sigs, I wanted to find out more about the soldiers trg background. With RMAS memories still fresh in my mind, it is interesting to see trg from the other perspective and is a great opportunity to brush up on the low-level inf tactics learned at Sandhurst.

The greatest impact of this job has been the insights I have gained into the extremely varied backgrounds of the young individuals who (each with their own motivations and reasons) have decided to join the Army. However, it is a great pleasure to observe their change and development over 14 weeks of trg and finally to see them pass out as different characters, with an air of new found pride and optimism.

Another advantage to this posting is the Officers' Mess. Due to the number of Junior Officers employed at ATR(P), the Mess is always a busy hive, bringing with it plenty of fun and an endless social life, should it be desired. AT is a way of life, particular at this time of year; Alpine Skiing, Snow-boarding, Nordic Skiing. This years Regtl Ski Trip is to Banff, Canada, where a few of us will be clipping on our 'L' Plates and hoping for the best!

All in all, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here at Pirbright. It's a year long posting which is an adequate time to gain an insight into Standard Entry Phase 1 Soldier Trg and a better understanding of what the soldiers at my next unit have been through. I would recommend a posting to an ATR to any Tp Comd, as there are few other jobs that are as fun and rewarding as turning civilians into soldiers.

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

BLANDFORD GARRISON SUPPORT UNIT

CO	**Lt Col RC Young**
GSM	**WO1(RSM) P Storey**

This year has seen many arrivals and departures, the introduction of JPA, the confirmation that Package 1 of the Defence Training Review will go ahead, which includes the move of the Defence College of Communications and Information Systems (The RSS is of course a part of this) to St Athan in Wales in about 2012, refurbishment of over 100 Married Quarters and 2 new Garrison Comds within the year!

There have been a few departures recently and we bid a fond farewell to:

Maj John MacKay on handing in his uniform and moving to Devon
Maj Derek Deegan on moving from 2IC BGSU to QM(T) about the time of this edition of *The Wire*
Maj (Retd) Pete Doherty, who is moving to Rheindahlen to look after the Big House after his appointment here as Garrison Welfare Officer.
Capt (Retd) Mick Neville on real retirement after being the RAO/GAO for the Garrison
Mrs Penny Stockwell our Garrison Welfare clerk

And we say hello to:

Tam Tulloch who is the new Garrison Welfare Officer.
Mrs Angela Reynolds as our new Garrison Welfare Clerk.
WO1 Jackie Collins as (Families) Welfare Warrant Officer

One departure that we must highlight of course is that of the Garrison Comd, **Brig Flint**. **Brig Flint** has been dual hatted as Commandant DCCIS and Garrison Comd since November 2006. He did not move too far, as he has taken over as the SOinC(A). To get him to his new office the GSM acquired the use of a 432 (all 436s and 439s seem to be busy elsewhere) to despatch the Garrison Comd to the top of camp.

Brig Flint used to command 'panzers' and has a soft spot for them so he recognised the low growl of the engine as he was saying his goodbyes to his staff in the Harrogate Building. He left

The Commander's Farewell

the HQ building and took his place in the mortar hatch and drove through the ranks of staff and soldiers who had gathered to bid him farewell.

Gp Capt Phillips assumed the mantle of Garrison Comd until the arrival of **Brig Watts** in January. We wish **Brig Watts** and **Mrs Watts** a happy tour here in Blandford

BGSU QUARTERMASTER DEPARTMENT

QM	**Lt Col Wally Drain**
QM(T)	**Maj John Mackay**
RQMS(G)	**WO2(RQMS) Gaz Middleton**
RQMS(T)	**WO2(RQMS) Shaun Fardy**

It has been an exciting time for the QM Dept over the last few months. As well as the normal G4 commitments, the QM and RQMS(G) have been heavily involved with the planning for the advent of PAYD in the New Year. The QM(T) and the RQMS(T) have also been asked to start planning for the proposed move of DCCIS to St Athan some 6 years hence!

In promotion terms it has been an extremely successful period: both of the RQMS have been selected for a commission, **WO2(RQMS) Gaz Middleton** into the Royal Corps and **WO2(RQMS) Fardy** into the AGC (ETS). Our CQMS, **CSgt Mike Vincent** (The Rifle Regiment) has also been selected for a commission into Dorset ACF.

After the tree planting ceremony

WO2(RQMS) Gaz Middleton realised how vital he was to the op tempo of the Armed Forces when he was selected from a cast of thousands to source 2 trees and 2 shiny shovels for the ceremonial tree planting to commemorate the departure of both **Brig Flint** and the SOinC(A), **Brig J Thomas MBE ADC**.

As well as sp to the Garrison Fete, Garrison Bonfire Night and Remembrance Sunday, our mil staff have carried on with their daily duties. We welcome **LCpl Kate Barry** into the Dept fresh from Op TELIC and congratulate **Cpl Sam Carlyon** on her award of Army Novice Sea Angler of the Year. **Sgt Neill Crawshaw** has manned the office while all others have found an important reason not to be there. He is often amused by the reasons for absence, from Corps Cricket to Army Angling, from Courts Martial to bad backs! It has also been a productive time for **SSgt John Hoskins** who has regularly been able to get out of bed and make it into work before NAAFI break! We eagerly await the return of **SSgt Trigger Smith**, who seems to prefer the badlands of Afghanistan to the cutting edge of the BAR office, can't think why?

What with PAYD, Super MAC, the Gurhka Mandir, DTR, and DII, it has been a busy year for the Dept. Next year will be full of change, should anyone fancy a QM job or an RQMS job in Blandford, please apply in the usual manner, there will be 4 vacancies next year.

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

CI	
SIO	**Mr Kevin Mather**
SL	**Mr Robin Cooper**
DSM	**WO2(SSM) Chris Jones**
DSM (G)	**WO2(SSM) Om**

COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION TRAINING DAY
- by Cpl Pauley

A 'training and team bonding day' was organised in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit (DRIU) at *HMS Raleigh* on Tor Point, Plymouth for 18 members of the Division. After a 0815hrs start and a marathon 4 hr drive from Blandford (which involved a shortcut by the MT driver that took us in the opposite direction for an hour) we arrived at the DRIU. At the facility we were offered a brew in the 'tea boat' (Navy slang for rest room) after which we were lead into the lecture hall, where an informative presentation was delivered, explaining how the exs were to be conducted aboard the DRIU and why it was essential that the skills we would learn would help us if we were ever on board a vessel which was in danger of sinking.

We got changed into coveralls and steel toe-capped boots and boarded the simulator to go through a dry run of how and where to seal the various holes which would have several tons of water pouring through them in but a few moments. We then split into groups, got into immersion suits, donned helmets and head torches and, grabbing hammers and wooden stakes, boarded the DRIU ready for the actual run through.

"All hands to battle stations...missile inbound...brace, brace, brace!" The simulator rolled from side to side as the warning

crackled piercingly through the intercom system. Suddenly it pitched to one side and everything was plunged into darkness. Acrid smoke belched through the blackness as the group made its way down to the galley, dodging the jets of mind-numbing, icy water. Along the pitch-black corridor and down a ladder into a rapidly flooding galley, the team leader appraised the situation which looked daunting indeed. Water was flooding in through several fist-sized holes in the floor and bulkhead, it was already at knee height which meant he had to think and act swiftly. Grabbing 2 members of his team, who had by now struggled down the slippery swaying ladder, the team leader positioned them at the two largest holes to fight the torrents of water, armed only with a hammer and soft wood stakes. The fearless team leader made his way back to the entry hatch and after quickly analysing the situation, fired off his orders to the rest of the team who were taking cover beside the ladder to the upper deck.

Torrents of water gushed through a hole behind a locker which took two crew members to dam. Another pair spent most of their time submerged trying to stem the flow flooding in from behind bunk beds, thankfully the remaining holes were quickly blocked and the team progressed into the final stage of the simulation. Keeping his team motivated throughout this phase was the responsibility of our illustrious team leader who, braving hazardous conditions and water at shoulder height, led by example providing a beacon of guiding light and dragging his brave crew through the arduous conditions. However, the team prevailed and soon all secondary seals were in place and power was restored, as the team emerged dazed, confused and soaked to the skin from the ordeal they had endured.

Following a debrief and another brew, the teams were re-united and headed back to Blandford, regaling each other with tales of bravery and derring-do!

COMMAND TRAINING GROUP (CTG)

OC **Maj Lloyd Golley**

COMMAND INSTRUCTOR WING

- by 2Lt JJ Sillito

Fresh from Sandhurst and armed with a few weeks of Signals knowledge from their 2-month attachments, TC69 entered the world of Command Instruction Wing (CIW) eager and willing to learn all about comms and take over from TC68 whose members were now signals gurus in their own right. **Capt Cat French** drew the short straw and is our course officer, ensuring that we absorb all the knowledge required to command our first troop.

THE CHARITY CAR WASH

As is custom for the Troopies' courses, TC69 organised a charity event with the chosen good cause being 'Help for Heroes', a very worthwhile and much publicised charity especially in the current climate. Our sport of choice was car washing, ideal for a cold November morning, positively encouraging soldiers to pay £3 to see officers freeze their little wotsits off!

After commandeering half of the car park, it quickly filled up with all manner of cars, mostly BMWs, which required a slightly higher donation due to the pop star wages of the owners. As well as this, collection tins were walked round camp; probably earning a lot more than the car wash, especially when the entrance to camp was covered causing a tailback into Blandford itself!

All in all, including the charity quiz the previous night, over £1000 was raised for the cause, illustrating the generosity of the soldiers on Blandford Camp.

VISIT TO ESAT

Another Troopie custom is the week long exchange visit to the French School of Signals at Rennes. Strong links between the French and British Armies are forged this way, very useful in these times of international cooperation. The French Army Signals is also undergoing a time of change, bringing in SATCOM kit, updating its digital trunk node system and also encountering procurement problems.

A highlight of the trip was the 4 hr rugby session in which we were described as tanks, animals and monsters. Not bad for only having 2 Army players on our side!

However the biggest difference between our countries has to be 'eating'. The lack of an Officers Mess was one thing but the most striking factor was the availability of Kronenburg, wine and French Rolls for breakfast, lunch and dinner leading us to believe that the French manage to sustain their nation on a diet of bread and wine.

After cultural visits to the museums at ESAT and Saint Cyr and historic Brittany, the restaurants and nightlife of Rennes were well sampled, where we were hosted ably by our French counterparts.

EXERCISE ANNAPURNA TIGER 07

Ex Annapurna Tiger was an AT ex to Nepal from 17 November - 6 December 07. The ex consisted of 9 pers: 6 British soldiers and 3 Gurkhas. The aim was to reach the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) at 4130m and develop leadership and personal skills. The ex planner/coordinator was **Capt Narayan Bhandari**, Queen's Gurkha Signals.

On 17 November, the ex participants from DCCIS left Blandford bound for Kathmandu, arriving some 26 hrs later. We were met with a warm welcome at the airport and taken straight to our Hotel in Thamel; the centre of the tourist area. Just driving through this area was an astonishing experience. We had 1 day to acclimatise and soak up the culture then there was the daunting road move to Pokhara, near to the start point and ready for some real work!

On 21 November, the group left the start point in Nayapul for the ABC. We started on the Jomsom Trail and then followed the Annapurna Trail.

The first 2 days saw us passing through Tikhedhunga and then up to Ghorepani - up some 3840 steps and ascending over 1km vertically in less than 2 hrs. Needless to say that all involved broke a sweat, some more than others – we are all very sure that **Col Rafferty** - DTrg DCCIS will never use the "Stepper" in the Gym again! The latter part of the trek took us through Chulle, Chomrong, Sinua and Deurali. Accn was in the form of "Tea Houses" where lodgings were clean and basic and food was usually something with "Gurung" or "Tibetan" bread. Finally, after 6½ days of trekking, the whole group arrived at the Annapurna Base Camp.

Luckily none of the trekkers suffered from altitude sickness; but the party were visited by a couple of snow leopards in the night! The views at ABC were simply breathtaking, the base camp being surrounded by the huge snow capped mountains of Annapurna, Himchuli and Fishtail. The way back down to the finish point in Dhampus were long days but were more comfortable on the lungs – less so on the knees and ankles!

The R&R phase consisted of 2 days white water rafting on the Seti River. There were some big white knuckle moments for **Cpl 'Oggy' Ogg**, who was petrified of the water. The over night stop was on a sandy riverbed where we ate like kings under the stars by an open fire.

Back in Kathmandu, the group enjoyed some downtime, visiting the various temples including the "Monkey Temple" overlooking a very busy Kathmandu. Finally, just to round the trip off the group enjoyed a flight around Everest and the mountain range, a truly memorable occasion. Overall the group had a fantastic trip away. This was undoubtedly a once in a lifetime expedition where we were able to be educated a little more in the way that the Gurkhas live and work.

Expedition members enjoying some well earned down time on the Seti River

Capt Blackwood, Capt N B Bhandari, Exped OIC Col Rafferty, LCpl Mike Carver, Cpl "Oggy" Ogg, Maj D B Gurung MVO, SSgt Jim Thisby, Sgt Kamal Gurung, Cpl Jim Fowler

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col JJ Cole**
RSM **WO1(RSM) JA March**

As the 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn deployment to Op HERRICK draws to a close, the Regt can look back on 12 months in Afghanistan with fond memories. However, with further deployments already on the horizon we cannot rest on our laurels. Christmas did provide a brief interlude and although **Capt Tim Cooper** will be reeling like a professional footballer after a particularly savage tackle from **SSgt 'Jasper' Scarrott**, the Regt looks forward to the challenges of the coming year.

One promotion of note, the Regtl Ops Officer is now the proud owner of every rank slide from LCpl to Lt Col. **Lt Col Steve Whytock** leaves the Regt for MOD Main Building and a life in the city. We all wish **Hilary** and **Steve** the very best for the future.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Anderson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) I Conlan**

QM (T) 2 SIGNAL REGIMENT – WEDDING DAY

The Regt would like to congratulate the QM, **Capt Andy Slack** and his new wife **Tracy** on their wedding which was held at Pavilion Hotel in York on 17 November 2007. The wedding was attended by family and close friends but the reception afterwards was attended by the whole Dept and many other members of the Regt – any excuse for a free buffet and a few beers. **Andy** then whisked **Tracy** off to London for a few nights in a hotel and a couple of shows before rushing back to work. All the best **Andy**!

QM DEPT DAY OUT *- by Cpl Brocklesby*

On return from ops in Afghanistan, members of 'those that had deployed' from the Dept joined up with 'those who had remained behind' on Rear Party to embark on a morale building and bonding day out at F1 Racing Indoor Go-Karting circuit in York.

The day was organised by **SSgt(SQMS) Jon Parr** (once RQMS Rear, but now firmly back in his place as Tp SSgt!). As you would expect, this was an event not to be missed, as the good turnout proved.

After the usual safety brief by one of the circuit marshals (I don't think too many people paid much attention!), it was down to racing with the lads taking up their positions on the grid for a "Monza" style Grand Prix.

It soon became evident who the **Lewis Hamilton** pretenders were, with **Cpl Mark Brocklesby** and **LCpl Jordan Woods** scrapping at every corner for the race lead, with **Sgt Tara Turner** firmly taking up the rear and being lapped on a number of occasions!

After the heats and the elimination of those not in the mould of the next **Schumacher**, it was down to the business end of the outing and the Grand Final which proved to be even more exciting than the heats! **Sgt Bruce Findlay** had a huge argument with the tyre wall whilst **WO2(RQMS) Les Tobbell** wouldn't give in to anyone!

The overall winner was **Cpl Mark Brocklesby** who, it turned out, had been putting in some extra laps the weekend before! The usual post event drinks were then to be had in York during the evening and well into the night!

MT TROOP

Firstly we would like to say a fond farewell and good luck to **LCpl Mark Holmes**, who leaves us for Civilian Street. We would also like to wish **Capt Stan Kelly** good luck with his QM course at Deepcut, let's hope he returns in one piece, and not forgetting **Cpl 'Gail' Porter** who has successfully passed his Hazmat Instructors Course.

The 'Mighty' Regtl MT has had a really busy period this year supporting the various Sqns on op commitments including Op

HERRICK and Op TELIC. Meanwhile it has been running various courses, including the Service GS driving course and various Duro MKII familiarisation courses. The main push for the Regtl MT, since the return for Op HERRICK, has been the preparation for the Equipment Care Inspection, as well as trying to get their heads around the JAMES system all over again.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj M Graham**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

The Sqn has only recently returned from post op leave and already our numbers have increased. Many congratulations to the OC on the birth of his second daughter (who, at the time of going to print, is yet to be named).

The Sqn Christmas function was a great opportunity to welcome those new members to our ranks as the first official function since our return. The night was a great success thanks to all the hard work that went into organising the function by **Cpl Martin Sloan** and **LCpl 'Mikey' Williams**. The function was held in the Park Inn Hotel, York with a casino theme. There was a full turn out from the Sqn and everyone enjoyed the night, especially **Sgt Steve Crutchley**, **LCpl 'Tomo' Thompson**, **Sgt Kenny Macpherson** and **SSgt Nigel Howard** who were all winners in the raffle. A special mention to **LCpl Ryan** and **LCpl Drabble** who had a dance off to win the cash prize from the casino tables. We also said goodbye to **Cpl Dave Butler** and **Sig 'Rosey' Roisetter**.

In order to raise some additional money for the Sqn party, a job swap day was organised in the spirit of Christmas, where key positions were taken up by the younger members of the Sqn. **LCpl Jake Oakes** was the OC Sqn for a day and subsequently enjoyed coffee in the Officers Mess whilst **LCpl Williams** put on a convincing act as SSM. However, **LCpl 'Chad' Chadwick** had the most fun as the RP Cpl, managing to 'drill' both **Sig Graham**, aka the OC and **WO2(SSM) Hayes**. The whole day was finished off with potted sports organised by **Sig 'Jacko' Jackson** who was Tp SSgt for the day.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Mould**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

ARMY STEEPLECHASE COMPETITION - *by Sig Winson*

Why would you want to do a 10 mile, 100 obstacle, cross country steeplechase with a 10kg bergen?

I was stood on guard, freezing cold on a Thursday afternoon and was then told that I was going to be doing this. Who had I upset? Not one for backing out of a challenge however, I accepted and was looking forward to it, save the long journey down to Tidworth Garrison. There were 6 of us from 2 Sig Regt and unfortunately for **Capt Stone**, he was the only one who could drive the mini bus, so had the honour of doing all the driving. After our arrival, we went to the NAAFI to watch England crash out of the Euros. The several ~~beers~~ isotonic drinks consumed in commiseration were paid for on waking up, along with the sudden recollection of why we were there.

In eager anticipation (or hung-over disbelief), the team at the start of the Army Steeplchase

Before we knew it we were at the starting line and there were people there who I would only describe as machines! When the start horn went, the pack moved off at quite a pace, while I thought I would pace myself – a good idea. Over the 10 miles there were 98 obstacles which you either had to go over, under, jump off or go through! It seems water is always cold, no matter what time of year it is. The route was well chosen and the obstacles were annoying me intensely. Other than that, all the way through the run I couldn't believe I was enjoying it. All too soon, I was on the home straight and could see 4 more hurdles, a little slope and a 100m dash to the finish line. I didn't know how the others had got on but I went for it, overtaking some of the people in front of me, but I really had to grit my teeth.

At the end of the day we were all pleased with our times and between the 6 of us, raised £507.50 for the Army Benevolent Fund and APTC association. The winner completed it in 1hr 9mins, what an animal. Our times ranged from 1hr 27 to 1hr 37.

EAGLE TROOP VISITS THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

On 22 November, Eagle Tp went on a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in the National Forest of Staffordshire, near Lichfield.

On arrival we were given a brief on the history of the Arboretum, which was established in 1997 and is home to over 130 national memorials. We then took the opportunity to hold a Service of Remembrance and a 2 min silence to remember those who had been lost and are commemorated at the Arboretum.

We left the Armed Forces Memorial and were given a guided tour around the arboretum by **Bob Morris**, where we were shown the various trees, rocks and memorials. We saw a large number of mil memorials, including a tree for the Royal Corps of Signals.

Eagle Tp at the National Arboretum

In October, the Arboretum opened a new Memorial to the Armed Forces to commemorate those who have died whilst on duty or as a result of terrorist action since WW2 and our tour ended there, allowing us time to appreciate this memorial on our own.

We had more time to explore the rest of the Arboretum before heading home to York. In all, the day was very interesting and informative, especially for those who found family or friends on the wall.

EXERCISE NORTHERN PHOENIX – SNOWDONIA
- by Lt SLR Gray

Hot on the heels of the Remembrance Parade, 8 members of Phoenix Tp and **WO2(SSM) Kielty** departed York to begin a week long hill walking and mountain biking exped to Snowdonia, North Wales.

The week began with a short 5 hr walk to ascend Moel Siabod, (872m) to the rear of Capel Curig Camp. The walk was chosen because it was not too difficult and was a good way to assess individual skills and experience. With the initial gentle climb completed, we climbed to the summit using the steepest approach, up the south face of the hill. The group were exhausted but pleased to have made a good start and completed a challenging first climb.

The second day was even more of a test, as the weather had deteriorated with a forecast of strong winds and low visibility. We began our climb up Tryfan (915m) on the western side of the mountain which is considered the most arduous approach to the summit. The group encountered some difficult rock faces and challenging climbing conditions. Much of the ascent was spent on all fours and the group had to really knuckle together and work as a team to reach the summit. On arriving at the top we had a quick lunch in the rain and wind, under the shelter of the two opposing rocks, Adam and Eve.

Day 3 was a change and spent in the saddle of a mountain bike on the Marin Trail. We were led by **Flt Lt (Retd) Ade Condon**, the Commandant of Capel Curig Camp and a mountain biking instructor with 20 years experience of our route. The Marin Trail is 25km in length and weaves its way through the woodland tracks above Betws-y-coed. **Cpl 'Wiggy' Waugh** led the way with the day's shenanigans screaming down the first hill ignoring all instructions not to use his brake and planting his face in the ground at great speed. Not one to be out done, **Sig Jim Coverley** duly got in on the act. Being an "East-end City Boy" and never having seen a mountain bike before, he found the experience more challenging than most and managed to send his bike 2m in the air and cut his hands, knees and face on a slope no steeper than a disabled ramp. Still he was laughing by the end of the day.

The last day saw a return to walking with our longest climb up Mt Snowdon (1085m). The weather was forecast to be sunny with excellent visibility and did not disappoint. We ascended from Pen-y-pas up the Pyg Track to the summit, taking just over 3 hrs. At the top we were met by stunning views of the Snowdonia National Park and views over to Anglesey. To make the descent a bit more challenging, the group split into 2 teams and raced each other down, back to the minibus via different routes. One team descended via the Pyg track, and the other team via the Miners track.

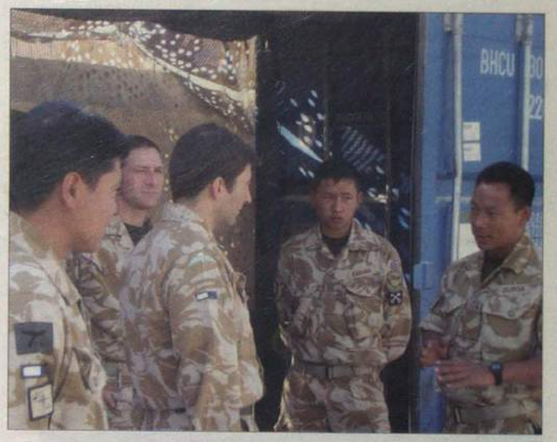
All in all, the entire group had an enjoyable and challenging week in the Welsh mountains, some learning a few new skills but with everyone experiencing something new for the first time.

HEADQUARTERS REGIONAL COMMAND (SOUTH) SIGNAL SQUADRON – OP HERRICK

OC	**Maj BG White**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

VISIT BY COMMANDING OFFICER AND REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR
- by SSgt(FofS (IS)) Neil Tarry

After giving 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn just 6 weeks to bed themselves into their new role as the HQ RC (South) Sig Sqn, the CO and RSM made a flying visit to inspect how we are getting along. With advance notice of their arrival the QM, **Capt Ganesh**, put in place plans that would prove we have been able to stamp our mark on the HQ. Paint and gravel were sourced, and the lads were put to work building more walkways and painting a Sqn seating area with a very artistic Nepalese theme.



Cpl Durga briefs the CO, but the RSM has spotted a soldier with his hands in his pockets...a mile away!

The first presentation of the day was given by the Ops Officer/2IC, **Capt Nirmal**. The VIPs then moved on to tour the HQ. This gave the CO a chance to see the Sqn at work and meet some of the Staff that we are supporting. Happily for us all, the reports he received were positive. With a good knowledge of Kandahar airfield, courtesy of a recent 6 month op tour, the CO and RSM managed to keep themselves entertained in the afternoon, spending time trg in the extensive gym. That evening, in time honoured Gurkha fashion, a BBQ (no curry in sight) was laid on giving everyone the chance to meet our guests.

The next day brought more meetings and visits, followed in the afternoon by the weekly basketball game. The CO showed he hadn't lost the skills learnt during his previous appointments with Gurkha Sqns, whilst the RSM proved that he wasn't as bad as he had suggested before the game.

The visit concluded with the Sqn Officers and SNCOs taking the CO and RSM to dinner in the Dutch ECHOS restaurant. The inevitable order discrepancy didn't spoil an excellent meal; we're now all looking forward to them returning the favour at our homecoming in February.

KAF REGIONAL COMMAND (SOUTH) HQ & SIGNAL SQUADRON SERVICE DESK
- by Cpl Nima Sherpa

246 Gurkha Sig Sqn officially took over the task of Service Desk from our sister Sqn, 214 Sig Sqn on 26 October 2007. The Service Desk provides Information Communication Services to the HQ Regional Command (South) KAF staff users. Service Desk is mainly responsible for looking after Mission Secret (MS), NATO Secret (NS) and NATO Unclassified (NU) Terminals. Beside these tasks, the desk deals with network, user problems and issues with all users affiliated with the Network. Apart from NATO Terminal and Networks, we are the first point of contact for multi-national terminals, networks and phones. We also liaise with TCW (our friends in light blue) for Joint Operation Communication System (JOCS), Secure and Non-Secure phone users. We also provide manpower to facilitate Video Telephone Conference (VTC) and Comd's Conference Call to the staff users.

We are also the first point of contact for the System Support

Teams (SST) providing similar facilities outside KAF. Sometimes we also provide manpower to other SSTs to fill the gap in place of soldiers away on R&R. Most of the jobs on the Service Desk are IT related and the desk pers have had to show their professionalism and adaptability in their specified job with a host of new IT skills.

We operate the Service Desk 24/7 with a very busy schedule to provide best services to the users. However, we have managed to spare some time for sports and PT in order to maintain our personal fitness and have some fun. Nevertheless the job in Service Desk is very important and demanding.

REGIONAL COMMAND (SOUTH) HQ & SIGNAL SQUADRON SUPPORT TROOP - *by Sig Kishan Ale*

HQ Sp Tp is a key element within HQ Regional Command (South) (HQ RC(S)). It is an integral part, looking after the GOC, all his Staff Officers and supporting staff within the HQ.

As a Tp of 26 pers, we are responsible for the complete close life sp for the 300 plus Staff and supporting members within HQ RC(S). As the Sp Tp we have various functions to assist the Staff's life within the HQ. Some of them are:

Manning the Access Control Points (ACPs), which are manned throughout the day. Duty pers at the control points ensure that everybody entering the compound are genuine workers and that those within the HQ are carrying their permanent passes. They also escort any contractors or escorted visitors to the HQ.

Manning the Help Desk, where all the fault reporting, application and creation of HQ RC(S) passes take place.

Accn Services operates under the control of the Tp SSgt. He controls 18 pure accn buildings and all the office buildings, whose allocation, maint, fault reporting has to be done via the contractors.

Besides all of the above, some of the Sp Tp functions are dealt with by the SSM, like local procurement and **SSM Dhir** can be guaranteed to get his hands on anything that does not come through the normal supply chain. The Tp OC is double hatted as QM, hence looking after the overall contract management which in itself is quite an enormous task!

Although it is a short tour for 246 GSS, it has been a challenging job for everybody here in HQ Sp Tp. 246 GSS pers have been working tirelessly to accommodate the daily needs of RC(S) pers. As a result we have been getting superb feedback boosting our morale. In short HQ Sp Tp has been the epicentre of HQ RC(S), as far as the Life Sp is concerned. We hope to maintain this good work to the very end and keep up the good name of the Regt until we hand over to our Canadian counterparts.

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC (Rear)	**Capt C Fogarty**
SSM (Rear)	**SSgt Harikumar Ghale**

LIFE IN 246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON (REAR PARTY)
- by Sig Santanu Pradhan

246 Gurkha Sig Sqn has been very busy in the last 6 months, successfully fulfilling both op and non-op commitments. Before the Sqn deployed to Afghanistan, it went though the OPTAG trg package. This took place at Lydd camp in August and was followed by a field firing package at Barry Buddon in September. 85 pers then deployed on Op HERRICK in late September led by the OC, **Maj Ben White**.

Island Tp took on the task of Spearhead Land Element (SLE) Strategic Comms Tp with **SSgt Andy Hayler** providing the experience and guidance – proving there's life in the old dog yet. Also Sek Kong Tp have deployed to Qatar on Op VERITAS. This was led by **SSgt Bholajung Gurung**; not to mention the permanent SBMA rear det, which is enjoying the hurricane season in Tampa under the guidance of **Lt Dave Marcham**.

Although the Sqn had been very busy due to pre deployment trg, it took part in the Queen's Gurkha Signals (QGS) birthday celebration day held at in Bramcote, the home of QGS. 246 GSS proved the law of averages by coming second at every sport and winning the QGS Champion Sqn accolade.

Dashain was celebrated a bit earlier in 246 GSS this year because of its op commitments. It was enjoyed by all and the party went on into the wee hours. The festival of lights 'Tihar' was celebrated at BhetGhat, warmly welcoming the families of both deployed pers and those in the rear party. The CO started the festival and promptly lost £20 of the RSM's money.

The Sqn also attended the Remembrance Parade held in York Minster on Sunday 11 November, which gave us the opportunity to reflect about our friends on ops.

Five new Operators and one Driver Electrician joined the Sqn having finished their respective basic courses in Blandford. Also joining the Sqn were 2 new Tp Comds, **2Lt Tom Harrison** and **Capt Hebindra Pun** who took over the responsibility of Sek Kong Tp and Island Tp respectively.

Looking on into the New Year, Sek Kong Tp are preparing to take over the role of SLE Tp in March and the other Tps are preparing for the task of Joint Force Logistic Component Command (JFLogCC). Lastly the Sqn is looking forward to the safe return of the deployed pers.

Jai 2 Signal Regiment, Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals.

3rd (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col P E J Drew**
RSM	**WO1 M R Eastman**

Farewell to the Adjt, **Maj Liz Byfield**, on her departure for ICSC(L), followed by the MSc CISM Course in 2008. Good luck to **Liz** and **Richard** in the future. Welcome to our new Adjt, **Capt Jane Squires** who has just arrived from 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

We bid a final farewell to the Traffic Officer, **Capt 'H' Lloyd** and his wife **Donna**, as he leaves the Regt, the Corps and the Army for pastures new. We look forward to seeing him again when he returns as part of the Reunion Club in the future.

HEADQUARTERS (THE SOMME) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj D T H Wilson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Torrington**

HQ Sqn has had an intense period in recent months; inspections, Div led exs, short notice tasks providing real life sp, coupled with leading on the preparatory phase to deploy on various ops in sp of 4 Mech Bde and supporting arms has resulted in a non stop commitment from all ranks of the Sqn. The SSM switched fire from anti-ambush and choke points following Ex IRON TRIANGLE to Deepcut where he successfully qualified as RQMS in preparation for deployment to the COB in March 2008. He joins

Maj Dave Wilson as the RQMS(M) leaving **CSgt (SQMS) Whitfield** to carry the flag for the Sqn. The Sqn will be left in the firm grip of **Maj Billy Green** RE and **Capt Danny Ferguson** RLC throughout the Regt's deployment in 2008.

QM(T) DEPARTMENT

QM(T)	**Capt RA Bell**
RQMS(T)	**WO2 S Ferrer**

Welcome to **Cpl Bill Reddy** posted in from 16 Air Assit Bde, who arrived and then departed on back-to-back courses and is now back in Fiji on a "well deserved" holiday. It has been a busy period for the Dept assisting the Regt in all the usual G4 tasks, as well as getting everyone's mil trg up to standard before deploying on Op TELIC 11. Good luck and farewell to **WO2(RQMS) Mo Pay**, **Sgt Mark Biggans** RLC, **Sgt Gemma Gillard** and **Cpls Col Carruthers**, **Lee Evans** and **Riz Rizza** who have all deployed on Op TELIC over the last month. Goodbye to **LCpl Mark Porter** and his wife **Amanda** who will eventually leave us on promotion to 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in the New Year.

REGIMENTAL TRAINING WING

RTWO	**WO2(SSM) Deano Cartledge**

The Regtl Trg Wing is firmly into a very busy period, having just returned from Ex IRON ENDEAVOUR, the unit pre-deployment trg package in preparation for Op TELIC. A fresh young subaltern has been selected to provide notes on that ex, so check them out for spelling mistakes! As you can imagine prior to any op deployment, the unit has gone MATTs crazy. Notably, **Cpl Dave Driver** can often be found teaching up to 3 subjects at any one time to anybody from the GOC down and even teaching MATTs in the back of the guardroom when on duty!

On a final note, we say farewell to **Sig Kim Watts** as she leaves the Corps for Civvie Street.

TM TROOP

Regt FofS	**WO1(FofS) D Fielding**
FOFS IS	**WO2(FofS IS) W Robson**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt A Lockie**

TM Tp has shrunk considerably due to the majority of its pers deploying to Op TELIC with 4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and the remainder due to deploy to Baghdad with 206 Sig Sqn and MND(SE) in January. Coupled with the many different tours in the Falklands and Bosnia, the Tp is well travelled.

Luckily we say welcome to several new members **Cpl Dunn**, **Cpl 'Macca' McSween**, **LCpl 'Harmani' Potter**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig 'Dutch' Holland** a mixture of Techs and IS Engrs. We bid farewell to **Sgt 'Eddie' Izzard** and his wife **Jo** who leave for Blandford to attend his Class 1 course, **Cpl Ems Fraser** who goes to Blandford on loan and promotion to instruct on the SECA course; **Cpl Sarah O'Reilly** who has left to join 2 Sig Regt on promotion.

The Tp will be busy over the coming 6 months travelling around the country to perform 2nd line inspections with the relatively small manpower team.

We wish all Tp members that are away over Xmas all the best and a safe return to the Tp and their families.

RP STAFF

PIT STOP CHALLENGE - *by Cpl P J Wood*

On 12 October 2007, the Provo Staff from 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt, **Cpl Wood**, **LCpl Griffiths**, **LCpl Reason** and **LCpl Rigg** were asked by the Holiday Inn of Amesbury if we would like to enter the Pit Stop Challenge for their grand opening. Not wanting to pass up a challenge we agreed.

Upon arriving we realised that it was a bigger challenge than we first thought as the teams we would be competing against were the touring car championship teams, consisting of Team RAC, Team VXR and Team Dunlop. We used the Team SEAT car driven by **Adam Jones**. Team VXR had to pull their socks up after losing to Team Royal Signals at our first attempt changing 2 wheels in 22 secs. After a few heats, Team Royal Signals came a very respectable 3rd.

Because of our efforts **Adam Jones** of Team SEAT gave us 5 VIP tickets to the World Touring Car Championships on 14 October at Thruxton and an invite to the VIP party being held in the hotel that evening.

202 (ARMOURED) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj KA Owen**
SSM	**WO2 S Crooks**

EXERCISE IRON ENDEAVOR - *by 2lt G Wallace*

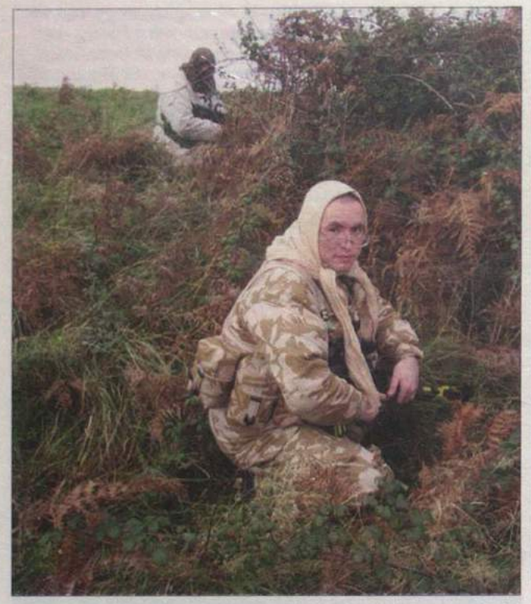
On a warm November morning the Regt deployed on the first wave of a 2 week range package to sunny Castlemartin. Organised by **WO2(SSM) Cartledge**, the ex consisted of 2 separate 5 day range packages, which members of the Regt rotated through as part of their Op TELIC pre-deployment trg.

LCpl Brant – 4Cs Op Battle Lesson – Plot, Pause, Plan, Issue

The ex started off with the basics of grouping and zeroing led by the ever patient **Sgt Thomas**. From this the guys went on to complete their APWT and IBSR with **WO2(SSM) Crooks** and his merry band of men all working hard to ensure that everyone passed. Once all the MATTs where completed, it was then on to the more interesting shoots!

Opinion was divided as to what the highlight of the ex was. Half of the Regt thought that it must have been the Minimi and GPMG familiarisation shoots. This was a welcome opportunity for the majority of the Sigs, who had never fired either of these wpn systems before. Others in the Regt considered the highlight to be the top cover shoots from moving Snatch vehs and others enjoyed the unarmed combat with the QMSI.

WO2(SSM) Cartledge and the trg wing did a fantastic job of delivering a very comprehensive and successful ex which left no one in any doubt that the trg objectives had all been met. A special mention must however go to **Sgt Trafford** for the enthusiasm he displayed organising and manning the bayonet range, a first for many. Also **Sgt Beattie** for his winning the donut eating competition, well done! All in all, a hard but still very enjoyable week, that all the guys will benefit from in preparation for the future ops. What next RTWO?



Sgt Washbourne and Cpl Driver – 'Realistic' Enemy Forces!

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj H Bosley**
SSM	**WO2 Yendell**

BAGHDAD SIGNAL SQUADRON – LEADERSHIP WEEK 12 – 16 NOVEMBER - *by LCpl Learmouth*

As a newly formed Sqn for our forthcoming deployment to Iraq in January 2008, our OC thought it would be a good idea to do some team and group bonding.

The Sqn deployed to Blandford by minibus, driven by the resident Sqn drivers, '**Lewis Hamilton**' and '**Fernando Alonso**', at least in their minds. We then spent the next few days at 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn doing comd tasks and developing new skills, namely learning to tie ourselves in knots and getting stuck in the trees.

From here we went on to visit Redwood to practise our orienteering following a 'History of the Sport' briefing from **SSgt Adrian Sims**. On the way back, morale was high and we were looking forward to our next day's events. These would take us to Winchester, where we would take part in a treasure hunt/pub crawl organised by **SSgt(FofS) Richard Musgrove**.

On our final day we departed to RSME Minley, to learn the fine art of raft building. We were split into 2 teams for the day's events, both to be captained by the Sqn YofS and FofS – **WO2(YofS) Mark Parr** and **SSgt(FofS) Richard Musgrove** respectively.

To get us into a competitive mood and practise our rowing technique, we had a race round one of the islands in a Mk6 Asslt Boat, which ended up with the Yeoman's team winning, even though they were one man down, as **Sig 'Bambi' Morris** could not get to grips with his rowing action – good thing he joined the Army and not the Navy.

The permanent staff then showed us how to build our rafts and we were ready for the water with our next big race of the day. Team captains gave their crews a few words of wisdom, and christened the rafts before we launched them as mighty war galleys. This time it was a straight forward race to the other island, where the teams had to get off the raft onto dry land, then clamber aboard and row furiously back to the start; the Yeoman's team were victorious again.

Baghdad Signal Squadron in Minley with their raft

Once the race was done, the rafts were dismantled, cold wet feet were dried and warmed up and the day with the Sappers was over, we headed back to sunny Bulford. All in all a good week, enjoyed by everyone.

BATTLE CAMP - *by LCpl Jamie Alderton*

For the last week in November, we set off to Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire for a live range package covering pre-tour trg from Grouping and Zeroing to IBSR live fire and manoeuvre. On arrival we were given the necessary briefs and told about the upcoming week. There were to be many memorable lessons taught concurrently with the range package such as **Sgt Traff Trafford's** bayonet lesson, with shrieks and cries of "Kill, Kill, Kill!" heard around the entire camp. Following this was **WO2(QMSI) Stuart Irving's** PSPO lesson from which we are all still dazed and bruised!

The week's events also included a convoy, top cover shoot; new to most of the participants making for an interesting change to normal static shoots. All of the action was also cleverly recorded by **LCpl Bibs Bibby** on an action camera which he strapped on above his SUSAT for every lesson. It was very enjoyable to see what we had just done especially the Bayonet Drills lesson.

It was a very hard, demanding week which everybody enjoyed. That said, there were also a few hard learned lessons such how not to handle a GPMG after firing 1000 rounds as **LCpl Gina Cailleau** found out when she grabbed the barrel of the gun. A less war-like lesson learned was not to chew your pen in lessons, as **Sig 'DC' Washington** found out after he broke his tooth in half). As the days finished there seemed to be a competitive streak between the senior and junior ranks in the NAAFI bar when it came to table tennis. **Sgt Jay Shuttleworth** and **SSgt Aidy Duplock** showed us how it was done; winning and beating us all off the table till closing time. We had a break from the package on Thursday when we all went down bowling and the competitive streak reared up again.

The last day was a very enjoyable day as everybody got to fire both the GMPG and the Minimi. We seldom get to train on these wpns and everyone was keen to continue firing. The long drive back to Bulford on Friday was a very quiet one after such a physical and rewarding week. It was a huge success and a very enjoyable range package for all.

7th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col NJ Makepeace**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) McDonald**

MEMORIES OF EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION 2007

229 SIGNAL SQUADRON – CHARLOTTENBURG TROOP

OC	**2Lt Lifton**
SSgt	**SSgt Maguire**

ITALIAN POINT OF PRESENCE - *by Cpl Hobbs*

After weeks of planning and preparation, it was time for the mighty Charlottenburg Tp to deploy to Italy for Ex ARRCADE FUSION. We headed to Ayrshire Barracks to board the train for our 3 day journey to Battipaglia, Italy.

After a 30 min drive and a few near misses with the less than patient local motorists, we arrived in Persano to be greeted by a trg area that could only be described as a muddy, mosquito infested bog pit and a less than amused look on **Sgt Opie's** face.

After parading with the Italians and listening to them belt out their National Anthem, it was all hands on deck as we prepared ourselves for the role of providing the Italian Acqui Division with ARRC comms. The sun was shining as everyone grafted away setting up TALON, Richelieu, INMARSAT and E1 links, to provide a multitude of local and out of area comms. We were kindly invited to an evening with the Italians, where we had a buffet (more of a Bush Tucker Trial really!), and played table football against them. This was followed by a cultural weekend including a trip to Pompeii, a day in Battipaglia and some helicopter flights around the area. For those of us who are used to digging in and pan bash, this ex was turning out to be quite surreal.

Members of Charlottenburg Troop setting up the CP in Italy

However, it was soon back to the daily ex routine, which consisted of maintaining our comms, setting up a number of VTC and VoIP phone conferences, ensuring our Italian counterparts kept up with the ARRC Battle Rhythm and most importantly, following **Cpl Simpkins'** lead and making the CP look insanely immaculate. The weather couldn't make up its mind, the Italians didn't quite realise they were on ex until COMARRC's visit (when they put their webbing on!) and the mud began to thicken. Trying to operate a VTC, in the same room as every main event in the HQ happened, proved to be challenging; the record for 'Team VTC' setting up the entire suite came to around 8 mins flat!

One morning, an attempt to collect our laundry failed miserably when we saw Italian soldiers walking off with bags full of women's underwear and British DPM uniform. It appeared the local laundry facility had mixed up the washing and on enquiring when and how the problem was to be sorted out we heard the word which cropped up time and time again: "Tomorrow". The Italians didn't understand the meaning of 'urgency'. After a time we realised that 'tomorrow' would never come.

The ex went well with positive comments from the Staff about the 'UK Platoon'. The heavens opened just in time for the tear down, flooding the trg area and turning the HQ and the CP into improvised bouncy castles. After we had to use a forklift to load the soaked camnet, 3 recovery trucks to pull one Bedford and a FEPS Generator out of the mud and endured a 30 min drive back to the station, we were finally about to board the train and get dry.

Other events which deserve a mention; **Cpl Gowdy** being the only person to get bogged in on the main route (not bad for a Driver Electrician); **Sig Laura Magness** with her 'Jade Goodyesque' comments and trying to use the VTC remote as a microphone; the daily Pizza runs by our favourite delivery boy, **LCpl Mortlock**. **Cpl Hobbs** doing a rendition of Superman over an unmarked coil of barbed wire, which the Italians kindly left out and unknowingly getting revenge by cutting one of their cables during our tear down!

In summary it was an interesting ex for all and everyone took away some invaluable experience and lessons from working with foreign forces. Roll on Ex ARRCADE FUSION 2008!

229 SIGNAL SQUADRON TAC CP – WILMERSDORF TROOP - *by Cpl Humphreys*

OC	**Capt Kelly**
SSgt	**SSgt Rickard**

Wilmersdorf Tp deployed on Ex ARRCADE FUSION in the role of ARRC TAC CP, supported by ARRC Sp Bn. As usual on ARRC exs, deployment from barracks meant the heavens opened and down came the first of many days of rain.

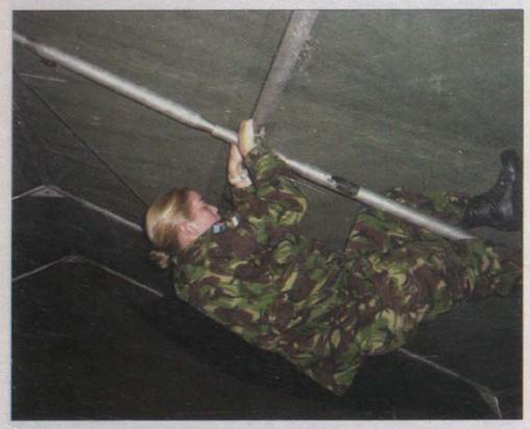
Wilmersdorf Tp's first week, spent in Woodlands Camp, was a success with a number of Staff Officers visiting the location and commenting on how impressed they were with TAC CP. During the second week TAC CP moved to EXCON's location; here we had a few problems with our TALON comms eqpt. Our TALON operators **LCpl Barber** and **LCpl Turner**, with the assistance of **Cpl Humphreys**, our resident ED, made a few technical calculations, said "move it over there" and without any further adjustments it was up and running.

Over the next few days, **Capt Kelly**, our Tp OC, passed a comment about the level of snoring in the tent and that she couldn't sleep because of it; it was then that everyone in the tent realised that it was **Capt Kelly** that was making the loud snoring noise and waking herself up!

Our next move was to Staumuhle at the same location as the Danish Div; this was to be a fast move. With promises from **Capt Kelly** that TAC CP may be stood down 3 days early from the ex, morale went through the roof with everyone looking forward to an early finish. However, this was only going to happen if we moved TAC CP in 11 hrs; the pressure was on!

The move started well; all the comms eqpt stripped out and loaded ready to go, all the admin tents collapsed, all we needed was ARRC Sp Bn to move the tentage to the new location, which

they duly did. On arrival at the new location everyone was ready to get stuck in and get TAC CP up and running; which we managed within 11 hrs despite some small issues; everyone was happy and morale was at an all time high.



Capt Kelly shows the rest of ARRC TAC CP how it's done

The high morale was soon quashed with the rumour of another move and being told that being stood down early was out of the window. To raise morale, **SSgt Lee Rickard** challenged B Tp to a Yogurt Eating Competition (later named the 'YOGOFF') as we had an abundance of yogurts. B Tp boasted that they had starved their contender for 3 days and only given him 2 Cup-a-Soups. Our Tp gave our contender, **LCpl Barber**, a warm-up roast dinner! The event went down well with B Tp's contender managing a pathetic 16 yogurts compared with **LCpl Barber** swallowing a staggering 19; the pride of the Tp had been maintained! This stage of the ex was very busy for both the Staff Officers and members of the Tp; it was good to hear that the Staff Officers were more than happy with the service we were providing them in TAC CP.

The move back to Javelin Barracks was uneventful until Route 2 was closed and the packet was thrown off into the largest traffic jam in the world! On our return, the drivers' hours sheets were collected in and it was noted that **Capt Kelly** was the main contender for the 'Golden Blanket Award' for sleeping a lot. Overall the ex was a good learning experience for the Tp and ensured that our Tp Comd left on a high!

231 SIGNAL SQUADRON - *by Sgt Griffiths*

Ex ARRCADE FUSION signalled the end of a very busy ex season for 231 Sig Sqn and indeed 7 Sig Regt. Members of the Sqn deployed to Sennelager in phases. The Installation Technicians were first on the ground under the watchful eye of **Sgt King**. Over the period of a week they installed what seemed to be the world's supply of Cat V and fibre optic cable. They were followed by the System Engineer Technicians, the Information Systems Engineers and finally the CS Ops each adding their own important piece to the puzzle that finally produced the comms for ARRC Main HQ.

With much of the Sqn's assets recently arrived, we found ourselves on a steep learning curve with our Richelieu system. Luckily still based around Promina on which we have experience, it also includes a new VoIP telephone system and other add-ons which ensured we always had something new to keep us on our toes.

The build phase went as expected with some teething problems which were soon ironed out. This meant that we found ourselves with a very reliable telephone network early on. As always, the Sqn's reputation lay on the line with the VTC system, this tent often being the focus for the whole of ARRC MAIN. For those readers who are wondering what can be so tricky about VTC, ours had enough sound equipment to put a concert at Wembley Stadium to shame! Credit for this must go to **Cpl Vinson** who was responsible for the build in the VTC suite and inevitably, absorbed much of the flack should there be a technical hitch.

The Sqn's operators were very busy during the ex, working outside their normal role, setting up voice conference calls and, importantly, interfacing with staff officers when they had problems. They were praised by the staff on many occasions for the job that they did.

Of course, it wasn't all fun and games; with the ex including NBC and air attacks just to keep things interesting. The Sqn worked hard to produce an effective comms system for the ARRC MAIN CP and it was clear we had succeeded when many of the Staff Officers commented on the quality of the service we had provided. As always, "work hard, play hard" is the motto and we still managed to squeeze in the occasional night out on the infamous Sennelager Strip…that's a story for another time.

Marching along Bird Cage Walk

PUBLIC DUTIES SQUADRON

OC	**Maj C Ratcliffe**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) P Jordan**

It has been a great honour and privilege for 7 Sig Regt to be given the task of conducting Public Duties in the Royal Palaces. The Regt provided a composite sqn based on 232 Sig Sqn, but with significant elements from 229 (Berlin) and 231 Sig Sqns, and sp elements from Sp Sqn. In total 120 officers and soldiers from the Sqn have been on the task. Sqn trg began in September at our home base in Javelin Barracks, Elmpt, on what must be the biggest parade square in the world -- the old runways of RAF Bruggen.

The trg, as might be expected, started with refreshing the very basics of foot and wpn drill and in order to ensure that this was of the highest standard, 14 of the Sqn WOs, SNCOs and NCOs attended drill courses in Catterick; they all came back better soldiers and a few had the blisters to prove it! By the end of October, the Sqn was ready to assist the Household Division on Public Duties, and deployed to Victoria Barracks, Windsor.

The duties comprise guarding the four Royal Palaces: Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace, The Tower of London and Windsor Castle. For all of us, the role has been a once in a lifetime experience; clearly it is a very high profile role and one which is in the public eye. This is confirmed by the thousands who flock to see every Queen's Guard Mount at Buckingham Palace, including many of our soldiers' families. Public Duties are an essential part of the fabric of our nation and 7 Sig Regt are proud to have played their part.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE DETACHMENT - *by Sig Barker*

In mid-September on a hot post-summer day at Elmpt Station, a group was assembled to take on the task of Public Duties in London. Most of us had not done any rifle drill since basic trg so we had to start from scratch; we had a mammoth task ahead of us.

A mere 7 weeks later we were marching onto Buckingham Palace forecourt with the marching band before us doing our first Queen's Guard Mount. Pride and honour was in all of us and I think we all surprised ourselves with how good we had actually become!

Posting Sentries at Buckingham Palace

I was on the first stag with **Sig Mitchell** and we bonded well with a good partnership. I will never forget the agony of a bead of sweat rolling down my face and staying on the side of my head – it felt like someone was drilling through my head and I couldn't do anything about it apart from try to blow it off and look like Sloth from the 'Goonies'!

One of our early duties coincided with the State Opening of Parliament and **Sig Webster** had having a Household Cavalry horse urinate over his recently highly polished new boots while on parade. This combined with another 'present' the horse left next to his sentry box meant that the less-than-glamorous side of guarding the Palace was all too obvious. On another occasion, we saw at first hand how elaborate the entourage of a visiting dignitary can be as the King of Saudi Arabia's procession came past with at least 30 cars. It was a long time to present arms for just one man. We are now settled into the routine and everyone is looking forward to Christmas. I feel we all deserve a good one because of all the hard work everyone has put in.

ST JAMES'S PALACE DETACHMENT - *by Sig Travis*

At the end of the Changing of the Guard Ceremony and the Old Guard has left Buckingham Palace Forecourt, it is the turn of the St James's Palace Detachment to march up The Mall to St James's Palace.

Once in the Guard Room, we're straight into our guard routine, with the second relief being posted to take over from the first relief, who have been waiting since midway through the parade. The rest of us are QRF or preparing our kit for our next sentry duty.

The stags are 2 hrs long, which isn't too bad on the public boxes because it can be funny when people are having their photos taken with you, or in a specific case having a phone number put in your pocket! In the private box inside the Palace grounds 2 hrs seems to last a life time because all you have to look at is a big brick wall. It is a great place to see the Royals as they pass through with **Prince William** and **Prince Harry** frequently coming into their apartments.

The last stag finishes at 1800hrs and then we spend the evening bulling boots and getting ready for the next day. Bulling boots is quite hungry work so it's soon time for the fast food run unless you are **SSgt Morgan** and you are upstairs in the Officers Mess having drinks with **Prince Harry**!

At the end of the 48 hr duty, the final day is usually a busy one and everyone looks forward to the dismount parade. With everything packed away ready to be taken back by the admin team and the final sentries posted, we prepare for the march down The Mall to join up with the Buckingham Palace Detachment for another Changing of the Guard.

TOWER OF LONDON GUARD - *by Sig Priestley*

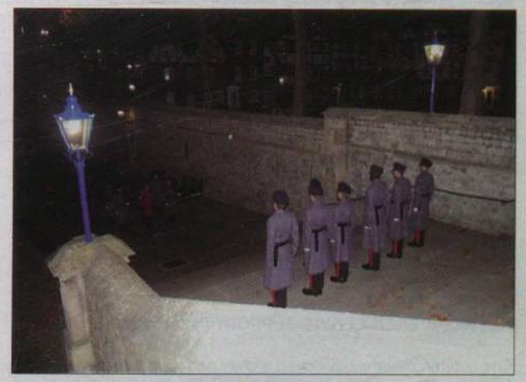
The Tower of London is a little different from other duties in the Queen's Guard. Firstly and perhaps most significantly, we do not parade on Buckingham Palace Forecourt with the remainder of the Queen's Guard.

While the parade is taking place, our role is more administrative. We wait in the changing rooms at Wellington Barracks and hump and dump the boxes and bags for the people preparing to face the public.

At around lunchtime the minibus arrives to take us to the Tower. Once we arrive at the Tower, we unpack our kit and take over guard at 1300hrs.

Over the 48-hour duty, each of us can expect to do 2 stags, plus the 2 ceremonies, which are the main highlights. The Ceremony of the Word takes place each afternoon and involves the password for that day's guard being passed around to those that will need to react if the Crown Jewels go missing! The Ceremony of the Keys is the formal closing and locking of the Tower for the Night. It is a great privilege to be chosen to take part in this and it is a very atmospheric occasion. The stags are enjoyable, though the quiet one can be a little boring after 2 hours of silent drill. The public sentry box positioned just outside the entrance to the Crown Jewels is good fun, with plenty of pictures being taken and young girls trying to make you laugh with some degree of success. There is very little Police presence at the Tower and therefore our QRF has a very significant role. Clearance patrols are carried out during silent hours – normally on the lookout for drunken students. Overall, it is rather relaxed in the guardroom, the food is good and I have enjoyed every duty I've done.

The Tower can be a little spooky at times and that adds to the experience. The Yeoman Warders always have plenty of stories to tell and we are fortunate that the Chief Yeoman Warder, **John Keohane** is late Royal Corps of Signals so he looks after us well.

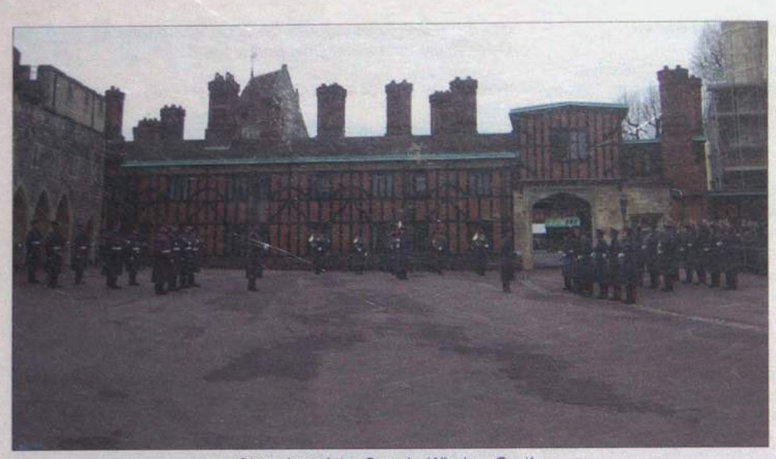


Duty at The Tower of London

WINDSOR CASTLE GUARD - *by Sig Kipling*

A last of the 4 guards the Sqn has been carrying out is mounting the Guard at Windsor. On the morning of my first mount the Captain of the Guard took us for a rehearsal after which we fell out to get dressed into our great coats.

As we marched up to the Castle it was quite nerve racking as the crowds lining the streets were merely 2ft away. On the approach to the oldest occupied castle in the world, the SSM called the step but a nearby dog barking prompted the Senior Sgt to change step a couple of times. Marching under the arch and into the Castle, the crowds just seemed to get bigger. We were all



Changing of the Guard - Windsor Castle

very pleased with our drill and general performance.
Being on duty gave us all a chance to walk around the grounds of the Castle to look at all the local attractions and the magnificent buildings within the perimeter. We had another unexpected bonus when the **The Queen** arrived for unofficial residence, which meant a few of the sentries had the privilege of presenting arms to Her Majesty. As the hours went by, so did the enormous crowds and soon the duty was over and it was time to dismount.

The parade started with us, the Old Guard, getting on parade and waiting for the New Guard. All of the Scots Guards looked very good in their bearskins but we aimed to out-do them on every drill movement on the day. With the new reliefs posted and the parade finished we marched back to Victoria Barracks to be dismissed for a well deserved day off.

The Windsor Castle Guard was a change from the other Guard Duties we had done previously, and we look forward to doing it again a few more times before we head back to Elmpt.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj John Fradley**
SSM	**WO2 Chris Stuart**

The fun and excitement of the recent op tour and summer activities are now well behind us with the German winter setting in. The last of the Sqn pers have finally arrived back from the ARRC exs, which have proved an excellent opportunity to get all the depts in the field for some time. Lots of things for us to look forward to; Christmas leave, Ex SNOW WARRIOR, Bowman trg, winter AT and of course the next round of exs. New eqpt; New Year…bring it on!

NETWORK ENGINEERING SUPPORT (NES) TROOP

The autumn months have seen a busy period in the newly formed NES Tp. After a series of ARRC exs here in Javelin Barracks, it was off to Sennelager Trg Area (STA) for the main effort of the year; Ex ARRCADE FUSION 07. The build up exs had got all the technicians familiar with the new Richelieu eqpt and most of the technical problems had been ironed out. As is the way of NES Tp most of the Tp deployed out with the Fd Sqns giving tech sp at the different CPs. Some were lucky enough to go further afield than just STA…

After much persuasion, **LCpl Lawrence** was the lucky member of NES Tp to deploy with Charlottenburg Tp to Persano Trg Area in the South of Italy. A report on the deployment is elsewhere in these notes.

NES Tp now looks forward to the New Year and the challenges that will bring with the effort needed to support Richelieu, Talon, and now Bowman too. The Tp continuously undergoes change and even though we have only just welcomed our OC, **WO1(FofS) Pace**, we will be bidding farewell soon as he has been successful on the recent LECB. Well done! Also well done to; **Cpl Ryan Booth** on being successful on the QAB (mark 2), **Cpls Gyamfi**, **McGlown** and **LCpl Lee** on passing the Class 1 entrance exam. It will be left to our new Tp Staffie, **SSgt Thirlwell**, to maintain stability during the coming months. There have been a number of recent arrivals, so welcomes go to **LCpls Rodway**, **Budd**, **Higgins**, **Ram**, **Forknall** and **Swift** arriving into the unit from Blandford and **LCpl Carr** joining us from 200 Sig Sqn in Sennelager.

Currently the Tp newbies are enjoying a GS drivers course where they will be trained in left hand drive Land Rovers and learn the art of cross country manoeuvring and night navigation. Good luck to the following; **LCpl Fillipo** on his JCLM in Blandford, **Cpl Smith** who has recently deployed to the Falkland Islands and **Cpl McGlown** and **LCpl Bright** are representing the corps in the annual alpine skiing championships held in Austria. Finally congratulations to **LCpl Baily** and **Laura** on their recent arrival!

QM (T) DEPARTMENT

QM (T)	**Capt AS Cupper**
RQMS (T)	**WO2 S Page**

Immediately after returning from summer leave the Regt went straight into the ex season, which due to ops had not seen the Dept deploy in the field for some time. As with the rest of Sp Sqn we were located in Depot 90; essentially a rat-infested, rain-soaked, wild boar ridden location; it even had REME blokes clearing up left over pigeon food! As top tips go when going on ex to Sennelager; being told to ensure the kit list is followed (take cold weather kit with enough undergarments to last the 3 week period) seems to be a rather clever one. However **Sig Groom** knew better. No Gortex, no Buffalo, no gloves…and no underwear! So the QM declared him deficient of his sense of humour when told that his planned trip back to Elmpt had been cancelled; I wonder why!

On return to barracks focus was immediately switched to the pending Logistic Support Inspection being conducted in January. The RQMS, **WO2 Ted Page**, has been whipping the SQMSs (they seem to enjoy that part) into order and has been instrumental in making certain that no stone is left unturned before the Regt disappears on Christmas leave.

The Dept have already had an early taste of the Christmas spirit when attending the Sp Sqn Christmas function, but it was only a warmer for our main event; a meal at the Nostos Greek Restaurant in Bruggen, a picturesque village a few kms from camp. The main entertainment was watching the preparation of **Sig Nelson** getting ready for his wrestling match, whilst **Sig Chapman** was coming to terms with a recent tragic break-up of a 2 week relationship! And we can't forget QM (A), **Maj Pete Whitehouse** forgetting to get a Secret Santa present and covertly purchasing a bottle at the bar and using one of his own gift bags as if nothing had happened! Many thanks to **LCpl Kerry Jordison** for the time and effort that went into the organization.

Many people have come and gone since the last notes; good luck to those who moved on, congratulations to those who went on promotion, and welcome to all our new boys. At the top, the QMs have recently changed over; welcome to **Capt Alf Cupper** and his family and congratulations to **Maj Al Higgins** on his promotion to take up his new post, good luck to you and **Meg**.

SUPPORT SQUADRON MT

MTO	**Capt Paul Buckley**
MT SSgt	**SSgt Rick Lodge**

Apart from needing to find coaches in every nook and cranny (on average 4 times a week) the main effort for the Regt MT was to ensure there was enough fuel for the ex season. **Sgt Geordie Cairns** was tasked with providing a fuel Tp to deploy in sp of the ARRC ex period, a task he threw himself into; until he realised he was going to be in the field for almost 3 months; "half a tour and no medal" was heard several times! This had been the first time, since the MTO arrived in June 06, that the Dept had left Javelin Barracks on ex and all he wanted to see was 4 UBREs on ex; **Sgt Cairns** made it happen, although the fourth only deployed in the September.

An impressive effort from the MT saw almost 350,000 litres of fuel distributed in a 5 week period; there was even a rumour that the MTO hand delivered fuel, but only 20 litres at a time.

Thanks to **Capt Anna Coffin** and **Cpl Stevens** for their assistance with OSH KOSH ensuring that the deliver quantities could be maintained.

The JAMES implementation team arrived to convert the Regt to the new system. In order for this event to happen the Regt had to capture the data from the vehs' documents and implement this information onto the JAMES system. From early on we knew that we had problems; there was insufficient bandwidth out of Elmpt for the system to work! It was taking over 30 mins to produce a works ticket! The trg continued but in the end the trg team had to move on to somewhere else but have promised to return; and with a bit of luck the cone heads will have sorted the IT problems.

The MTOs are about to change over and we would like to welcome **Capt Jim Watt** and his family to the dept and hope you have brought a fleet of coaches in your MFO. Good luck and best wishes to **Capt Paul Buckley** who moves on shortly to his new assignment to 2 Sig Regt, he will be now close enough to follow his true dream; supporting Darlo! We would like to thank him, **Gillian** and his family and wish them good luck.

7 SIGNAL REGIMENT LAD REME

OC	**Capt DK Tolley** REME
ASM	**WO1(ASM) Rookes**

Since our last *Wire* Notes, the LAD has been busy (as ever) in the support of Ex ARRCADE FUSION. As none of the soldiers currently employed in the LAD had deployed on FUSION before, this was to be a good learning curve. Loading trials were carried out to see if all of the kit and eqpt required could physically be lifted to Sennelager (best lager in the world?) and SOIs were re-visited to ensure that we were fully prepared.

Being a Bde ex it involved a RiP, carried out mid October and we took over some luxurious apartments in STC (OK – Depot 90, but it was still very pleasant moving post pallets and disposing of several year's worth of pigeon droppings!).

The ex routine was soon established; with the bulk of the repairs appearing in the morning. Plenty of time was available for mil trg. The new WSM, **SSgt Blacklock** (fresh on promotion from Sqn Ops) soon had a full trg schedule in place, including MATTs, wpn handling, PFT and CFT. On the fun side, the newly formed LAD hockey team managed several (very long) trg sessions and will be a force to be reckoned with in the future. An afternoon was also spent in the CAST where the LAD had the opportunity to engage in armd and AH battles; a great afternoon and all the LOAC was observed at all times!

Following a month of sp to Ex ARRCADE FUSION, the LAD returned to Elmpt for a well deserved long weekend, less the ski and snowboard teams who, led by **SSgt Campbell** and **Sgt Johnson**, deployed to Austria for 2 weeks race trg in preparation for the Div and Corps Championships. Early reports are that the snow is excellent and the trg is going well for next year – time will tell!

On a final note, congratulations to **WO1(ASM) Rocky Rookes** who was successful on the recent REME LE commissioning board. The ASM will leave for his first commissioned post early next year; due to this important transition, he has now reverted to his real name, **Justin**, and hopes that everyone will use it!

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col RJ Quinlan**
RSM	**WO1 D Rayson**

VIEW FROM REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS - *Capt A Senneck*

Congratulations aplenty for RHQ pers in the run up to Christmas. First and foremost, congratulations go out to the Regt's 2IC, **Maj David Duggan**, who has been selected to attend the Advanced Command & Staff College, along with the CO who had been pre-selected. All in RHQ hope they enjoy another year together! Couple with this good news was the Adjt and OC CPO, **Maj Bob Wymer** both appearing on the Beige List for selection to the rank of Maj in 2008, well done to both and enjoy ICSC(L), Adjt. Away from RHQ, **FofS Turner** of 243 Sig Sqn was the Regt's inclusion on the WO2-1 Board and he should be justly proud of his achievement. Congratulations from all in RHQ and the Regt go out to all recent successes on promotion and selection boards in 2007. May there be many more to celebrate in 2008.

PEDAL FOR PUDSEY

November brought with it the second of the two big fund raising events of the year 'Children in Need'. This year's event would be a 340 mile cycle ride from Northen Ireland to London, taking in some of the best sights that MOD locations could offer, by visiting all the locations of 10 Sig Regt's Sqns.

The team that had decided to undertake the challenge was, **SSgt Matt Stowell**, **Sgt Martin Campbell**, **Sgt Rob Grabowski**, **Sgt Rob Hinkley**, **Cpl Steve Lawrence** and **Cpl Glen Knight**. We are supported by an admin team made up of **Sgt Adie Williams**, **Sgt Steve Mesmer** and **Cpl Richie Sather**.

After a short 'Ferry across the Mersey' (sorry, the Irish Sea), we arrived in Belfast at 0630hrs, which gave us just enough time to get to Lisburn, sit around for a few hours and then cycle back.

As we only have had 15 miles to cover on Day 1, we set off with high expectations of a quick sprint back to the ferry port. However, any chances of breaking any records were scuppered by **Sgt Campbell** breaking his seat post – his penance for this would be to complete the remainder of the leg standing up!

Day 2 was our first day of serious cycling, repairs made we set out on our goal of completing the 70 miles from Liverpool to Church Strettam near Shrewsbury. The plan was for the admin team, in their comfortable petrol powered vehs to stop every 20 miles, set up a road side recovery station to enable the opportunity of getting fluids and chocolate on board. However, forgetting that we were 'leg' powered, the first stop was some 50 miles into the leg. At this point the PXR log was started. After much complaining at **Sgt Campbell**, we mounted up again for the remaining 20 or so miles.

Day 3 took us a distance of 80 miles from Shrewsbury to Stroud, which we covered quickly until we realised that the A30 was closed. Out came the maps and after much pondering it was decided that the best route to take would be through Stroud town centre. Somehow **Cpl Lawrence** got separated from the group (i.e. lost!) but while waiting for him to catch up, we all indulged in a McDonalds, unlucky **Steve**.

Day 4 was media day! We were joined in the morning by Radio Gloucester and Points West TV, but more importantly **Pudsey** himself! After spending an hour with the media we started off on our 70 mile push for the day, which would take us to Salisbury, via RHQ in Corsham. Unfortunately, we had now entered Gloucestershire which is not known for its flat plains but more for its rolling hills. We were met in Corsham by the Regt 2IC, **Maj Duggan** and **Capt Heaton**. Whilst there, **Sgt Campbell** was interviewed for Radio Pudsey. That's the first of many crates he ended up owing the team. In all he was fined 5 crates of beer, one for each minute of fame. On arrival at Salisbury, we were greeted by the CO, **Lt Col Quinlan**, members of 10 Sig Regt and yet more media. We may need agents and Equity membership.

Day 5 was a chilly morning and all 70 miles seemed to be uphill to Aldershot! The admin team thought that today would be a great opportunity to get some footage and photos of the cyclists en-route, which they managed to do. Unfortunately the photos turned out to be another group of cyclists? After following us for 200 or more miles, they should know **Cpl Lawrence's** rear by now. We arrived at Aldershot and were introduced to the Bde Comd, **Brig Hargreaves**. The highlight of Day 5 was an 'all you can eat' Chinese, which we felt we had earned!

Day 6 was the final push with only 45 miles to Covent Garden and the Finish Line. The first 20 miles passed without event and then we hit the City of London and the fun started. Cycling in London is like sprint trg, stopping at red lights, sprinting off only to be stopped at another down the road. Then there are the buses – apparently they have the right of way over everything. There is only one hill in London, Richmond Hill, and we found it.

We were able to present our cheque for £5,340.19 live on BBC London during the Children in Need broadcast, which seemed a gratifying end to a long arduous bike ride!

Pedal for Pudsey

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Pardew**
SSM	**SSgt M Stowell**

Another incredibly busy period for 241 Sig Sqn which at one point saw 5 surge teams deploying simultaneously! We are now looking forward to the return of most of our soldiers from theatre which should make for a fantastic all ranks Christmas function. However, following the Christmas leave period, we are straight back into the rotation cycle with 2 surge teams deploying on Op HERRICK, one on Op TELIC, our ongoing Nuclear Accident Response Organization (NARO) commitment and a fifth team supporting the 16 Air Asslt Bde MRX. Whew!

HOTEL TROOP

OC	**Lt J Perring**
SSgt	**SSgt M Carr**

Firstly the Tp would like to wish **Capt 'Buff' Harris** a fond farewell as he leaves the comfort of running a Tp to becoming a 2IC Sqn at Blandford. We would like to welcome **Lt 'Pez' Perring** to the Tp as our new Tp Comd.

Cpl Jackson, **LCpl Hall** and **LCpl Philpott** will soon be arriving back in November after a very successful 6 month tour in Basra. **Sgt 'Rod' Rouchy** has just returned from AT in South Africa with **Capt Harris**. We all know **Sgt Rouchy's** incentive for volunteering for that one!

Also this month a surge team consisting of **Cpl 'Ozzy' Osborne**, **LCpls 'Hoggy' Hodson**, **'Jack' Gooding** and **Sigs 'Lloyd' Cromar**, **'Gaz' Evans**, **'Jimmy' Tearle** and **'Danny' Lewis** deployed to Op TELIC to complete a number of cable installations within theatre. **LCpls 'Seta' Raikoso**, **'Jenny' Sheridan** and **'Clazz' McClarrence** are currently hard at work in Nepal conducting important installation work. Well that's what they told us!

Hotel Tp would also like to extend hearty congratulations on the excellent news of selection for promotion to LCpl to **Sigs 'Lloyd' Cromar** and **'Jimmy' Tearle**.

KILO TROOP

Tp Sgt	**Sgt G Sunderland**

The Tp welcomes back **Sgt Steve Mesmer** and **LCpl Shane Duggan** from the sleepy hollows of Wilton to Basil Hill Lines at Corsham. Also safely back from an 8 week surge deployment to Afghanistan are **Cpls Mickey Lane** and **Dave Keen**, **Sigs Justin Reeves**, **Pete St-Pierre**, **Neil Watt** and **Richie Webb**.

The Tp wants to wish **LCpl 'Nobby' Noble** a safe tour in Iraq and **LCpl Greg Mesmer** and **Sig Fazakerley** a successful deployment to the Falklands. Finally, we must say a fond farewell to **LCpl 'Dorris' Day** on posting to RAF Henlow. We have heard rumours that they already have your Iraq OPTAG course booked!

RUGBY SEVENS

Early one Monday morning our resident Rugby guru, **Sgt Glenn Sunderland** announced that the Rugby 7s CO's Cup event was drawing nearer and he would be commencing trg sessions for the Sqn team straight away. Unfortunately, due to op commitments most of the Sqn's rugby players were currently deployed, so with much trepidation, the rest of us (who for the most part had never played rugby before) embarked on a week and a half of intensive trg. Finally the day of the competition dawned and our Team consisting of: **Maj Graham Pardew**, **Capt Alex Manley**, **Sgt Sunderland**, **Cpl Mikey Kervell**, **LCpls Jay Branchette**, **Dave Cracknell**, **Jay Emmanuel**, **Mikey Goddard**, **Sean Heys**, **Kieron Johnson** and **Dan Quai** as well as our band of travelling supporters/cheerleaders made our way down South to Salisbury Rugby Club to enter into battle. Our first match was against 243 Sig Sqn which we managed to win emphatically with 3 superb tries by **LCpl Emmanuel**; one of which was a sprint the full length of the pitch! However despite some very strong performances against the more experienced teams, we came second in our next 3 matches. After much blood, sweat and nearly some tears, the competition was over and we finished 4th. After the presentation, the team retired to the bar for some much needed liquid refreshment. A special mention must go to **Sgt Sunderland** for slipping over and injuring himself while taking a conversion after just 45 secs on the pitch.

Even with his imminent posting to 1 UK Civ Div, LCpl Goddard continues to display a fighting spirit

LIMA TROOP - *by LCpl Cracknell and Sig Martin*

OC	**Capt A Manley**
SSgt	**SSgt D Pope**

Once again, the last few months have been an extremely busy period for Lima Tp. As well as members of the Tp being deployed on OP TELIC 10, we have had to provide pers for NARO exs, a 4 Mech Bde MRX in Germany and a surge team deployment to Brunei. The Tp has also played an active part in various CO's Cup events. Looking ahead, the next few months look to be just as busy for us with forthcoming surge team deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the handover of NARO to Kilo Tp in January.

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj O Finnie**
SSM	**WO2 W Lilburn**

ALPHA TROOP - *Cpl Broderick*

OC	**Capt (Tfc) P Emsen**
SNCO	**SSgt D King**

EXERCISE JEBEL SAHARA 2007

Ex JEBEL SAHARA was a joint ex with the Royal Gibraltar Regt and the Moroccan Infantiere Parachute Regt which runs annually and is an ideal environment for trg for future ops in Afghanistan. The ex is well supported by an RAF Chinook and RN Helicopter Sqns and I was one of the lucky pers selected to form the UK Permanent Range Team (PRT), along with pers from a number of other units.

The journey started for us on arrival in Gibraltar on 12 October for a 4 day package on who the Royal Gibraltar Regt were, what Ex JEBEL SAHARA was all about, range briefings and familiarisation. I then deployed to Morocco as part of the advance party. The journey started with a minibus journey from Gibraltar to La Tarifa in Spain. Then after the 2 hr ferry across to Tangiers port we picked up the remainder of the white fleet and drove for 9 hrs to our destination, Camp Ram Ram, just outside of Marrakech. We put up our accn for the next 2 weeks and then took an early night before start the next morning. The routine for the remainder of the week included range recces and preparing the ranges. This consisted of digging the target pits, filling sandbags (many 100s of sandbags), clearing debris and also building FIBUA houses out of black hessian and wood. At the end of each day all the eqpt had to be removed, so that the locals would not steal it for their homes.

In the middle of the first week we managed to get into the outdoor market inside the main city of Marrakech. This was an experience in itself with snake charmers, monkeys in skirts, sheep heads and other bizarre things on display. On the arrival of the main body, the range package started for the Moroccan Parachute Regt and G Coy of the Royal Gibraltar Regt. All started with zeroing the wpn systems, 9mm, SA80, GPMG and UGL. The trg then progressed to pl night attacks and ambushes and finally to the pl in defence house, which was the climax of the live firing package. After the end of the live firing package, we were then given 2 days R&R. The whole of the UK PRT hired a villa in Marrakech and a few beers were enjoyed before our return journey. On behalf of the whole of the UK PRT, I would like to say a thank you to the Royal Gibraltar Regt for their hospitality during Ex JEBEL SAHARA. I strongly recommend volunteering for this ex in the future – it was a well run and very rewarding experience.

1 Bn Gibraltar Regt practise helicopter CASEVAC

SUPPORT TROOP - *by Sgt Knowles RLC*

OC	**Sgt Pullen**

Well it's another hectic period in the QM's Dept! Everyone is trying to get to grips with the total change round of the new establishment and the aftermath of Op BANNER ending. There has been a total restructure of the Dept from the top down, with **Maj (Retd) Don Holmes** cracking the whip as the 10 Sig Regt QM and **WO2 Mark Chapman** as the 10 Sig Regt RQMS. A special mention must go to our civilian staff for all their hard work and professionalism especially in a time of great need: **Mr Stan Banks**, **Mr Davey Stewart** and last but not least **Mr Henry McCullough**. We would like to welcome **LCpl Dave Wilkinson** and **Cpl Cheryl Smyth** to the fold and say a sad farewell to **LCpl 'Jabba' Hutt** on posting and to **Cpl Emma Standen** on posting and promotion to Sgt. They will be sadly missed. The Tp OC, **Sgt Nicki Pullen** is inconsolable over **Jabba** leaving.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Maloney**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Manley**

As is the norm there has been the typical overhaul of pers in and out of the Squadron. Our best wishes go to **Sgt Lindsey Stewart** who has moved on to the Panther Fielding Team at Ashchurch.

Yes, we've lost a valuable member of the Squadron but we have also had our fair share of newcomers. The Squadron would like to welcome **SSgt Gringo Inns,** who has taken up his role within 600 Troop. **Sgt Mary Hessell** who has recently arrived from 251 Signal Squadron and **Sig Anthony Luckman** arriving straight from the School of Excellence. The Sqn welcome all 3 of you and hope you enjoy your time at both Corsham and Wilton.

EXERCISE GLEN TREK 8 – 12 OCTOBER

October saw members of 243 Sig Sqn taking part in Ex GLEN TREK, a long distance mountain bike ride from Fort William to Inverness. The route followed the Great Glen Cycle Way and took in some spectacular Highland scenery.

The group assembled at 0750hrs in Wilton ready for the long drive to Fort William, which is situated on the north west of Scotland. After quickly packing the van, it was all aboard the mini bus and so began the 9 hr drive. Everything was going well until the mini bus's Tom Tom got lost and took them into the centre of Glasgow. After a brief tour of Scotland's biggest city, they were soon back on track and it was not long before the tpt limped into the Red Squirrel camp site. The mini bus had blown a back tire and one of the van's front wheel bearings had give up the ghost. We quickly set up the tents and called the RAC who responded quickly and told us that both vehs would be OK to drive but would have to wait until the morning to be fixed. With that bad news it was off down to the Clachaig Inn to drown our sorrows!

We woke the following morning to an overcast sky and a drizzle. The tents were quickly packed away and it was into the tpt for a tentative drive to the bike hire shop in Fort William. Those who needed bikes were sized up and given their trusty steeds for the duration and we were off. We got as far as the local supermarket before our first stop – a grand distance of half a mile! Once everyone had replenished, it was back on the bikes and so started GLEN TREK in earnest. The first part of the route was an easy cycle along the banks of the Caledonian Canal and after a slight detour, we were soon back on track and speeding along the canal. Morale was high and the route was flat, but this was all about to change as we came to the first small climb of the day. This was a relatively gentle climb but the group started to spread out. Once at the top we dropped down a narrow path onto the banks of Loch Lochy and followed the banks to Laggan Lochs.

By this time the sun had come out and the team had broken down onto 2 distinct groups. The first contained **Lt Foot**, **WO2(SSM) Manley**, **SSgt Stowell** and **Cpl Purvis** and the second contained **Q Turner**, **Sgt Mesmer**, **Mr Graham Harwood** and **Mr Nigel Mills.** Although leading for most of the day, the first group, after a quick look at the map, decided to take the easy way out and follow the banks of Loch Oich avoiding the very steep hill marked on the map. This lack of courage earned them the title of DNF (did not finish). The second group stopped at Invermorriston for a quick brew and some freshly baked scones, energy for the coming hills! As it turned out the hills were not as bad as expected and we all rolled into Fort Augustus for the night. We were accommodated in Morag's Lodge, a bunk house that had a bar and live music. After a brief on tomorrow's route, **Sgt Campbell** gave us the good news that it was going to get a lot harder with some big climbs, so it was off to bed slightly apprehensive.

We woke to the smell of a cooked breakfast and after a quick shower came down to the kitchen to find **SSgt Powell** and **LCpl Barr** cooking up a feast. Once this was demolished it was onto the bikes and we were off again. The day started with a climb that saw all riders pushing their bikes! Was this a sign of things to come? Yes it was! The morning saw us climbing the side of every mountain that came into view. We stopped for a break just short of the summit of Creag Dhearg and waited for the stragglers. Last up was **Sgt Mesmer** who, puffing and panting, cycled straight on and shouted that he was going to push on and would wait at the next track junction. After several litres of water and countless Mars Bars, we set off. It was a quick descent on the fire trails and we were soon at the next junction. The trail took a left while the main track continued on down the mountain to the side of the loch, a mile down the trail. We all stopped and after a quick recce it was obvious that **Sgt Mesmer** was not here! After some strong cursing, **Sgt Campbell** was back on his bike and screaming down the mountain looking for **Sgt Mesmer**. He found him right at the bottom of the mountain waiting patiently. When asked if he thought that he may have gone the wrong way, after we had all been briefed that we would be going nowhere near the road, he replied that he had a suspicion. After a brief exchange of words the lucky pair was cycling back up the mountain. From there it was an easy cycle into Drumnadrochit with the final 2 miles being a somewhat hairy descent of a road with some nasty corners. We lunched at Drumnadrochit and **Sgt Mesmer** decided that he had climbed enough hills for the day and jumped onto the tpt. We arranged to meet him at the top. So the worst climb of the ex began. We climbed from the side of Loch Ness to a height of 380m. This does not sound too bad but because of the gradient, we struggled to push our bikes up some of it. From the highest point of the route we had a quick blast through the Caiplich Moor to the turn of at Blackfold, where **Sgt Mesmer** was waiting, fully recovered. From here it was all down hill to the bike drop-off where the tpt picked us up and drove us to Cameron Barracks where we would be accommodated for the next 2 nights. There was a slight panic when **SSgt Powell** locked all the keys in one of the rooms but a bit of breaking (a window) and entering later we were all in, showered and ready for an "All you can eat Chinese". Everyone was tired from the 2 days cycling so after a few drinks it was off to bed.

Stopping for a well earned rest!

We woke the next morning to glorious sunshine and decided to treat ourselves to a fry up at the local supermarket. Then the group went its separate ways with **Sgt Campbell** and **Sig Andrew** kayaking from Loch Ness down the River Ness to Inverness. The rest of the group went for a tour of Culloden Battlefield and then did some souvenir shopping. As it was the last night it was decided to spend it in "Jonny Foxes" where there was a live band on. For those driving it was an early night but for the rest of us it was a chance to finally relax!

Our drive home took longer than expected with 2 serious crashes on the A9 and it was 1930hrs by the time we rolled back into Wilton. A good time was had by all and apart from **Sig Andrew** falling off his bike whenever he was stationary and some very sore bums there were no injuries.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Jez Toze**
SSM	**WO2 Jim McEwan**

1 TROOP

OC	**Capt Cameron**
SSgt	**SSgt Pengelly**

The Tp would like to say a fond farewell to **Capt Cliff Kamara** and welcome the following members, **Capt Emma Cameron** from 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt, **SSgt Paul Carrington** from SHAPE, **Sgt Lyndsey Melia** from 238 Sig Sqn, **Sgt Dave Clarke** from 16 Air Asslt Bde, **Cpls Hancox** and **Watty Watson** from 238 Sig Sqn and finally **LCpl Mel Walker** from 11 Sig Regt.

October began with a TRF ex in Bicester. One of the dets, consisting of **Cpl Andy Harvey** and **LCpl Stores Storey**, were called in before the sun came up on Monday morning to deploy to the Technical Holding Area. Everything went well despite the rain; spirits were not dampened in the slightest. At 3am the next morning the rest of the dets were called in to setup; awaiting further instructions.

Sgt Melia was heavily involved in fund raising for Pudsey Bear (Children in Need) and Tp members willingly contributed to get out of OC's battle PT. The Tp also had **Sig Matt Bignell** and **Sig James Talbot** brave the elements in toga fancy dress to collect money on the gate from other units entering camp.

The Tp is now looking forward to Ex WINTER TEARS and a well deserved Sqn Christmas function held at the Phoenix Club!

2 TROOP

OC	**Capt Alex Hodges**
SSgt	**SSgt Mark Bagstaff**

The last few months in the Tp have been very busy with the amalgamation of 238 and 251 Sig Sqns. A month long concentration period for all pers within the Sqn was conducted culminating in an ex. 2 Tp deployed its Immediate Response Team (IRT) supervised by **SSgt(YofS) Karl Knowles** which involved each det moving to various locations, including Thorney Island, Andover and Sandhurst. On arrival in location IRTs were to set and establish comms to EXCON, which was manned by **Lt James Snelgrove**. The purpose of this ex was to ensure that Tp pers were competent on all aspects of the IRT det.

We finally bade farewell to the Edwin det as it was handed over to 36 Sig Regt. The hand over and trg were conducted by **Sgt Mark O'Donovan** and **LCpl Jase Allard**. Tp pers were more than happy to see the back of Edwin, good luck 36 Sig Regt.

251 entered a team into the CO's Inter Sqn football competition. Representatives from the Tp included, **Cpl Randy Hussey**, **Cpl Mac McCreadie**, **LCpl Taff Thomas** and **Sig Dicko Dickinson**. Their performance on the pitch could only be described as world class; unfortunately the same standard was not present from the remaining members of the team. Overall the Sqn came second.

Also this month the CO's cup rugby took place. Tp members included **Capt Alex Hodges**, **Cpl McCreadie**, **LCpl Thomas** and **LCpl Hiorns**. 251 completed a clean sweep, defeating all the other Sqns in the Regt comprehensively.

The Tp bids farewell to the following people; **SSgt Rob Howe**, who leaves us to become the SQMS and **LCpl Taff Thomas**, who is leaving the Army. The Tp would like to welcome the following; **Sgt John Connolly**, from the Tech Workshops, **Cpl Dave Smith** from 7 Sig Regt and from London; **SSgt Baggy Bagstaff**, **Sgt Jim Brown**, **Cpl Errol Flynn**, **Cpl Randy Hussey**, **Cpl Becky Burnell**, **Sig 'ASBO' Hadlow** and **Sig Lydia Newton**.

638 (LONDON) SIGNAL TROOP

OC	**Lt J Snelgrove**
SSgt	**SSgt A Carter**

LONG DISTANCE CEREMONIALS

The Winter Ceremonial season is the first set of events the Tp has undertaken since the closure of 238 (London) Sig Sqn and the move to Aldershot. The Tp supported every LONDIST event in some capacity, ranging from 2 ECM Motorcycle outriders for the Festival of Remembrance to the full Tp of 29 for the State Opening of Parliament and everything in between.

This year has brought on some new challenges – namely how do you conduct Ceremonial Events when you are based 55 miles from the centre of London? Well the answer is simple, just get up much earlier. The season started on 22 October and ran for 3 weeks until the final event, the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on 11 November, with a typical day starting at 0500hrs and finishing at 2000hrs.

No mil op would be complete without detailed rehearsals and these are conducted prior to a ceremonial season and take the form of Ex MERCURY DAGGER. During this ex, all the troops involved with the events travel to London and conduct detailed recces of their locations, including Big Ben, the Palace of Westminster, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and then carry out rehearsals, some at 0300hrs so the roads can be closed!

The Tp says goodbye to **Sig Claire Hallewell** who leaves us for 1 (UK) Civ Div and a warm welcome to **Sig Nick Harmer** who joins us from Germany.

Finally the Sqn would like to wish all the guys on tour a Merry Christmas and your parcels are in the post.

LCpl Looker, the SO2 Ceremonial's Operator, awaits the arrival of HM the Queen outside the FCO

ECM (FP) SQN

OC	**Maj J Fraser**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Saunders**

The relief in place of Bdes in both Afghanistan and Iraq has lead to an increased workload for the Sqn in recent months. We have conducted pre-deployment to 4 Bde and 52 Bde and also have deployed 2 pers to Kuwait to conduct an in-theatre-trg package. Further to that 2 further pers are deployed in Kuwait to carry out the Warrior ECM re-fits. In addition to that the Op Sp Teams have continued to rotate at 4-month intervals in both theatres.

The Sqn has said goodbye to the following: **SSgt Trev Evans** to 71 Sig Regt, **SSgt Wilf Williams** to 16 Sig Regt, **Sgt Stu Dickeson** to RSS, **Sgt Reggie Perrin** to Chicksands, **Cpls Ben Fowler** and **Dave Gill** onto their Class 1 and **Sig Phil Heydon** to a new life as a civilian. We wish them all the best for the future.

In return MCM Division have graced us with the presence of the following- **SSgt Bri Mclean** from 7 Sig Regt, **SSgt Gaz West** from 1 Sqn, **Sgt Jim Wear** from 16 Air Asslt Bde, **Sgt Seymour** from ATR Lichfield, **Cpl Phil Browne** from 16 Sig Regt, **Cpl Ricky Curran** from 1 Div HQ & Sig Regt, **Cpl Huw Morris** from UKLF CSG, **LCpl Jamie Browne** from 7 Sig Regt and **LCpl Malcolm Royal** returning to the Corps after deciding civilian life was not for him.

EXERCISE PARA FINN - *LCpl Lancett*

After a long day of travelling we finally arrived at our destination, Hans Drei Muhlen, Wertach in the Allgau region of Southern Germany, to start the elementary pilot paragliding course. The first couple of days were a mix of theory lessons and some sunny afternoons on the trg slope, where **Sgt Mike Routledge** showed us all how to do it because he had flown many times before. By the end of the second day most us had managed to get airborne for a few seconds before floating back down to earth; some more gracefully than others!

I thought we'd be much higher than this!

Unfortunately over the rest of the course the weather kept us in the classroom to finish off the theory lessons and our chances of completing a mountain flight did not look good. We only managed one more day on the trg slope in the snow before it was time to pack up and leave.

Overall the group left the lodge having thoroughly enjoyed the short time we did have on the slopes and in the air, but a little disappointed with the weather. I guess that there is always next year!

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col JAG Langley**
RSM **WO1(RSM) L McGrail**

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Morrice**
SSM **WO2 M Bell**

EXERCISE OUSTON WARRIOR - *by Cpl Swanson*

Under the illustrious leadership of **Cpl 'Richy' Bastow**, Battleaxe Tp deployed as 1 Pl to Copehill Down in order to conduct Basic Close Combat trg.

On arrival at SPTA the usual range admin procedures were completed and the recruits were briefed on what to expect over the course of the next 2 days. Daylight had by now long gone and so the recruits were allowed to get their heads down.

Early o'clock Saturday and following the mandatory demos, the days trg began. This was a 3 stand round-robin rotating through house clearing on the cut down houses before moving onto the main buildings, veh patrol contact drills and patrolling. This was a steep learning curve for many of the recruits and a useful reminder for some of the upgraders who were acting as Sect Comds.

Sig Croker is rescued from the sewer

Either by sheer fluke or suspicious planning the rotations finished just in time for the Rugby World Cup final. The entire ex was paused in order to watch **SSgt Adams** swear at a projector, the South Africans, the English but mainly at the Referee.

With a travesty of justice witnessed by all, it was back to the delights of half built houses and fire fights. The final stage of the ex involved the 2 pls conducting sect level patrols practising the skills learnt during the day. Several misunderstandings with door frames and rubble later and the end was in sight. Following a spectacular attack by the enemy (5 of them against a fortified coy) and suitably violent counter attack, endex was called.

Following a quick wash up and 'scran' it was time to tackle the Maze and Confidence Course. Despite a few lost heads and tight squeezes, all made it round.

After a good ex all that remained was to hand over the ranges and return to camp to make the dirty wpns shiny again.

Ambush Left!

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC **Maj L Roddy**
SSM **WO2 M Tench**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BLANDFORD MILITARY TRAINING INSTRUCTOR - *by Cpl A Naylor*

From listening to guys and girls around the Corps before I arrived in Blandford, I thought I was in for one of the worst tours ever. Why? Because it's "Blandford", because Phase 2 soldiers are "frustrating" (putting it politely!), etc, etc... However arriving in Blandford, I was quickly introduced to the small trg team that I was to join including a Tp OC, Tp SSgt and 3 Tp Cpls. This was mirrored in the other Tp. Also within SHQ, we had a Sqn OC, 2IC Sqn and SSM.

Straight away I noticed it was a relaxed environment and that the banter was strong. My first task in Blandford was to become a course mentor for the new Communications Systems Operator Course that had come into place. This included educating new arrivals from Phase 1 into Sqn life at Blandford, personal admin and arrival interviews. Shortly after I went on my first Sqn ex which was a 'battlecamp' taking the form of a FIBUA package

organised solely by one of the other Tp Cpls and guided by the Tp SSgt. This made me instantly realise how much trust was given to the Cpls and how much support they received from the chain of command within the Sqn. The whole package once organised was delivered by the trg staff from my Tp using their qualifications, gained largely during their time at Blandford.

After this frantic start I thought life would slow down but it never did and soon I was asked to organise the Sqn AT weekend. To do this on your own is a daunting task but not as bad as it first seems and throughout the whole process the learning curve was steep but achievable. Before deploying I thought that to organise AT you should really have at least one qualification so I applied for Mountain Leader Trg and due to the priority of being at a trg unit, I was instantly loaded on the earliest available course. Before this post I had spent 2 years as a Tp Cpl over in Germany and had never been given such a large task. But that's how much respect you are given. Finally after all the planning, the weekend of the ex arrived and we ended up deploying with over 60 Phase 2 soldiers and 8 trg staff. We conducted Mountain Biking, Hill Walking and rock climbing; all of which was delivered by trg staff from the Sqn, bringing into play all of their qualifications which were gained whilst posted in Blandford.

I went on to organise a whole host of different things including charity events, functions and Sqn trg including sport and mil skills. All through the year there has been ample time to organise different events that I have been interested in. This has included parachuting and bungee jumping and the whole time I have received the backing of my peers and the chain of command within the Regt. Obviously I have also carried out many tp management tasks including G1 issues, ration returns, the posting of soldiers and hundred of other tasks; this job is a constant learning process. All the trg staff, especially the reporting chain, are in agreement that the job is much the same as a Sgt's job within the field army but in some ways on a larger scale.

I have kept this as short a possible but in actual fact I could write another 10 pages on life in Blandford and specifically as Tp Cpl. This job is secure and stable, with ample opportunity for self development and the development of Phase 2 soldiers, which has an effect on the entire Corps. If you wish to carry out any career courses then the opportunities at Blandford are massive. Even only having 3 x Tp Cpls in a large tp, between us we have managed to get qualified in the following: MLT, JSMEL(S), OASAA, BCDT, CBRN, Urban Ops Instructor, Counter Surveillance, SCLM, Parachuting, LFTT, Canoe Coach and ABA Boxing Coach to name a few.

This is a busy job with tp management, ongoing exs and sporting events. The long and short of it is that anyone keen to continue on the RD roster would find this the perfect post. The chance to gain qualifications and then put them to use is fantastic, the learning opportunities on the side of tp management, defence writing (including report writing) and all tasks associated with a Tp Sgt's job are covered.

However, most importantly, the feeling you get from seeing your guys do well, such as taking them through the Regt boxing and seeing them succeed, is unbeatable.

3 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Jennings**
SSM **WO2 Padfield**

HARROGATE CUP INTER SQUADRON BASKETBALL COMPETITION - *by Sig Reynolds*

Once again the friendly rivalry between the Sqns brought the best out in people, allowing them to perform to their limits and this competition was no exception. With a sports hall full of spectators, the teams fought for their Sqns' pride. The teams were a mixture of experienced and novice players but all were determined not to lose. It was the trg provided by **Cpls Copland** and **Allen** of 3 Sqn that allowed the male team to win and the mixed team to be placed second.

With this great performance, it was only right that 3 Sqn should take home the Harrogate Cup Basketball trophy. Commiserations to 1 and 2 Sqns!

RACE TO RUDESHEIM – SWANAGE CHARITY EVENT
- by Sig Younge

On Saturday 10 November, 3 Sqn travelled to Swanage for a charity event. This consisted of the two Tps of 3 Sqn (Ulster and Lightning Tps) racing the equivalent distance from Swanage to its twin town Rudesheim-am-Rhein, which is in Germany approximately 850km from Swanage.

Lt Col Langley, CO 11 Sig Regt, starting the 'Race to Rudesheim'

There were 3 methods of tpt the teams could use to cover the distance; running, cycling and rowing. The teams consisted of 20 Phase 2 Soldiers. As to be expected there was plenty of competition between the two Tps and in the end it was very close with Ulster Tp just managing to finish a few kms ahead of Lightning Tp.

The event attracted a lot of attention from the local people of Swanage and the Sqn managed to raise £840 on the day, which was added to the rest of the money raised for Ex HARROGATE REMEMBRANCE.

Ex HARROGATE REMEMBRANCE is a year long accumulative money raising ex in aid of the Swanage Branch of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. **Cpl 'Crypto' Redpath** has spent most of the year arranging the Sqn's involvement in various half marathons around the south of England and taking part in endurance competitions such as Tough Guy. All of these events were sponsored and all monies raised were collected and added to the final total during the 'Race to Rudesheim'.

On 13 December, 2 cheques will be presented, one to the Swanage Steam Railway for £439.05, to help restore the funeral carriage of the late **Sir Winston Churchill**. The second cheque for £3,052.03 will be presented to the Swanage branch of the Royal British Legion in aid of the Poppy Appeal.

The Sqn would like to extend a very big thank you to **Cpl Lee Redpath**, **Cpl Jay Copland** and all members of 3 Sqn who took part in any of the events during this exercise, well done!

EXERCISE HARROGATE DIAMOND 3 - *by Cpl Smith*

It was a cold day on the morning of Monday 19 November and it was also the start of the permanent staff 3 day AT package that was being run by Lightning Tp's OC, **WO1 Dougie Icke**.

The group consisted of **Maj Jack Jennings**, **Capt David Palmer**, **WO1 Gaz Dixon**, **WO1 Dougie Icke**, **WO2 Guy Padfield**, **SSgt Steve Davis**, **Cpls Grant Shipley**, **Redders Redpath** and **Stevey Blake**.

Day 1 consisted of a nice easy bike ride, as **WO1 Icke** would put it! The drop off point was just outside Petersfield and after a gruelling 6 hrs cycling and non stop moaning from the **Redpath** we finally made it to the first camp site. The group were thankful that all of the tents were already put up by **Cpl Smudge Smith** who was running with the admin. After having a well earned shower and letting all the aching bodies rest for a bit, it was time for a nice pub meal with a couple of pints and then bed.

Day 2 reveille was 0600hrs and it was another cold morning but the 'boiley' in the bags soon went on and everyone was eager to start with the hill walking that was ahead of us.

WO1 Icke again said that it was going to be a nice easy walk – if looks could kill, Lightning Tp OC would be no more! Nevertheless, true to his word this time it was a very enjoyable walk, and everyone enjoyed the sites and scenery. The day ended at a camp site behind a pub in Dyke Hill which is just outside of Brighton City.

True to form the morning of Day 3 was typical Baltic weather but everyone's sprits were high as we were about to pack up and go paint balling. When we arrived we split ourselves up into 2 teams – Juniors against Seniors.

It soon became apparent that if you had a badge on your chest, you must be resistant to being shot. However that did not deter the Junior ranks as **Cpls Shipley** and **Smith** had great fun tag teaming the **SSM Padfield** until he had tears in his eyes – all in all it was a great morning.

We then proceeded to the Brighton TA Camp where we were going to stay the night. After a spot of sight seeing around Brighton Pier we decided to paint the town red but by 2300hrs, we were all tucked up in bed ready for our trip home.

REMEMBRANCE PARADE 2007 - *SSgt Davies*

On Sunday 11 November, 2007, 3 Sqn's Remembrance parade took place in Swanage. The day started well with a shake out run at 0900hrs; this warmed up the muscles and shook out the cobwebs. At 1100hrs the whole Sqn paraded to observe the 2 mins silence. At 1230hrs the Sqn were loaded onto the coaches and departed for the town of Swanage. Once we arrived in Swanage, we listened to a heartfelt reading of the 'Unknown Soldier' by **Mr Frank Roberts**, who was once a Tp Comd of Ulster Tp in 3 Sqn. The SSM then brought the Sqn to order and marched them to the start point of the parade. At 1430hrs the parade marshal from the Royal British Legion (RBL) brought the parade to attention and marched the parade to the church. After a very emotional Last Post was sounded the Sqn formed up to march to the Cenotaph. The service at the Cenotaph was attended by the RBL, the Mayor, 3 Sqn and many others. During the service, **Sig Battye**, the youngest soldier, performed the laying of the wreath on behalf of 11 Sig Regt.

Sig Battye, the youngest soldier, after laying the wreath

The last phase of the parade was for the Sqn to march through the Town of Swanage, under the control of the local police force.

The Sqn marched all the way through to the RBL. On arrival at the Legion the Sqn received a hearty welcome of pie and chips and a few beers. Then came a speech from the Chairman of the Legion and **Mr Joe Clark** who thanked us for attending their parade. This was swiftly followed by the chance to mingle with all the 'Old Boys' and listening to the war stories they had to tell. Some people met with old faces they met during the Remembrance Parade in 2006, namely **Cpl 'Jim' Allen**.

Our next visit to the Swanage branch of the RBL will be on the 13 December 07, to present them with the monies raised throughout the year from various charity events; mostly organised by **Cpl 'Crypto' Redpath**. This year the total is just over £3,000!

Mr Frank Roberts reading the story of the 'Unknown Soldier'

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

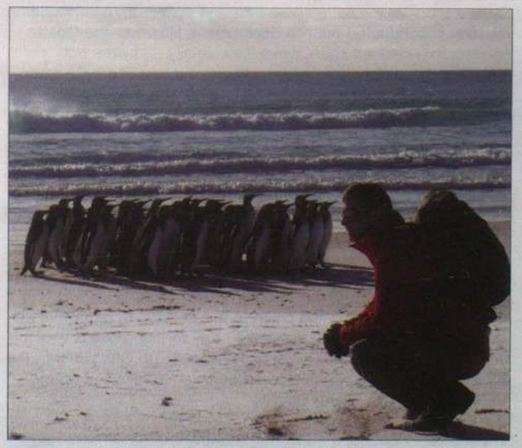
CO **Lt Col TJ Carmichael**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DR Taylor**

ASSOCIATION OF OLD CROWS NATO UNIT AWARD

14 Sig Regt (EW) was selected alongside its Danish EW counterpart as recipients of the Association of Old Crows (AOC) NATO Unit Award for 2007. This prestigious award was presented as recognition for exceptional op achievements and contributions to Electronic Warfare and Information Operations and bears testimony to the op success by deployed elements of the Regt on Op HERRICK throughout 2006 and 2007. Additionally, the UK Chapter of the AOC awarded the Regt with a plaque and cheque for £500. The money will be paid into the Regt memorial fund and used to assist with refurbishing the EW Trg Wing, which will be named in memory of **Sgt Baz Keen**, who was killed in action on July 27 this year, while deployed in sp of Op CHAKUSH in the Upper Gareshk Valley. Thus far, EW sp has been provided by 226 Sig Sqn for Op HERRICK 4, 245 Sig Sqn for Op HERRICK 6, while 237 Sig Sqn remain deployed in sp of 52 Bde on Op HERRICK 7. We should also acknowledge the deployment of our sister unit, Y Sqn RM on Op HERRICK 5, who have also contributed significantly to the EW effort. The award was presented at the 44th Annual AOC International Symposium and Convention on Monday 29 October at the Caribe Royale Resort and Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida and collected in person by **Maj Aitken**,OC 245 and **WO1(YofS(EW)) O'Neill**, Regt Ops WO – previously Ops WO 245.

A TROOPIE IN THE FALKLANDS

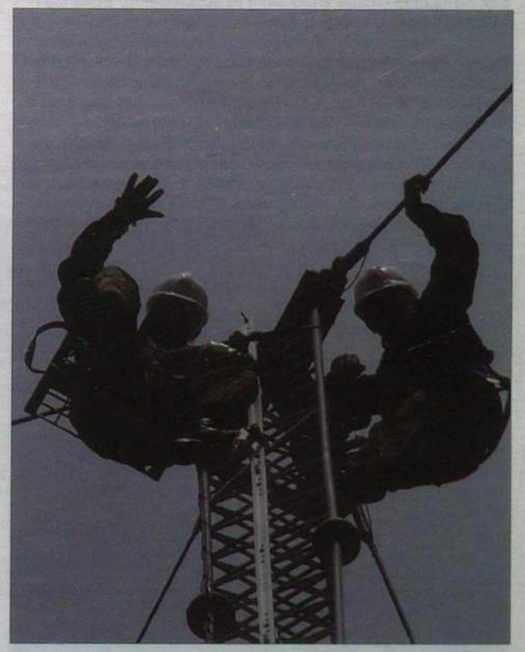
Two months into my first Tp command, I had just got to grips with everything when my OC, **Maj Cole**, bounced up to me at lunch with that grin on his face that all young Troopies dread (the one that says "Guess what, your dicked!") and said to me "**Chris**, you've pissed me off so much today I'm sending you to the Falklands." The next day the orders were in front of me (quick work, I still have yet to find out what I did wrong but it must have been bad!) and 3 weeks later I was getting off the plane at Mount Pleasant Airfield (MPA) to the notorious Falklands winter.



Obligatory penguin shot!

Meeting me with a big smile on her face was my predecessor **Capt Lucy Potter**, eager to hand over the reigns of JCUFI's C Tp to me so she could get home for a stint of well earned leave. First stop on the handover was the Falkland Islands' premier Friday night venue: 'Sharkes', the JCUFI Bar. Throughout my tour I would find myself fined a ring of the bell on a weekly basis, early on for legitimate misdemeanours but my bell ringing antics soon became a regular fixture of Friday nights just because.

The handover was soon complete and I finally had time to sit back and look at what was now mine and was initially shocked at how C Tp was unlike anything I had ever been prepared for. It consisted of about 50 pers, a third Army, third RAF and third Navy, split into 4 sections: Comms Maint and Installation Sect – Royal Signals Inst Techs; IT Sect – RAF TG4 and one Royal Signals IS Eng; Aerial Maintenance Sect – RAF Aerial Riggers and a Navy Commcen. Instead of a Tp SSgt, I had a Navy CPO! I had a lot of learning to do, especially about the other Services and couldn't have got into the job so quickly without the sp of an unparalleled team of Seniors from all 3 Services, most notable amongst them my 'Chief': **CPO 'Razor' Blades** for trying (and failing) to educate me in the black magic ways of the Navy, but mention also has to go out to **Sgt Steve Baynton**, the greenest man in the RAF, **Sgt Wayne Eves**, who pretty much lives in the Falklands, knows everybody and has extended his tour to make it 4½ years and **Sgt Aidi Bennett** who got banished from Ascension Island – we're still not sure why! It soon became apparent that most of the day to day running of the Tp just happened, thanks to these Seniors and all I needed to worry about was the things that the rest of the units in Theatre saw, for example projects like networking the local primary school and fortifying security and coordinating upgrades of the welfare computer network. I soon became very aware of the fact that I was responsible for the IT on everybody's desk, especially when 4 days from the end of my tour the whole network collapsed. The result: all eyes at all levels on me!



Cpl Mickey Brogan and Lt Chris Goslin at the top of a 58m mast

The job was always a challenge but I soon settled into it and began to work out the whole Tri-Service thing. There is definitely

a fine line to tread when you command a Tri-Service unit and when you step either side of it you risk ignoring the needs and ways of working of a third or two thirds of your Tp. Without a doubt, the other services are different but I learned that they are not necessarily always wrong and I have certainly taken a lot away from my experience in the Falklands as a comd.

On my departure from 14 Sig Regt, I was receiving mixed messages from those around me. Those that had never been were telling me that they felt really sorry for me that I was being abandoned to this bleak little outpost in the South Atlantic. Those that had been there were telling me what a great time I was in for. Having now been there I am definitely in the latter camp. The unit social scene was fantastic, revolving around the aforementioned Friday nights which started at lunch time for the USM, **WO2 Rob Luke**, as he would strut up and down the corridors singing "Tonight is Sharkies night, it's Sharkies night tonight" or something equally as imaginative and at 1400hrs for the rest of us, as the 2IC, **Flt Lt Helen Wood**, would call "Cake Friday" which was a get together of the comd team plus invited guests to… you guessed it, eat cake on Friday! What a great idea, although a little too RAF for some of the Army contingent. Added to the Friday night's travelling the bars of MPA were regular weekends in Stanley starting with after work drinks on Saturday lunchtime in the Victory Bar and finishing in "The Trough", a strange venue where, to the best of my recollection, you pay £4 for the pleasure of entering a building with a crate of pre purchased booze under your arm (none is sold inside) and "dance" the night away to the classic rock of the slightly ageing "Fighting Pig Band". Again a special mention has to go to our Visits Clerk, **LCpl Emma Bradley** for documenting these trips, seeming to be everywhere at once with her damn camera, and to **SSgt Jim 'Beast' Mackay** for his phenomenal karaoke and air guitar efforts.

However, please do not assume that drinking is all there is to do in the Falklands. There were plenty of other ways to fill the time. The facilities on MPA are top quality, with a state of the art gym and swimming pool, various sports and AT clubs covering everything from circuits every night to scuba diving, a paintball arena and a go kart track to name but a few.

There were also regular helicopter trips out to the more remote islands for the obligatory penguin photos, the chance for flights in the Hercules when it goes out for a bit of a low level play or in a Tornado F3 for those lucky few and of course, battlefield tours of the major battlefields from the 1982 conflict. Being the tour guide on the Mt Tumbledown tour was one of my secondary duties and an extremely humbling experience when I took veterans back to the ground they fought over 25 years ago. As the mil vehs were made available on weekends for "Bimbling", many of the tourist locations were just a 45 min drive away for anybody. As I always said to the new arrivals to the Tp; if you are bored in the Falklands, it's your own fault.

2 Scots Guards Memorial on top of Mt Tumbledown with Stanley in the background. SSgt Jim Mackay, WO2 Rob Luke, CPO 'Razor' Blades, Capt Chris Quinn, Capt Chris Gill, Lt Chris Goslin and Flt Lt Pete Norman

I hope, in some small way, I have dispelled a few myths about the Falklands, in that it isn't a bleak and dull little outpost in the South Atlantic to be dreaded as a posting. My experiences out there should alleviate the worries of those of you due a tour to JCUFI. It is, without a doubt, one of the most interesting, diverse and unique experiences in the Corps. After 4 months, I came away with so much more experience than I could have possibly gained in Regt, a number of very good friends; now spread back around the Corps and the other Services and the Sharkies bell named after me!

Where else could I have commanded Army, Navy, and RAF personnel, 2 civilians and 1 sheep (another story perhaps), put nearly £300 behind the bar in fines and had as much responsibility as I did, only 3 months out of trg. A fantastic tour and I envy all those going out to the Falklands in the near future, especially those lucky young officers who will comd C Tp, enjoy.

EXERCISE DRAGON'S TALON 2007

Ex DRAGON'S TALON 2007 was the main Regtl ex for 2007. Its main aim was to prepare 226 Sig Sqn for its forthcoming tour to Op HERRICK. As part of this, a Danish EW Sqn and US Army det joined the trg as they will be fighting alongside 226 Sig Sqn in Afghanistan next year.

THE ODETTE PLATFORMS OF 226 SIGNAL SQUADRON GROUP - *by LCpl Johnstone*

On 19 November, 2 Odette platforms (one from 226 and one from 237 Sqn) and a Troop Command and Analysis Detachment (TCAD) deployed to Nesscliffe as part of the annual Regtl Ex. The dets were manned by a mixture of pers from 14 Sig Regt's field sqns with individuals ranging in experience across each. At Nesscliffe, the platforms were plugged up and crews enjoyed a familiarisation period in a relaxed atmosphere prior to the ex proper that started on 21 November on Sennybridge trg area.

The morning of the 21st was a grey one but neither excessively cold or wet. Soldiers were visibly disappointed at the absence of Sennybridge's notorious climatic adversity. However, once in location, the crews of the Odette platforms set to work eagerly setting up the dets that were to be their home for the next 10 or so days.

By all accounts, the set up was slick and paid testament to the rehearsals conducted prior to deployment. However the Odette sensors experienced some difficulties initially and were not immediately operational. As a result, gaining intercepts via these means was initially rather slow and analysts were reliant on intelligence gathered by the Light Electronic Warfare Team (LEWT) patrols that were having some success using hand scanners.

Once the technical problems with Odette were rectified, operators and interpreters alike worked tirelessly in their analysis of the Pashtun, Arabic and English dialogue they intercepted. Significant intercepts and signals of interest were duly fired up to TCAD via Bowman.

After further analysis was conducted there, intelligence was disseminated further up the chain to the BEWCC in order that an intelligence picture could be formed. Key to this process was the timely and accurate dissemination of Tactical Tip Offs (TTO) to the BEWCC from where warning could be given to relevant ground forces of imminent enemy activity.

In the post ex debrief it transpired that the Odette sensors had performed well with regards to the amount of material intercepted. This was further reinforced by the accuracy of the intelligence summaries and network diagrams that were produced on its foundation. Suggestions for improvement included a more free flow of information and intelligence up, down and across the comd chain and the need for diligent eqpt care was stressed.

THE VIEW FROM THE OPFOR - *by Sgt Owens*

Normally the job of being the enemy on a Regtl Ex is given to untrained soldiers borrowed from a Trg Regt or the odds and sods, not gainfully employed by field Sqns. For its recent Regtl ex, 14 Sig Regt decided to break with tradition and use soldiers only recently returned from ops in order to make the most of their hard won experience. 245 Sig Sqn was to put into the field some of its most experienced soldiers, dressing in the fashion of the moment for OPFOR on ex, i.e. desert combats and shemaghs.

We deployed with the balance of the Regt to Sennybridge trg area in the dying days of November. In common with most trg areas, the weather gods in charge of Sennybridge had decided that there was not to be clement weather during the ex and we were greeted with a light dusting of snow and freezing temperatures. Our first task was to set up our home in the form of 9 x 9 tents. Although the Sqn OC, **Maj Aitken** decided that this wasn't good enough for him and he went with the old school solution of a bivy in the tree line. This was possibly a good idea as 2 days later, we decamped to a barn because heavy rain had turned the floor of our tents into something resembling the Somme.

Our first real job was an attack on a patrol from Echelon. However HQ Sqn implemented a deception plan by not putting out any patrols. **Cpl Button's** team decided to attack the Echelon complex instead, catching them completely by surprise and raising cries of complaint. Apparently the pers from HQ Sqn lacked our abilities and experience and we were told to go easy on them in future. During the next 10 days of the ex, the OPFOR of 245 Sig Sqn put in some excellent attacks against the rest of the Regt, expending massive amounts of blank, pyro and smoke. Strangely though, most of the time our patrols had a smoke grenade or two to toss into TCAD on the way back to EXCON.

BEWCC was thoroughly penetrated early in the ex and we managed to sneak a cardboard sign into their portaloos as evidence of their lax security. This led to dire threats against the OPFOR and a tightening of security. So much so, that a later attack against BEWCC resulted in the capture of **LCpls Tim Kerr** and **Tommy Tucker**. BEWCC utilised the unusual interrogation technique of forcing them to drink port in an effort to break their will, but they held out and were released none the worse for wear in the morning. Another notable capture was of the Regtl trg team who were helping out the OPFOR with the placement of larger items of pyro. Attached to the ex was a team from the Danish Army, complete with excellent night vision eqpt for each and every soldier. When a night infiltration was attempted against the Danes, this proved to be an ex in futility, although the trg team did get to see what the cream of Scandinavian electronics firms could produce in terms of NVGs.

OPFOR caught in Danish night sights

Overall the input that the OPFOR of 245 put in was well received. Although sometimes exasperated by constant attacks, Ex DRAGONS TALON exercised the rest of the Regt in their force protection abilities and ensured the experience of 245 Sig Sqn was passed on.

640 SIGNAL TROOP CAVING EXPEDITION - *by Lt D Atkinson*

640 Sig Tp now have 12 proficient cavers thanks to a course at Rippon. The 8 hour drive was well worth it as the intrepid few got stuck straight in. Before tackling Single Rope Techniques (SRT), the group were introduced to South Manchester cave. Throughout the week, the ante was upped to 40ft descents and ascents, culminating in a trip through Alum Pot.

The cohesion of the troop was threatened when a splinter group began to form under **Sgt Harle** and **Sig Pike** and **LCpl K-Dog** decided to go on their own little exploration one evening. Thankfully, inspired by the boss's dancing, the team stayed tight and all finished in one piece.

A special mention should go to **Cpl Feeney** for doing the lion's share of the ground-work. All those on the course can now go caving by themselves in groups of 3 or more and are all proficient in the SRT dance.

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col JM Hodges**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

As this edition of *The Wire* goes to print, a significant element of the Regt is about to fly to Afghanistan. It feels like only yesterday that the final elements of 16 Sig Regt boarded a C130 in Kabul to bring them back from a very successful tour as part of the ISAF mission. Now, with HERRICK 8 almost upon us, preparations are once again being made to ensure that the high quality of service people have come to expect from us is delivered in theatre. With the build-up to deployment in full swing, people have still managed to find the time to mount numerous expeds and compete in a wide range of sporting events, including a significant football result against 7 Sig Regt. The ARRC ex season saw us reaffirm our reputation as experts in the use of the recently procured Richelieu eqpt, and the Bde restructuring plan saw the rebirth of 252 Sqn and a steady trickle of new pers. 2008 presents the challenges of a difficult op tour, the continued restructuring process and the introduction of Bowman. These are challenges which the Regt will meet and overcome with its usual 'can-do' attitude.

JIMMY ENTERS THE OFFICERS MESS AT ST JAMES'S PALACE

To commemorate 16 Sig Regt's recent tour of Public Duties in London, a silver ornament of Mercury was commissioned by the officers who participated. The finished product has been donated to the Guards' Mess, St James's Palace following in the tradition of officers from other units who have had the honour of being guests there and have presented a piece of silver.

"It was a great privilege to have been an officer of The Queen's Guard and we really enjoyed the time we spent at St James's Palace," said **Maj Bill Anderson**, OC Public Duties Sqn. "The silver 'Jimmy' marks this special experience and will no doubt be placed at the table whenever Royal Signals units visit the Mess in the future."

Lt Col Hodges presents a silver 'Jimmy' to Lt Col Toby Gray, the Brigade Major of London District as GSM WO1 Billy Mott looks on

OP HERRICK FORCE GENERATION
- by LCpl Melvin and LCpl Levitt

Operational Training Advisory Group (OPTAG) came to Elmpt Station on a freezing cold November morning to provide essential pre-deployment trg. As well as 16 Sig Regt pers, soldiers from units all over Germany turned up to learn about the latest developments in tactics and eqpt and about where we were going and what we are going there to do.

The course started off with an introduction to Afghanistan. We looked at the terrain and weather there and what the people were like. Hot and sandy was the general impression. We then moved on to how Afghans perceive the British Army in their country. This was done by an Afghani guest speaker who told us about the completely different characteristics of the people in the north and the people in the south. He explained such things as if you were to be offered a drink by an Afghani civilian then you had to take it. You don't necessarily have to drink it but if you refuse it, they may take offence as this is very rude in their culture. He said how people there could be nice one day offering you drinks or information but you could walk past the exact same person the next day and they would ignore you completely, if they were with their tribal group. He explained about their views on women and on children and how the people in the north are generally friendlier towards us than those in the south.

We then moved on to why the Army was there, what we were doing to support the people and how we planned to achieve our aim. Other briefings consisted of personal health, the law and new eqpt. I hate to say it but the most entertaining brief came at the end by an RAF Officer. There were plenty of jokes about British soldiers doing silly things like shining laser lights in pilots' eyes to try and get them to land. However, through the giggles of the presentation he had an important point about how to get off and on different helicopters, without losing your head and how to mark out a landing zone.

Next morning was an early start again and a nice cold brisk walk onto the airfield where a series of stands had been set up. This was definitely a day to be wearing softies and gloves as it was freezing. We were split into groups moving from one stand to another. The first brief covered what to do if you took a prisoner; how to treat them and what paperwork had to be done. There was also an extensive brief on mines and explosives, including a demonstration on how you would deal with finding yourself in the middle of a minefield.

There was another legal brief, this time by an RMP Sgt, who used ex troops to give examples of what was and wasn't allowed under our rules of engagement. He also gave us the life saving card "Guidance for Opening Fire for Service Personnel Authorised to Carry Arms and Ammunition on Duty". He said how important this was and how important it was to keep the card on you.

The guest Afghanis were also there giving a more detailed talk on how to interact with the Afghan people and handing out translation booklets. We learnt that in Pashtu saying hello is 'salaamu alaikum'.

At one stand we got our hands on some different types of wpns. For some it was the first time they had held AK47s, pistols and rocket propelled grenade launchers. We received a brief on each wpn and were shown how to make safe the most common enemy wpns.

There was another eqpt brief and a refresher on convoy drills before the medics gave us our final lesson on Battlefield First Aid. We were shown how to apply a tourniquet, how to use the new field dressings and were shown the volcanic ash and shellfish products that can stop arterial bleeding. Although it had been another long day it was very interesting and we all benefited from it. It eased some people's minds about going out to theatre and gave us some hands-on experience with new kit and skills.

LEICESTER TROPHY

The Leicester Trophy is an annual inter-sqn sporting competition held by 16 Sig Regt. It dates back over 27 years to when the Regt was based in Krefeld, the German sister city of Leicester. Although the Regt is now located in Elmpt, it is still proud of its link with the city of Leicester and the competition is still very much an important part of the Regtl calendar. On occasions, the Mayor of Leicester has visited Germany to present the trophy to the winning Sqn.

Over the course of the year, the Sqns have competed across a range of events, the most recent being football and cross-country. With all the results collated, 230 Sqn were declared this year's champions and **LCpl Swales** received the trophy from **Lt Col Hodges** on behalf of his Sqn.

In the final event, **Sig Usher** completed the 11km male course in the fastest time, whilst **Pte Astley** finished first over the 6km female course.

LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT

Cpl Kay and **Cpl Pursglove** were recently decorated for the commitment and discipline they have shown throughout their careers to date. They were both presented with a Long Service and Good Conduct medal confirming that they are now considered masters at the art of not getting caught. The awards were presented to them by Comd RESG, **Brig Wolsey CBE** on 9 November.

Cpl Kay receives his medal from Brig Wolsey

EXERCISE ARRCADE FUSION - *by Sig Hankey*

After many weeks of preparation, members of NETCEN Tp from the newly reformed 252 Sqn lined up outside Regtl MT for a final veh inspection. All the kit had been loaded and everybody was ready to deploy on Ex ARRCADE FUSION. After several convoy briefs we set off for Sennelager, with **Sig Brady** leading the way. With only a few miles on the clock we took our first casualties with **Sgt Sheath** and **Sig Hankey** breaking down, proving that no plan survives first contact with a Bedford 4-tonner.

After a cold and bumpy journey, most of the Tp finally arrived at Depot 90, Sennelager where we would live and work for the best part of a month. As practised, we proceeded with our initial set up, providing a NETCEN light facility as soon as possible, so that initial engineering work could be completed under the Regtl FofS.

The initial build was completed in record time with the Tp now having mastered the construction of Stonebridge tents and being familiar and practiced with the NETCEN layout. The Richelieu and IS kit stayed in the back of the BSVs and the services were remoted out to the staff in their Stonebridge tent by installation technicians **LCpls Orr** and **Goodgame**.

Once **Cpl Worthington** and **SSgt Pavier** had engineered in links across all the domains, the NETCEN and BSG staff had settled in and **Cpl Howe** and **Sig Lutner** had ironed out the kinks on the IS side of things, we all got into routine. Off duty, the Tp made time for football, running and visiting the gym, whilst **SSgt Pavier** pursued his more unusual hobby of roller skiing. The excellent food provided by the ARRC Sp Bn chefs meant that these activities were necessary to work off all those calories.

The routine saw most of the work fall to the technicians and IS operators, who had to monitor the network 24 hrs a day. The electricians also had their work cut out with numerous power problems for which an improvised solution was eventually found by **Cpl Winter**. The operators had their first chance to use the AirMux SHF eqpt to try and get a link in over 6kms to where the Danish Div was based. However the weather and terrain meant that we were unsuccessful.

Ex ARRCADE FUSION provided an excellent opportunity for the new Tp to bond and to become even better versed with the new eqpt and Point of Presence set-up. 252 Sqn had completed their first major tasking since reforming and everybody returned to camp having learned a lot but thankful to be escaping the bitter cold and mud of Depot 90, Sennelager.

PARACHUTING AT NETHERAVON - *by LCpl Swales*

Nine members of the Regt recently made the long trek back to UK to go skydiving at Netheravon Parachute Centre. The whole group were excited and fearless at the prospect until the morning the course started. Over breakfast nerves started to show but the long walk from the cookhouse to the centre helped to calm people down.

Once we arrived at the drop zone, we received our eqpt and the trg began. There were several parts to the trg, ranging from exiting the plane to canopy control. During the ground trg, **LCpl Mills** was asked to get into the door of the mock-up plane and practise her exit technique. As the camera was rolling, she climbed into the trg aid only to realise that she was facing the wrong way! This sent the rest of her group into uncontrollable laughter. This was just the start. The next morning we completed the ground trg required before we were allowed anywhere near the big bad sky.

The first jump was now imminent and the tension was rising as we waited nervously for the cloud cover to disperse. Eventually by the evening, we were given the nod and we began to line up in our lift order. The nerves peaked as we approached the plane having been told that once we got on it there was no turning back.

I ended up at the back of the plane and could feel my heart almost stop as the door closed and we began to taxi along the airstrip. The plane took off and we began to climb. As we reached 3500ft the door was opened and the light went green. You could cut the tension with a knife. The first few people exited and my moment was getting ever closer. As I looked up I saw **LCpl Joly** entering the doorway. He was the first member of 16 Sig Regt to leave the aircraft. Once he jumped, the rest of us followed him out. Despite the absolute fear we all felt at the time, once we were out of the plane the experience was immense.

Everybody in our group had the determination and courage to jump, which the instructors assured us was a fantastic achievement. It was certainly an experience none of us will forget in a hurry...except maybe for **Sig Henderson**. The reason for this is because on her third jump she managed to black out. She ended up landing 6 miles away from the drop zone! However, to her credit this did not faze her at all and she went on to do a tandem jump from a massive 12000ft.

As the course progressed people improved significantly, becoming far more confident and honing their technique. But each jump was proving just as hard as the first. The initial fear felt in the door of the plane thousands of feet above the ground was not going away. During the 2nd week there was a lot of waiting at the drop zone due to bad weather and moral was beginning to drop until we eventually got back in the plane. On that next jump we witnessed **LCpl Joly** hit the side of the aircraft as he jumped. Everybody just burst into laughter as he was sent spinning down to earth!

After each jump we were assessed by the instructors who had recorded our jumps. They then played them back to us once we were safely back on the ground. Depending on how well we had done, they let us progress to the next level or made us repeat the same jump until our technique was perfect. Towards the end of the course, 3 of us had done 2 perfect jumps with a dummy pull and needed one more to progress from static line to freefall. After our 3rd attempt we went into the briefing room. The instructor came into the room and we watched our jumps. We were overjoyed when he gave all 3 of us a perfect, meaning that we could progress to freefall.

This course was by far the best thing any of us had ever done in our careers but sadly, like everything, it had to come to an end. We ended it with a BBQ and a few beers and on the following day we made our long journey back to Germany with everyone still in one piece.

The team at the Parachute Centre

ELMPT STATION FOOTBALL DERBY - *by Sig Werrett*

The fiercely contested game between Elmpt Station rivals, 16 and 7 Sig Regts was always going to be a passionate affair. The two Regts, being best friends and greatest rivals, have often used this football derby to rally soldiers behind their respective units.

Traditionally Seven have fielded one of the strongest sides throughout the Corps and indeed the Army and have dominated this fixture for years. But with both teams somewhat changed since the last time they met, nobody was quite sure what to expect this time round. **SSM Kidd** had spent the last month trg up Sixteen's team from scratch and they took to the pitch with an air of confidence and expectation that had not been seen for a long time.

After a delayed kick off due to the groundsmen having marked up the wrong pitch, the teams eventually took to the field. The game started off at a hectic pace with a number of unforced errors coming from both teams. Before the game had a chance to settle down, an early goal came from the speedy **Sig Smith**. He added a second minutes later leaving a shell-shocked Seven running back to the centre circle with the ball.

Seven were in awe, finding themselves in this unfamiliar position so early on.

Some fine saves from **SSM McBean** ensured that Sixteen went into the half-time break with a comfortable 2 – 0 lead. The second half saw a number of changes from both teams, the result being a far more balanced display. Despite some fierce attacking play from Seven, Sixteen were able to hold on to the lead until late on into the match. Eventually the practically invincible Sixteen goalkeeper, **SSM McBean** was beaten to make the score 2 – 1.

It only emerged later that **SSM McBean** was playing on, in spite of suffering severe ligament damage that will see him sidelined for the best part of a year. As the game concluded, a massive cheer went up from the winners who had eventually taken 7 Sig Regt's long held crown away.

SSgt Herbert, Cpl Orr; Cpl Allan, Mrs Georgie Makepeace, Cpl Lower; Tina Pringle, Mr Duncan Phillips and Mrs Poppa at Javelin Barracks

Volunteer organisers Tina Pringle, Debbie Perry, Teresa Valance and Cathy Sheath (in white t-shirts) with other members of 'Little Pickles' childcare who raised €130 at their 'Big Brew'

SSAFA FUNDRAISING

A plethora of fundraising activity swept across the Regt recently as various groups on camp tried their best to raise money for SSAFA.

The 'Big Brew' charity drive has been extremely successful with no pocket left unplundered across the entire Station.

The Sgts Mess held a Big Breakfast to raise money, while staff and mums at Little Pickles Nursery sold cakes to name just a couple of the fundraisers that took place.

21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)

CO **Lt Col DA Craft**
RSM **WO1(RSM) S Mayell**

The Regtl Ops Cell remains the hub of activity it should be, although minus some of its normal characters for much of the time as Ops and various courses take their toll. The main focus through this period has been the first of our regular Regtl exs since Bowmanisation. Much autonomy was given to the Sqns as to how they ran their exs and as such 3 separate articles are included below to cover the various experiences people had whilst deployed. Additionally, the JAMES implementation team are here to complete the suite of software and hardware rollouts to hit the Regt this year and in common with many other units, we look forward to 2008 as the year we catch up with the 21st century!

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

OC **Maj Grant Johnston**
SSM **WO2 Mark Pollock**

HQ Sqn plods on and we move into the silly season. Looking back, it's been a very busy period for us. Since summer leave finished, we've had various supporting roles to MRX exs for the Bdes prior to deployment and now have JAMES implementation rolling on into the New Year. Various soldiers have been trawled for deployments and others have returned for extended POTL over the New Year.

Looking back at 2007, the OC would like to thank all our soldiers for their hard work and dedication in times that can be and have been very frustrating with the emergence of so many new systems and processes. He hopes that having had a relaxing Christmas leave, you will have arrived back fresh and ready for the challenges of 2008.

EXERCISE RED BEAUFIGHTER - *by Sig Agyepong*

Exs in 21 Sig Regt have always been times of excitement because of the way they are carried out and Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER was no exception. Since all the three Sqns (HQ, 220 and 244) were involved, the tempo of preparation was high. The ISM team was as usual required to provide networking sp to the Sqns, which meant most days we had late finishes to get the ATacCS network complete. **SSgt Marsh** set up 2 teams to build 2 major networks: Alpha and Bravo LANs in order to support 244 and 220 Sqns in the pre-ex run-up. Both teams were made up of inexperienced ATacCS systems builders, since most of the guys who attended the ATacCS course have been posted out of the ISM Team, so the given task was a real test. The main point of the test was for other members to learn and improve their skills. After a couple of days' work, we realized that we needed all the help we could get to meet the deadline. With expert advice from our ATacCS 'gods' we managed to initialise the routers, set the server up properly and finally bring all the clients to the server. With this done, we were ready to deploy and that really made us excited.

Early on Sunday 18 November, Bravo team under **LCpl Hanvey**, **Sig Roberts** and **Sig Skinner** were deployed to Salisbury Trg Area tasked with supporting 220 Sig Sqn in the field. Overall, we all enjoyed the Pacex and the entire ex period and are looking forward to next year's MRX to support 16 Air Asslt Bde and Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER 4.

BRITISH ARMED FORCES MOTORING ASSOCIATION (BAFMA) COMPETITIONS - *by Cpl Gilll*

The BAFMA championship is a highly professional sport with participants from across the 3 Services competing at locations throughout the UK and Germany. The championships consist of a number of driver/navigator events including:

Scatter. A scatter is an event held over a large area, where navigators are given either an aerial photo of the area, or an enlarged copy of a map. The event normally has a time limit and carries a penalty for exceeding. Markers are located around the area, each worth different points, which must be recorded in their appropriate box on your scorecard. They may normally be visited in any order. The crew with the least points and least penalties within the time limit win the event.

Trials. A Trials Section is a set course over undulating ground, driven between 10 sets of cairns. The idea is for driver and navigator to negotiate the course without hitting any of the cairns, and thus ending up with a score of zero, for the best result.

Orienteering. Quite similar to foot orienteering, you are given a map of the area with the markers plotted and you must go to the markers to mark your card in the corresponding numbered box, within an allotted time.

Safari. A Safari is a set course, where you are not normally given a map but directed on the ground by arrows. You then have to note letter boards in the order that you see them on your card, and a letter missed will cost either an amount of time or points. The crew with the fastest time and most letters is the winner.

Autotest. A time recorded event, usually driven at speed and through a tight course or over demanding terrain. The winner is the crew that records the fastest time and picks up least penalty points.

This year, 21 Sig Regt have competed in a full BAFMA season. The team have been very successful, building a solid foundation on which to start the new season. We won the Scatter in the 4 Wheel Driving Force at MOD Wethersfield, but needed to work more on the navigation after starting at the wrong location for the orienteering.

On Ex MAGNUM SPIRIT in Germany, **Cpl Bemrose** took out the competition early on by reversing into them. The unfortunate team he hit had not only hired a civilian Land Rover but had also spent 3 days travelling from Scotland just to compete. The Germany trip was also a first experience of driving abroad for **Sig Kay**, who is quickly progressing within the sport, as well as the first (and the last) time **Cpl Gill** had ever eaten a horse burger.

The most successful competition was in Doncaster. **Cpl Bemrose** and **LCpl Huckstep** won the Best Beginners competition and were 2nd overall as a crew and **WO2 McPhee** and **Sig Kay** came 2nd in the Novice Category.

Luckily the team consists mainly of MT and LAD pers, as there is a heavy toll on the vehs involved. We're hoping for an even more successful season this year and are already well into the planning for the events.

The BAFMA Championships provide an excellent opportunity for soldiers to improve their driving and navigating skills at very little cost to the individuals and units, with events held over weekends to minimise the impact on work. The team has given up much of their free time to compete in this sport but the experience gained has certainly been worthwhile.

Easing the Rover over tricky terrain on the Safari Route

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj I Blower MBE**
SSM **WO2 S Lithgow**

244 continues to deal with the rigours of Bowman conversion, with RED BEAUFIGHTER 3 being the first Regtl ex using the new

eqpt. Even though nearly everyone has received some form of Bowman conversion, the learning curve when doing it for real was very steep!

Soon after this year's Lanyard Trophy, the Sqn's tabbers represented the Regt in the "Bergathon", an annual march-and-shoot competition run by the RAF in Stafford. After a tremendous performance, our boys won the entire event, much to the disappointment of all the RAF teams and 22 Sig Regt, who finished some way back.

The Sqn bids farewell to **Capt Holly Dyer** who leaves to start a civilian career but has also been selected to represent Great Britain in the bobsleigh; we wish her all the best. But every time we say 'goodbye' to someone we forever find ourselves saying 'hello' as **Lt Burgess** with his blonde locks and gargantuan frame returns to the hangar, having finished his first op tour in Afghanistan.

EXERCISE EAGLE'S EYE

On the one and only sunny day of the entire ex, 3 dets from Alpha Tp deployed up to South Cerney for the start of Ex EAGLE'S EYE, in sp of 16 Air Asslt Bde. Two Mobile Air Operation Team (MAOT) dets provided the ground-to-air comms in support of Joint Helicopter Force (JHF) and the Main Refuelling Area (MRA) assisted with the refuelling requests for the Tactical Supply Wing (TSW) element from the RAF.

For the MAOTS, the first 2 weeks were spent overseeing the revalidation of all the Landing Point Commander/ Rigger Marshaller (LPC/ RM) pers within the Bde and the 2 BGs, in preparation for the main ex phase when troops and loads would be flown all over Salisbury Plain. In the meantime, the MRA crews started to use and learn more about Bowman comms as they were all fairly novice as well as being new to the det itself.

The move down to Salisbury Plain was pretty straight forward. The idea was to embed one MAOT det with each of the BGs and control the movement of pax and loads from their locations through the battle phase. Unfortunately we lost one MAOT det to Scotland on an ongoing ex up there, so the workload increased somewhat for the remaining det. The ex was especially livened up when a Chinook came into land at Nook Camp. Just a little too close to the 1 Royal Irish sleep tent. The entire tent plus contents was deposited over the nearby hedge, much to the amusement of the bystanders and the helicopter crew but not the Royal Irish RSM!

Although very wet and winter like, the ex was a great learning curve for all concerned, with everyone taking away some new ideas and learning. We wish 16 Air Assit Bde all the best for their imminent tour of Afghanistan next year.

EXERCISE RED BEAUFIGHTER 3

On 12 November, 244 Sig Sqn rolled out of Azimghur Barracks on a long arduous 40 min road move to Hullavington Airfield near Chippenham. On arrival things started looking up straight away as we realised that we were not the only ones using the Airfield that week – we had been joined by 10,000 women who over the 7 days were attending the Mary Howard show. This prompted the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Rich Warmington** to return to Colerne and pick his Mess Dress up, thinking his luck could finally be in.

After the novelty of watching cars full of women drive past, we were warned off that it was up to Charlie Tp to set up the Drash HQ in record time, so we could get our heads down in preparation for the days ahead. Over the next 6 days a lot of experience was gained using Bowman, starting with a quick set of radio orders for Bravo Tp's deployment to Wathgill Camp for some trg with JSSU. Whilst up in Catterick, **Sig Lucy Waqalevu** had her first experience firing off a flare and something else remarkable happened – under the watchful eye of **SSgt Daz Mordaci** the Tp managed to maintain a 240 mile link from Catterick trg area back to Hullavington on a 4m whip. Whilst Bravo Tp continued to brave the elements of Catterick in November the remainder of the Sqn were making good progress under the guidance of **SSgt (YofS) Matt Delaney**. Meanwhile **2Lt 'Leonard' Jones** took on the (unofficial) role of Air Liaison Officer for the Sqn. He soon found time for himself, **Cpl J Pateman, LCpl Mark Stewart** and **Sigs Rach McGinn** and **Lisa Hughes** to experience Wiltshire from the sky after convincing the local glider club at Hullavington to take them up for a spin.

At the end of a busy week's comms trg, **WO2(SSM) Si Lithgow** organised some 'tasks under pressure' comd tasks and inter-tp sports. It was during this that **Sig Abdulrahmen** was dragged up to Hullavington on the guise of being duty PTI and subsequently promoted to LCpl.

After Bravo Tp had returned from Catterick, it was time for the Sqn to move to a very wet and windy Thorney Island to simulate a port of entry. After a very wet and sleepless night living with the fear of one's tent blowing away, we were off again. This time the Sqn again moved under orders to Carter Barracks in Bulford for a rolling replen before moving off to the final ex location; RAF Odiham. Once at Odiham it was back to the routine of setting up the HQ, tasking dets, getting comms in and listening to a few presentations by the staff at the Support Helicopter Force HQ on their role, before showing the staff round the complex to give them an idea of what we can provide for them in the field. All in all a good ex was had, with much experience gained by the operators on the Bowman system.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Bryan**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Smith**

In what has been a reasonably busy period for 220 over the last couple of months, we have been involved among other things, in supporting 4 Bde on their MRX in Germany. The initial road move to get there turned out to be quite exciting, with one veh not even making the crossing. Also with no fuel stops on the way, **Cpl Bale** had to use his initiative to siphon some fuel out of an articulated lorry which was part of his packet – much to the dismay of the RAF pers who were occupying that veh. The ex, which involved deploying a SAN GP, MAOT and a Flying Site, was supported mainly in mass by Golf Tp.

The Tps that deployed were there principally to support JHF for all the Heli Tasking, as and when required. It was a challenge to get the manpower together for it, as the Sqn is very busy in the op sense, but there was a definite sense of excitement as we finally rolled out the gates. The timing of the ex was also very good, as this gave the Sqn hierarchy, which was almost entirely new, the opportunity to see the most professional of soldiers in action. Upon our return, we were thrust straight back into action without much of a chance to dust ourselves down as we moved straight into Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER 3.

EXERCISE RED BEAUFIGHTER 3

220 Sig Sqn prepared to deploy into the field on Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER 3 with a series of det inspections and trade trg kindly organised by **Sgt Osmound** from Golf Tp. With a large majority of the troops not being trained in Bowman, it would be a large learning curve we would all have to climb.

With all the veh packets lined up in the garages ready to go, all the packets left on time in the right order and with all the right eqpt – so a big tick in the box for the MT Sgt, **Sgt Grainger**. The first packet to leave was the advance party, which as you would expect included the SQMS **SSgt Richie Smith**. He ended up blowing the tyre on his stores truck, not once but twice. This meant all the rations and stores were 6 hours behind the rest of the Sqn and the motorway patrol on the M27 had to close the motorway while the aforementioned tyres were changed.

The ex would be split into 2 separate activities. The first was trade trg and mil skills at 63 Sig Sqn on Thorny Island and the second was deploying dets around various trg areas, fulfilling real time Heli tasking and practising det drills. Week 1 was designed to be interesting, fun and challenging. The key players from Sqn Ops did a fantastic job in delivering just that. The SSM, **WO2 Smith**, helped out with a 23km walk around the South Downs, which all the participants really enjoyed. A special mention to **LCpl Taff Jenkins** and his navigation partner **Sig Harrison** on their navigation skills (Not!). OC 63 Sig Sqn laid on fantastic facilities for us and his staff were more than helpful in providing first class instruction and sp.

Week 2 started early, with the first packets leaving Thorney Island at 0500hrs for Carter Barracks in Bulford. We were met with a rolling replen from HQ Sqn and parked up before going off for breakfast. The RSM had arranged for a Regtl Photo to be taken before the Regt deployed out to field locations. However the helicopters that formed a key part of the ex became available earlier than expected and the photograph had to be cancelled in their favour. Golf Tp departed to RAF Benson and set up the JHF HQ while **Sgt Osmond** deployed with 2 dets to SPTA to complete 2 real-time Hustle taskings. This was the first time some of the Rigger Marshallers would have the chance to apply their new skills. India and Hotel Tps deployed out to provide Flying sites, Refuelling sites, TAC and RRBs. Sqn Ops managed to get several Heli tasks for the Sqn, which made the whole ex come together.

On reflection a lot of new skills were learnt on the ex and a lot of cobwebs blown away. The ex was a great success, down to great planning from Sqn Ops and the hard work from the troops. We can only look forward to putting the new skills learned into practice on RED BEAUFIGHTER 4 in February 2008.

XXII 22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col ND Fraser**
RSM	**WO2(RQMS) Coombe**

So much has happened here in Stafford that it is difficult to prioritise the importance of events. Crucially, on 1 December the Regt having only formed on 1 April, was declared at Full Operating Capability as a GS Ptarmigan Regt, having had a good ECI result after much work. The process of steadily building up numbers continues and we are now at some 500 pers living and working in Beacon Barracks. The arrival of new people continues at pace and we have also said farewell to some of those who have been here since the early days. Notably, the Regt had an Offrs and WOs lunch to bid farewell to our Regt 2IC, **Maj Dougie Wright MBE** who is saying goodbye to the Royal Corps after 33 years service and also to Great Britain, as he is on the move to Australia – from where he tells us he "ain't coming back"! He has done much to create the Regt as has **Maj Jamie Balfour,** the first Adjt who is about to start his CISM course and then drive another desk – but in London and **Maj Darrell Skimming**, the QM(T) who is now also DCOS 12 Sig Gp. **Capt Lorna Giddings** could not join us as she had a job interview and is also now a civilian! Comd 1 Sig Bde, **Brig NAW Pope** attended the lunch during his recent visit. He also issued some awards; **Sgt Jayaprakash Rai** received his CinC LAND Commendation for his extraordinary work improving the Junior Ranks Single Living Accommodation (SLA). **LCpl Cartwright** was the first recipient of the Nick Bateson Memorial Trophy having been identified as the Corps' best athlete. **LCpl Chadwick** also picked up his Army colours for Tug-of-War.

The proud recipients show off their awards

EXERCISE HOPTON ALLIANCE – REGIMENTAL BATTLECAMP
- by Sig Lyons

Our first battle camp was split in to 2 phases. Initially we had a live firing package and followed this with a field ex. Starting as individuals and progressing to fire-teams, by Day 4 cobwebs had been removed and we were getting into inf and close combat skills. The freedom of being away from the garages without wagons full of comms eqpt was a joy. We stayed at Farm 10 on SENTA, the advance party enjoyed the advantage of bagging the building, while the main body arrived to find a nice patch of grass on which to build their 18 x 12.

Grins from our girls after doing their thing on the pairs fire and manoeuvre range

The transition from live firing to ex happened at the mid-way point of the camp. Troops set off in different directions to play out the serials as dictated by the scenario. Our first task was the occupation of a farm on what was the darkest night of the year. The OC's stop-short ended up bang on top of the location, so the orders needed some quick readjustment! Once in, we went out on clearance patrols and established defensive positions. Daybreak brought us a number of serials, mine clearing, marking a HLS, conducting air recces in a Gazelle, ground recces, dealing with civvy casualties and dealing with PWs . The most outstanding thing for me was the composition of the Sects. We had both **WO2(SSM) Abbott** and **2Lt John Silletto** as riflemen. There is nothing more satisfying than giving these 2 a kick at 0300hrs to go and take over your stag position. From this holding

area we were to move and occupy a village on the other side of the area. On the move in we were ambushed whilst still in the veh borne phase so 'peeling and baseline' was the solution. This worked particularly well and we soon fought off the enemy. Having woken up half of Wales with the weight of fire loosed off, the OC decided to simply 'crack-on' and assault the village from the ambush location.

20 mins later we arrived at the village, occupied it and then had to work like men possessed to defend our new location. We always kept one sect out on the ground as the boss wanted 'an aggressive presence' of friendly forces to 'dominate the territory'. That all sounds very good but my ability to dominate, let alone look aggressive, in Force 10 gales during a constant torrential downpour was somewhat diminished. Still, at least the SSM was in the same boat!

Someone from the Trg Wing with a horrid sense of humour had us move locations at 0330hrs. Pandemonium followed as 40 plus blokes all tried waking up and transporting themselves to their correct place in the correct veh. **WO2(SSM) Petts** quickly got a grip of this situation and we were soon moving out of our nice warm village and heading into the unknown. Now for another pitch black drive across SENTA into what turned out to be the hardest phase of the ex. We were to man battle trenches for an undisclosed period of time. When we arrived the storm had blown out revealing a perfectly starry night and of course, clear skies mean freezing cold conditions. A day spent rebuffing attempted enemy attacks was followed by the most exciting part of the ex – the break in and occupation of Village One. We were attacked 3 times during the orders for the break in but eventually we all knew what to do (sort of!). The plan was to stop short, shake out and move up to the Line of Departure (LD). Before we even had the chance to reach the LD, the enemy engaged us and lit the area up like a summer's day. However, the plan worked and after 20 mins or so of moving under the cover of smoke we eventually held the village and made preparations to defend it. Another freezing night of stagging on awaited but we all knew that Endex was close. Sp Tp came to reinforce us during the following day as intelligence suggested that the enemy would attack the village at last light. And attack they did. After holding out bravely against the onslaught, the order was given to withdraw. This didn't go precisely as it had in rehearsals but we made it to the RV and heard everyone's favourite word: Endex!

THE ROYAL SIGNALS INTER UNIT 7-A-SIDE FOOTBALL COMPETITION - *by LCpl Doorbar*

The Regt has been developing its football team over the last 6 months or so and put ourselves on the Corps football map by winning the first Corps competition of the season, the Inter Unit 7-A-Side Competition. We found ourselves grouped with 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt, 10 Sig Regt and JSU Corsham. We first lost 1 – 0 to a strong 3 Div team. We played well even thought **Cpl Stu Pickup** couldn't hit a barn door at 5 paces. We then played JSU Corsham, who scored an early goal against us but we picked ourselves up and won the game 2 – 1. Our final game in the league stage was against 10 Sig Regt. We had to beat them to qualify for the main competition and we achieved this by 3 – 0. Thus we had qualified for the main competition, finishing 2nd in our group. We moved on to face 7 Sig Regt in the quarter finals. This was a hard fought match with great defending from **SSgt Wes Farrell** RLC and goalkeeping from **WO2(SSM) Stuart Abbott** to deny 7 Sig Regt from scoring. We then scored the winning goal on a swift counter attack that **Cpl Reilly** REME calmly finished. After a hard semi-final against 30 Sig Regt, which we won 3 – 0, we faced 19 Lt Bde in the final – a strong team that we had seen earlier in the competition when they knocked out the favourites 3 Div. Once more we were the underdogs and had to rise to the challenge. It took a brilliant finish from **Cpl Pickup** to break the deadlock. He then finished them off with a second goal so that we won 2 – 0.

The prizes were presented by the SOinC(A) **Brig JE Thomas MBE ADC** and **Col CJ Thackray**, president of Royal Signals football. So after a tiring day of hard fought football, all we had to do was to make the long journey back to Stafford celebrating our triumph.

22 SIGNAL REGIMENT v TACTICAL SUPPLY WING (RAF) RUGBY UNION

On a wet and blustery day in Stafford, the newly formed 22 Sig Regt took on TSW (RAF) in a brutally contested rugby match. 22 Sig Regt started the better side, dominating much of the possession and territory without any points being put on the board. Both sets of forwards worked exceptionally hard throughout the early stages with the poor weather conditions stifling opportunities to play expansive rugby. After continued pressure the deadlock was broken by a slick passing move with man of the match **Sig Simon Tyler** diving in at the corner. With the conversion missed, solid defending and ferocious tackling on both sides kept the score at 5 – 0 at the half. The second half was a much closer affair and the next points came from a chip and chase from full back, **Capt Phil Stubbs**, who collected his own lofted kick. The breakdown in play resulted in a penalty which was converted by the fullback to make the score 8 – 0.

To their credit, TSW fought back, accidentally sidelining **Sig Frankie** with concussion, a broken tooth and a cracked jaw, however he is as chatty as ever now he's back in work. The 22 Sig Regt pack stood firm under mounting pressure with big tackles flying in from forwards and backs alike. **Sgt Leigh Necrews** was always in the thick of the action launching a couple of tackles that were 'a touch on the high side'. Finally with 5 mins to play TSW got their reward for all the hard work with a converted try, leaving 22 Sig Regt leading by just a single point at 8 – 7. Despite a nervy ending there would be no more points scored and both teams enjoyed what was a difficult but rewarding game.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj D Craig**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Collins**

-by Sig Santander

It has been a busy period in the MT with new arrivals, promotions and an EC inspection. Firstly we would like to welcome **LCpl Chadwick** and his wife **Kelly**, and **Cpl McEwan** both from the Royal School of Signals and **Sig Santander** from 2 Sig Regt. Congratulations are in order to **Sgt Jackson** and **Sgt Yam** on their well-earned promotion to Sgt and not forgetting **Cpl Hawkes** on his promotion to Cpl. The MT has been extremely busy with the Regtl Battle Camp and the EC inspection. Both events were very successful – no surprise, considering how much hard work was put in to make them so.

ENGINEERING SP TP

Tp Comd	**WO1(FofS) M Claxton**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Dear**

- by LCpl Karl Blacker

On the Saturday before Remembrance Day, **LCpl Woods** and I had the privilege of raising funds for the Poppy Appeal. We managed to collect roughly £300 between us, although this was purely due to the fact that I am better looking and therefore collected more. On the Sunday we participated in the Remembrance Parade through Stafford town centre, followed by a Remembrance Service. Before returning to Camp, 3 of us volunteered to go to the Royal British Legion to talk to the veterans. The enthusiastic old soldiers were happy to see us and kept buying us port and as a result we ended up quite merry – and we didn't even want to drink! It was good to talk to them though and many of their stories were both amusing and awe-inspiring.

Just back from paternity leave is **Sgt Andy O'Neill**; so far there have been no signs of sleep deprivation, although by the time this is printed, **Sgt O'Neill**, his wife **Emma** and son **Rueben** will be settled in Beaconsfield, where his head will be deeply buried in Arabic for the next 15 months. We wish them all the very best for the future and have but one word for him; ILM!

Whilst away on my Ptarmigan Basic Engineers Course, the Tp have had 3 new arrivals, **SSgt Ade Dear** as Tp SSgt, **SSgt(TQMS) Will Morrow** and fresh from the Royal School of Signals, **LCpl Andy Wills**.

217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj SJ Abram**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Abbott**

217 Sig Sqn has welcomed **Sgt Dowson** into the comd team to fill the vacant Ops Sgt post. The manning situation looks increasingly rosy, being up to the 75% mark. At Tp level, **2Lt Elliot Moore** continues his language trg in Nepal with **SSgt Somras Tamang** keeping the ship steady in the interim. Bravo Tp welcomes **Sgt Kent** who comes on a transfer from 222 Sig Sqn as a Bowman man – not that we have any radios to use as yet! Eqpt continues to be at a premium but there is light at the end of the tunnel. Charlie Tp is newly formed and **SSgt Brotherston** leads a crack team of IS trained pers into the future.

These are busy times, as the recently arrived J1/J4 IOS eqpt works well and everyone wants some to play with. We continue to have 8 people in Afghanistan spread all over the place. Shortly, the Sqn will start to train for REACHER and in the New Year will start to work out which bodies will head to Blandford to start to build up the FALCON Implementation Team. The Sqn, augmented by 222 Sig Sqn, deployed anyone with any IS skills at all to Germany during ARRCADE FUSION to set up and run the EXCON and the CAOC. Working long hours, we provided much of the manpower to get Richelieu up and running and then had our first taste of "Close Support" – all useful stuff for Op HERRICK!

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj C Alexander**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Ingham**

With the pace of life refusing to slow any for the run into Christmas, 222 Sig Sqn have been as busy as ever. Having deployed an 'expert' team to the NAO Combined Air Operations Centre under the technical wizardry of **SSgt(FofS) Dave Randall** and with a Sqn MATTs Camp, this has meant even fewer nights in camp. Thankfully though, 222 welcomes **2Lt Craig Smith**, **WO2(SSM) Ash Ingham**, **Sgt Jackson**, **Sgt Bowden** and back from 4 months in the Falklands, **SSgt Rob Luke**.

CHILDREN IN NEED FUN RUN - *by Sig Furlong*

As Children in Need crept closer I thought that I would organise a little fun run to raise some money. Little did I know my little fun run would turn into a full blown Station event, now I really had my work cut out for me! With the help of the gym staff **WO2(QMSI) Hayes** and **LCpl Steve Cox**, we organised a 5km route for adults and a 2.4km route for parents and tots. With prizes for the best fancily dressed tots.

After a week and a half running around frantically trying to organise and advertise the event, which included standing on guard dressed as Pudsey bear complete with webbing and helmet, it all finally came together on the day, with massive sp from the Regt and families, civilian pers and the RAF. With guest appearances from **Sig Dodgson** as Daffyd – the only gay in the village, **LCpl Grant**, **Sig Willard**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig O'Rouke** as The Tellytubbies and many men convincingly dressed as women, **WO2(SSM) Abbot**, **Sgt Powell**, **LCpl JaJa Binks** and **LCpl Silver**.

A CO's PT session was enjoyed throughout, even by spectators who left their jobs to watch the hilarious sight of 22 Sig Regt in all sorts of costumes running down the road. Some incriminating evidence found its way into the local paper. After all the fun and games 22 Sig Regt raised £1056.00 for Children In Need. A big thank you and well done to everyone who was involved.

The terrorist soon took off when La La and Co got on the case

Cpl McGinn and LCpl Lane... Nice!

248 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj KA Jeeves**
SSM	**SSgt(SQMS) Bharat Shrestha**

248 have now completed Public Duties and are back in Stafford and getting integrated into the Regt. We bid farewell and best of luck to **WO2(SSM) Surendra Gurung** in his new post as a WO Liaison in Land Forces Secretariat, Upavon, Salisbury.

EXERCISE BEACON KHUKURI - *by Sgt Pitamber*

Ex BEACON KHUKURI was a Sqn level ex in which we combined both the comms aspect of the job with mil tactics. Not long after coming back from Queen's Guard in London, Ex BEACON KHUKURI was scheduled to take place between 19 and 30 November 07 on SENTA trg area.

Understanding the OC's intent, the Ops Officers, **Capt Robin Foster** and the Ops Team planned the ex well in advance. To maximize the value of time on the ground, there was a week trg prior to departure which taught all the mil skills needed to survive on ops in Iraq or Afghanistan. BCDT, CBRN, Anti-Veh Ambush, Mine Clearance and IEDs were just few of the topics covered.

Cpl Bhes prepares the SHF low gain means

The ex scenario was made as realistic as possible, considering the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Early in the morning of 19 November, the OSC and Trunk Nodes deployed to SENTA Trg Area. The Trunk Nodes were to establish Trunk Networks in the given grid locations in order to build and maintain mobile, robust and flexible Ptarmigan and mobile networks covering the SENTA trg area. Once the comms were achieved with preliminary defences set up, the next move was to establish the confirmatory defence of the comms sites in order to make the enemy's infiltration into the Node Home as difficult as possible. From Day 2, the 'Red Dragonian' enemy attacks came thick and fast. There was a risk of becoming a hostage, being shot or blown up by IEDs or suicide bombers, which would have been an embarrassing moment for anyone, even though it was just an ex. By the end of the ex, we had been through all serials of attacks as per the scenario i.e. road side IED bomb explosions, mortar attacks, attacks on the Trunk Node and various hostage taking serials.

On 27 November, all the comms eqpt was placed in a hide as the ex scenario stepped up to the next phase. 248 GSS took comd of an inf op in order to rescue 3 x Sqn pers who were taken hostage by the Red Dragonian terrorists. The following morning all 3 trunk nodes formed up for dawn attacks on the enemy positions. Each Tp was given their own objective in order to rescue the hostages. By 0930hrs, all enemy positions were destroyed and all 3 hostages recovered.

Overall, the ex was very successful and extremely beneficial for all Sqn pers. The junior solders especially learned a lot, not only in trade but also on mil tactics and awareness. All in all a good baseline has now been established for the Sqn.

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col C Ford**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Brett**

JOINT NETCEN

There have been a number of movements within the Joint NETCEN over the past 2 months. We have said farewell to **Capt Marcus Skeet** who has departed for Camp Bastion, apparently they needed a "Football Manager". **RSM Daphne Brett** has retuned to Bramcote along with **Lt Rory Bailey** leaving the co-ord desk in the capable hands of **Cpls Nabin** and **Hasta** – productivity has seen a surprising upward turn since their departure. Finally its farewell to **Capt Phil Tonks**, replaced by **Capt Dilly Dilnot**, newly promoted and back in theatre once again after a few months break.

Joint NETCEN on a day out"

On the project front, the NETCEN staff have been extremely busy. Installation tasks across theatre seem to take up the majority of the time and it is good to see so many of the projects finally coming to fruition after 4 months in theatre. The surge team of installation techs from 30 and 10 Sig Regts proved to be a huge success during an 8 week deployment to Camp Bastion facilitating the infrastructure within the new Tier 2 hospital. All involved are to be praised for the hard work and efforts. The introduction of a number of new points of presence across theatre promise to ensure a not only a busy but no doubt frustrating period between now and the end of tour in Feb . The cries of 'manpower, manpower' from Camp Bastion are already giving the Ops Officer, **Maj Nick Range** sleepless nights, or is it Tim Horton's!

The Gym facilities in Kandahar are second to none and Op MASSIVE is going well, with most of the NETCEN staff smashing it out on a regular basis. Of particular note the TOT, **Capt Jim Ross** and Regt FofS, **WO1 Kev Peters** are now so ripped that they have recently been offered deals as Maxi Muscle cover models. The SO3 Co-ord, **Lt Rory Bailey** also got ripped, however that was his trousers on a fence when he tried to take a short cut to work as he was late yet again for the morning brief.

The month of December sees us in the maximum R&R period with the majority of pers taking a well earned break. We look forward to bringing in the New Year of 2008 and the imminent arrival of our replacements from 16 Sig Regt. Hoorah for 16 Sig Regt!

HELMAND ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON (256)

The Sqn continues to work hard and play hard with SHQ leading the way, well at least on the playing side. When not trying to magic additional manning from thin air, the SHQ has managed to utilise its connection with **SSgt Wally Cullings** in the cookhouse to get a tour and some free doughnuts, not that **YofS Martin Reed** let anyone else have any. **Capt Jim Chatman** has been crowned the Supreme Conker Champion and **Cpl Becky Edmondson** has been amazing everybody with her balloon tying skills.

On a serious note, every member of the Sqn has performed brilliantly and has been a credit to the Regt. With 2 new points of presence being established in Dwyer, South Helmand and Sangin, North Helmand, increasing numbers of pers are being asked to work out of their normal trade skills, a challenge they have all risen to.

CAMP BASTION

Having just passed the half way mark in their 6 month tour, Bastion ICS Tp have now settled into something approaching a routine despite the best efforts of SHQ to keep things 'busy'. This lull in the battle has allowed **SSgt 'Charlie' Henson** the opportunity to indulge in his deep seated passion for weaponry and he has arranged a number of range days involving everything from 9mm pistols to 0.5in HMGs. **LCpl 'Reidy' Reid** displayed a particular aptitude for firing the AK47 from the hip but then he is from Walsall. Some of the Tp have also entertained themselves by test firing the Scots Guards Right Flank Warriors with **Sig 'Cridders' Cridland** responsible for the almost complete destruction of an ISO container.

SSgt Charlie Henson trying to teach WO2(SSM) Wobbo Robinson

The mighty Line Sect (installation techs/mechs/telemechs – depending on which year they joined) have continued to battle the never ending flow of jobs with a cheery smile and helpful demeanour. Apart that is from **Sgt 'Ski' Zukowski** who is in the running for the 'angriest man in the whole of Afghanistan' competition. With current R&R commitments, the det is down to minimum manning with **Ski** and **LCpl 'Shell' Smith** manning the helm. **LCpl 'Vickie' Marsh** is on R&R and was disappointed not to take 'her' records package with her and **LCpl 'Woof' Griffiths** is currently on holiday in Lashkar Ghar.

The IS Engrs continue to geek on under the watchful eye of head geek **Sgt 'Barny' Barnard** and deputy **Cpl 'Gaz' Watson**. Despite a hectic schedule they have found time to reach level 23 on Call of Duty 4 and electronically steal £50m from the Bank of England. The whole dept has fingers and toes crossed that Santa will answer their prayers and deliver a year's subscription to PC World magazine. The Tp would like to congratulate **FofS (IS) Faulkner**, the 'Wizard Geek in Chief', on achieving 'best geek in show' on his IS Supvr course.

The Techs have formed a 'Magic Milkshake' club and train at least twice a day. Congratulations to **Cpl 'J' Seymour** who celebrated his promotion with a shake. **Cpl 'Harv' Harvey** was grateful for the supplementary shakes whilst on 10 man ration packs at FOB Dwyer for 6 weeks. The RLI team are working well despite the absence of **Sgt 'Eddie' Edwards**. He has finally escaped to the UK on R&R. The last time he ran away, he got as far as Khandahar but was captured and brought back to Bastion in a Mastiff armd veh. He made it sound like the whole thing was planned but now the real story is out. The COMCEN operators have started to dribble and behave even more strangely but on the plus side **Cpl 'Joe' Perry** is now running CV workshops for those interested. **Sgt 'Richie' Horsburgh** disappeared for a couple of weeks but has now turned up in Lashkar Ghar.

The EDs, **Cpl 'Al' Paisley** and **Sig 'Wellsy' Wells** have now been joined by **Cpl 'Duds' Dudley**. **Cpl Paisley** has established a bit of a reputation for himself by drawing indirect enemy fire wherever he goes and **Cpl Dudley** has taken part in a 'cultural awareness workshop' which involved slaughtering a goat.

SSgt (SQMS) MarkThomson and **Cpl 'JFB' Somerville** have converted their stores ISO container into an 'adult'/ bicycle repair shop, complete with translucent green screen entrance. The OC got a nasty surprise last time she happened to wander inside and notice that **Cpl Somerville's** screen saver had changed from a picture of his daughter to something else.

LASHKAR GAR

In the past few months Lashkar Gar (LKG) Sigs Det has been a busy place with projects coming thick and fast. With the first being the TUAV link from BSN to LKG providing plenty of headaches for the dets at both ends. Then came the installation of the JPCC SHF shot providing a chance for **SSgt Jim O'Mahony** and **LCpl Lee Bickerton** to show off there skills as Relay Ops. As a result of this, a brave and fearless **Sig Stu Tait** was given the chance to show off his green skill by helping to provide top cover for a patrol returning from the outstation on a crypto run. Other projects which have taken place include Hi Paths being replaced with Avaya exchanges (Tech stuff), which **Sgt George Keogh** and **Cpl Aaron Houghton** expertly installed and programmed in one night.

During this busy period we've also seen a lot of pers rotating out to other location and enjoying the sights and sounds of Helmand Province, including **Sig John Dickinson** and **Sig Martin Landry** being sent to FOB Rob and welcomed by the Taliban with several IDF attacks within minutes of arriving. Also providing pers to FOB Dwyer with **Sig Bob Purdy** providing IS cover and **Sgt George Keogh** following a few weeks later and being forced to tab 1km to the FOB after her helicopter came under fire and had to drop them short.

Lt Rich Gardner-Clarke, Sgt Paddy Briggs and SSgt Jim O'Mahony

With all this happening over a period of only a few months, you would think that things could only get quieter but with the arrival of Project REAPER and the camp winterization going on, **Cpl Keith Ford** and his able assistant **Cpl Pete Wright** have been kept busy. Now being well in to the R&R plot things are chugging along at a consistent pace with every one from Tp OC, **Lt Richard Gardner-Clark** to our new SET, **LCpl Geordie Cronnie** being happy and enjoying the tour.

GERESK MOB PRICE

FOB Price is home to Battle Group Centre, Helmand Task Force. Centred round a Danish led BG with coys from 2 YORKS and 1 COLDM GDS, it has responsibility for the large town of Gereshk and the Upper Gereshk Valley leading North to Sangin. Squirreled away in 'Comms Ops' resides the 11 man team from the Helmand ICS Sig Sqn that provides all of the static comms infrastructure and reach-back strategic comms in camp. Led by the now **Capt Lewis Matthews** and **SSgt Marty Barringer**, we arrived in August taking over from 2 Sig Regt just in time to see the 2 MERCIAN BG finish their tour on Op HERRICK 6.

The FOB itself is a well established forward base and has excellent living facilities to sp the multitude of troops moving in and out of it. A 100km charity bike ride and up coming half marathon are just 2 of the events 'designed' to keep the troops on their toes! One of the highlights remains the excellent cookhouse in which there are nightly discussions about the size of the pancakes the det have just consumed! The ICS lay down ensures that all of the team, be it; Operators, Technicians or IS Eng are constantly busy and are forced to learn from each other in both trade and other knowledge.

We have engineered and commissioned a major up lift in the capabilities of the camp while tackling every manner of faults ranging from near catastrophic power failure to the re-engineering of mission critical C2ICS nodes. However some of these can be rectified with 'simple' solutions. The key to keeping the TALON SGT in and working appears to be belt feeding brews to the det comd, **LCpl Grant**! In amongst all that have been a large number of Force Protection duties, inventive range packages run by **SSgt Marty Barringer**, continuity trg from on site Combat Med Technicians and supporting medical efforts during a mass casualty situation within Gereshk town.

Cpl Dan Lamkin, the sole ED in the det has been much in demand and the need for power has seen him deploy forward into the Green Zone to establish the power solution for a new Patrol Base.

It has been a testing time for all members of the det – everyone with new experiences to take forward on return to Bramcote. While there have been slow moments, all would agree that the first 4 months of the tour has gone quickly and with the prospect of the winter weather further challenging the delivery of comms here, it looks set to continue in such a tempo. The end of tour in February looms ever closer.

KABUL SUPPORT UNIT (KSU)

MT CAMP SOUTER AFGHANISTAN

Working out of Camp Souter in Kabul, the MT is one of the busiest depts in KSU, from driving VVIP's (and on occasion just VIPs) around the City to the mundane airport runs every night. Some VIP visits recently have included **Gen Sir Richard Dannett** and many other high ranking Officers who we would not normally rub shoulders with, never mind have conversations with. The visits run with mil precision (funnily enough), unless the RAF get involved, then it goes wrong!

With Christmas coming up, the parcels have been flowing in. Thanks to the MTWO, **WO2 Scott Tremain's** wife **Sue**, who has been rallying around the locals in the area she lives. The number of parcels we have received from them has been staggering. We would like to thank everybody who has donated; it is a massive

Kabul Support Unit

boost to moral to know we have such dedicated support from the folks back home.

Due to an incident in which pers from our camp were involved, there was a strong possibility that a public order situation may have arisen which might have required us to get involved. Therefore some refresher (and in some cases) initial trg on sangar duties, public order skills, foot patrols and the use of baton guns was initiated at fairly quick order. **Sig Tom Welsh** proved to be a natural, however he did hit the fig 11 with an illegal head shot at 80m! Apparently he was trained by a blind one legged Tibetan monk.

On 8 December, we had the opening of the Osprey Café by the Secretary of State for Defence; **Rt Hon Des Brown MP** during a visit to Camp Souter. You couldn't see him though, due to the size of his entourage. We can now experience a coffee in comfortable surroundings instead of on the boardwalk in the freezing cold.

Congratulations to **LCpl Egan Ridguard** on his promotion. Good luck with your P Coy trg that the OC, **Maj Alan Balsdon** has engineered for you. You won't be bragging any more about being fitter than the OC will you! A big pat on the back for **Sgt Ian Dickinson** who worked extremely hard to put right the F&L as he received a pass on the recent inspection. Next is the LSI to get through.

Due to the rapid change in temperature, **Sgt Andy Howe** has deployed us on Op FROST WATCH. This means taking the snow/gritter around the camp and spreading de-icing salt everywhere. During the first day, **Sig Eusabio Titus** managed to drop half the theatre's supply of salt in front of the guard room. He was unaware that there are different settings on the gritter.

All in all, the tour has been a good learning curve. The amount of work we get through keeps us busy and the tour is going by very quickly. Before we know it we will be handing over to 16 Sig Regt.

QUARTERMASTER DEPARTMENT

As we now pass the 4-month point in Kabul, the QM Dept can be rightly proud of the achievements made to date. **WO2 (RQMS) Fred Deas** has made the Resources Park his own personal goal. This has been helped with the new-build of an inner ring road which now allows access in the poor weather we experience here in the harsh winter months. He has now removed some 77 ISO Containers and back loaded many pieces of eqpt which cluttered the place. You now have to use the magic password to gain entry to the park, which is "Sugar Plum Fairy"

While the RQ disappeared for hours talking to his ISO friends, the Tp has been hard at it in the office. The accounts are looking very healthy and the recent Op Eqpt Table Re-write went extremely well. **Sgt Mick May** and **Sgt Mark Holmes** (QM A – 7 Sig Regt) have spent some very long hours tapping away at the UNICOM Keyboards. They should be rightly proud of what they

have achieved across all locations in Kabul but it must be noted that more could have been achieved if they were logged in at the time.

The R&R Plot is now and truly underway with the QM, **Maj Tom Smith** going first in November. Apart from **Cpl Leighton Jones** and **LCpl Nick Howgate** who are in the UK as this is typed (**Nick Howgate** is back auditioning for a part in Dracula) the rest of the Tp go at Christmas and over the New Year period. **Sgt George Washington**, who spends most of his free time in the gym and now boasts Pecs the size of mouse mats, is currently walking around gingerly with great back pain. This was caused by bowing and praying to the mighty WO ES on a recent LSI. He is now considering taking off his blue badge of courage and replacing it with an "I Love ISAF Flash". We welcome the arrival of **Sig Bobby Sands** who recently arrived from the UK, and he fits nicely into the young lad contingent. Their primary aim is to keep the QM constantly supplied with tea and they all welcome the new build of the water bottling plant at Camp Bastion.

With only about 8 weeks to go now until the tour ends, preparation is well under way for the LSI, Board of Officers and the Hand Over to 16 Sig Regt. The past 4 months have had their trials and tribulations and these boys without doubt have grafted, but with Christmas around the corner and the QM preparing for Sierra Leone on his return, life in the QM's Department Kabul is now ticking over nicely.

250 QUEENS GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE IN NUNEATON

A mixture of Gurkha and UK pers prepared the rehearsals for the Remembrance Day Parade a week before the actual parade, with **Sgt Maj Lokbahadur Gurung** taking drill lessons for those of us participating in the parade. The standards of drill on display were variable but with the SSM's cajoling and threats, the parade format and standard of drill was vastly improved within a week.

The morning of the parade was a nervous time for the soldiers participating, knowing that their week of practice was soon to be shown to the waiting public in Nuneaton. We arrived in Nuneaton, quickly formed up into a squad and marched into our waiting position outside Marks and Spencer shopping centre, waiting for the other participants to take their positions and for the signal to march on. There was plenty of time for some last minute checks to ensure everyone was looking their best before the parade began. The parade itself went relatively smoothly with only a few minor hitches. It included a present arms with 2 mins silence, laying Wreathes and Poppies at the memorial by all parties present, including OC 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn **Maj Anderson**, Gurkha Maj **Maj Krishnabahdur Gurung**, the Mayor of Nuneaton and representatives of the police and ambulance services.

Contingent from 30 Sig Regt marching through Nuneaton

After a long hard parade, the soldiers of 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn and Comms Sp Tp retired to the British Legion for a few drinks and to swap war stories with the veterans.

EXERCISE SHARPSHOOTER 2007
THE BRITISH ARMY COMBAT SHOOTING TEAM IN CANADA

After a 5 year gap since 2002, the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association (DCRA) re-introduced Canadian Forces Small Arms Competition (CFSAC) this year. The British Army Combat Shooting Team (BACST) was then invited to participate in this event. 30 Sig Regt, the Champion Regt of 2006 and 2007 at Bisley, were granted the honour of providing the BACST team. The 17 man team were mostly from 30 Sig Regt and Royal Corps of Signals with a Sniper team from the RIFLES.

The team comprised of 3 comd elements Team Captain, **Capt Yamkumar Gurung** QGS, Adjt **Maj CJ Kell**, Coach **WO1(SMI) W Marr** SASC, 4 Snipers and 10 other firers. The Team Captain, Adjt and all 4 snipers also fired the Rifle Matches. The 4 man LMG team and 4 man pistol team were selected from within the squad. After 2 day's trg at the RMAS Sandhurst ranges, further trg was conducted at Kingston ranges. Excellent sp was received by the team from **Capt Steve Beattie** from Canadian Forces who was the LO to the BACST.

British Army Combat Shooting Team

The National Service Conditions Championships (NSCC) were held during the week prior to CFSAC. The Precision/Sniper rifle was held 3 – 5 September followed by Canadian Forces Sniper Competition (CFSC) on 6 – 7 September and Service Rifle on 8 – 9 September 07. The Service/Practical Pistol matches were held concurrently with the other two throughout the week. The Precision/Sniper matches were the traditional mil matches that have been in place for several decades. The Service Rifle matches were the same Stage 1 and 2 as for CFSAC and were similar to our National Rifle Association (NRA) matches and fired in the gallery ranges. The Pistol matches were the traditional mil matches mixed with combat style matches.

The DCRA Small Arms Competition for regular and reserve forces were conducted at National Marksmanship Trg Facility, Connaught ranges, Ottawa from 11 – 16 September 07. The CFSAC included additional LMG matches, 4 man FIBUA team match and the Soldiers Cup to the NSCC matches. The team matches were more combat relevant. The Soldiers Cup was a more advanced version of our Para Cup, which consisted of an 8 man team incorporating 3 obstacles in the middle of 3km run and fire team movement with fire team advancing with covering fire from behind. This match also included the CBRN phase at 300m to 100m and simulated FIBUA from 100m to 50m. The BACST was the only International Team present in the competition.

The team won a total of 23 first place prizes, 6 in NSCC, 2 in CFSC and 15 in CFSAC. The Gun Team swept the board winning individual, pair and the 4 man team and an exemplary result was produced in the Soldiers Cup beating the second team by a huge margin. The Sniper Team managed to secure 2 first places and 5 second places in CFSC. The Pistol Team won 3 first prizes including overall team aggregate. **Capt Roberts** finished second

overall in serving pistol championship. Three members of the team finished in top 4 places in CFSAC individual rifle match aggregate ahead of their Regular Forces Queen's Medallist. **Capt Yam** tied for first place only to be separated by 'V' bulls with Queen's Medallist from the Reserves. **Maj Kell** won the Bronze medal in combined aggregate of serving rifle and pistol matches.

Ex SHARPSHOOTER 2007 was a very successful and productive shooting trip to BACST especially for 6 young members of the development squad. They gained tremendous shooting experience in different shooting climate and standards.

Individuals now have more confidence to utilise these core skills in the forth coming Regimental, Corps and CENTSAMs as well as on their deployment on ops.

We should thank the ARA and the COs of those individuals who gave this excellent opportunity.

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col SL Streete MBE TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Concepcion**

It is with great sadness that we must again start our article by saying farewell to Regtl pers who have recently passed away. The unit has lost another loyal and well loved member of the Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), **SSgt Willie Loch**, and we have just heard that a past TA WO2 who kept in close contact with the Regt, **WO2 Jim Paine**, passed away on 13 December 07. Both will be missed and our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Although there is an obituary for the late **SSgt Loch** in this edition, we have to comment on how outstanding this SNCO was. After a full and varied career in the Regular Army with the Royal Signals, **Willie** couldn't let go and took up a role as an NRPS SQMS within the Regt. His commitment to the Regt and in particular the Corps was revered and he often said that if you were to cut him in half you'd find the Corps colours running through his veins! His funeral took place in Eastbourne on Monday 26 November 2007 and with approximately 250 people present, the church was absolutely full – a real sign of his popularity and of the respect people had for him.

The Regt has without a doubt had many changes in personalities in 2007 and has had to gap numerous posts Regular and NRPS. Recruiting of NRPS in London continues to be an uphill battle with the loss of Home to Duty travel in particular, leading to a drop in applicants for key London based NRPS appointments. The Regt is saying farewell to **SSgt Phil Walton**, SQMS 83 Sp Sqn, **SSgt Mick Lynn**, SPSI 83 Sp Sqn, **Cpl Meads**, PSI(Tech) 83 Sp Sqn and **Mrs Jo Eldridge**, AO 83 Sp Sqn. Fortunately we have replacements for the 2 Regulars leaving! For anyone reading this who is about to leave or already left the Corps, numerous job opportunities exist with the Regt in either civil service, TA or NRPS appointments – call the Adjt for more details. At the same time we welcome **SSgt Sandra Evans** who joins us as SPSI 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn and **Capt Bob Goulding** as our new NRPS PSAO at 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn.

Another busy 2 months of trg for the Regt with mil trg, sporting events, charity work and the odd social function, as well as a strong presence on Remembrance Sunday parading at 8 locations in total across our Sqn AORs. Our team of premier footballers reached the finals of the TA LONDIST football competition knocking the reigning champions 71 Sig Regt (V) out of the cup and then putting up a strong performance against 36 Sig Regt (V) in the finals. Unfortunately it was not to be our year and 36 Sig Regt clinched the match in the latter part of the second half, leaving us as Runners Up. More awards have also been presented to Regtl pers in the last few weeks. Two of our civilian workforce were nominated for and selected to receive Lord Lieutenant Awards. These were **Ms Jane Paulini**, AO 56 Sig Sqn, and **Mr Dave Hoggins**, the Fitter at 5 Sig Sqn – congratulations to them both. In addition, one of our TA OC Sqns, **Maj Carolyn Murison**, was invited to attend a reception for 'heroes' during the flooding events of July 2007. **Maj Murison** received a certificate and personal thanks from the Prime Minister himself.

THE BIRTWHISTLE PENNANT FOR RECRUITING

Awarded for outstanding contribution to recruiting, 31 Sig Regt was exceptionally proud to be awarded the Territorial Army Birtwhistle Pennant for Recruiting 2007. The award was presented on Saturday 8 October 07 by **Col Crackett,** Col TA, on behalf of the SOinC(A) to **Lt Col Streete MBE TD**, CO 31 Sig Regt (V), in the presence of our outgoing Hon Col, **Maj Gen John Stokoe CB CBE**. The award is a high profile achievement for the Regt which has invested a great deal of time and effort into trying to improve our recruited strength and our image in our local AORs, especially through PR in local newspapers. It is a great 'pat on the back' to all our soldiers and officers who have been apart of this ongoing campaign.

The Presentation of the Territorial Army Birtwhistle Pennant for Recruiting 2007

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF INNHOLDERS DINNER NIGHT

The Regtl autumn dinner season saw the annual Dinner at the Worshipful Company of Innholders in the City of London, where past and present Officers of the Regt dined with the Master of the Innholders, **Cdr Hugh Evans**, and the new Regtl Hon Col, **Alderman Sir Robert Finch**, who was officially dined in. Unfortunately due to this period being so busy, the turn out wasn't as high as normal but this was made up for by the atmosphere with a great night being had by all and much reminiscing taking place!

The Regt is as always especially grateful for the generous support that the Innholders gives every year in assisting our deployed soldiers and their families as well as supporting AT activities. Thanks go to **Capt Scott Bumby** for organising a great evening.

EXERCISE CAPITAL PATROL

After a great deal of planning and a final 3 days of the advance party working hard in the field to simulate realistic surroundings,

Orders before a patro leaves the SF base

props, scenarios and a patrol base, Ex CAPITAL PATROL took place on a freezing October weekend at Hankley Common on the Longmoor Trg Area. For this ex, troops were deployed on a Stabilizing Op in the Longmoor Province of Hankistan having to deal with the local militia known as the Hankiban!

After the normal last minute inconveniences of other units trying to use the trg areas (RM Reserves setting up a recruit trg tented village and parking 2 civilian coaches right opposite our tactical SF Base) and of course the reliance on Sqns having to fight the hectic Friday night motorway traffic, we eventually deployed a

Cpl Hone and Capt Orr dragging an injured allied soldier to safety on Ex CAPITAL PATROL

Coy of about 60 strong into the trg area led by the nominated OC Coy, **Maj Carolyn Murison**.

From the outset, the exercising friendly forces were put under pressure by having to man sangars and defend an isolated rural SF base, man an Ops room, provide a QRF and send out a variety of patrols day and night on foot and in vehs. With a strong turn out from all Sqns, in particular with officers from 5 Sig Sqn, the troops were thrown into a variety of situations.

An enemy force was made up of volunteers from 106 Regt RA(V) and our own new recruits, led by **Sgt 'Chadders' Chadwick**, our regular with the most recent op experience of Afghanistan and **Capt Matt Cahill**. Scenarios included small arms fire and major contacts with simulated mortar/RPG fire against the SF base, hosting and liaising with local tribal elders, handling civpop, supporting OGA convoys under attack and dealing with casualties, handling very keen media crews and initiating a Coy level ambush against a militia patrol.

Memorable moments included; listening to the chants of **Sgt Chadwick** in the early hours, simulating the 'call to prayer'; the constant ex incidents created and thrown at us by the Adjt; **LCpl Hone** our medic saying he was about to sack the ambush as "I'm a medic and I don't do cold!"; and **Capt Cornick**, who had threatened everyone with death if they set off any of the trip flares he was setting before the ambush, only going and setting one off himself as he put it together. To say the sniggers were audible up and down the whole ambush was an understatement.

The ex, organised by **Capt Jez Wadia** and **Capt Andy Haines**, could not have worked without the hard work of all of the permanent staff especially those deploying early to transform the Hankley Common DZ huts into a realistic Security Force patrol base!

Although the weather was bitterly cold and the ex programme relentless, the TA troops seemed to enjoy the weekend, coming away with newly learnt skills and with a real sense of achievement. The drivers certainly had peace on the way back to the TACs as everyone else had a little snooze.

EXERCISE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

On Thursday 13 December, almost all of the Regt's permanent mil staff deployed into London on Ex CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, their annual team development and education ex. Organised by **Sgt 'Chadders' Chadwick** and ably assisted by **LCpl Chris Urie**, the group of regulars and NRPS spent the day in the Imperial War Museum, the Tower of London and on a River Thames boat cruise before ending up at the Corps carol service at St Stephen with St John Church.

After a bit of festive singing, the group returned to a local public house for a 4 course Christmas dinner and a few drinks. It also gave us an opportunity to say farewell to **Cpl 'Alf' Meads** who leaves us on posting to 10 Sig Regt.

OFFICER TRAINING WEEKEND

On a November weekend, the Regt's officers paraded at the home of the Royal Corps of Signals for an officer trg weekend. This consisted of a wide range of briefs including an update on UK Ops from SO2 G3 2 (NC) Sig Bde, a presentation on the Regt's comms capabilities and effects from the Regtl FofS and YofS, a lesson on operational writing by the Ops Maj, and further briefs from the Padre and Regt 2IC. A bit of afternoon range work with the 9mm Browning pistol gave everyone an opportunity for a little bit of inter-sqn competition.

The day finished with an interesting and thought provoking leadership presentation by **Col Robertson**, Comd Special Group Royal Signals, before an opportunity for our officers to host the new SOinC(A), **Brig EM Flint ADC**, for dinner and a few drinks. It was a very productive weekend and a good chance for our officers to benefit from the trg and Mess facilities at Blandford.

83 (LONDON) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Major T Crosby**
SSM Gapped

83 (L) Sp Sqn continues to do well with its recruiting and we welcome to the Sqn: **Sigs Banks, Kennedy, McBrier, Peterson, Chesser, Caldiera** and **Woolliams,** all of whom have just started or are about the start their recruit weekends.
Over the 10 – 11 November we carried out a weekend for Remembrance Sunday. This involved a lot of drill practice carried out by **Sgt Eastwood Bell** and **LCpl Whittaker** who had the task of turning 4 of our brand new recruits, who had never done any drill whatsoever, into marching soldiers. This was followed by BCDT trg conducted by **LCpl 'Yardstick' Yarde** and **LCpl Tash Wynn**. **Cpl 'Special' Meads** then took the Sqn for CBRN followed by **Cpl 'Ligger' Williams's** special PT sessions. Show parades then followed, conducted by the Kit Fuhrer, **Capt Bumby** in his office – this was a mistake as after it was mentioned that the bar would not open until everyone's boots were up to the required standard, the same pair of boots were shown to him about 10 times.

A games evening followed, organised by **Sgt Chadwick**, where obviously the Seniors and Officers were seen off. **WO2 Wilkie** and the oldest SSgt in the world, **SSgt Trype**, had very lovingly provided a curry which you couldn't eat without consuming a lorry load of yoghurt – great idea the night before a parade.

The next day it was on to the parade with **Sgt Eastwood-Bell** taking the entire parade for all the units and contingents present. On arrival there were gasps from some of the older members of the parade of "It's a woman!"

After a little diplomacy in getting the seniority of all the different units and VIPs correct, the parade went very well through the streets of Putney and the new recruits did the Sqn proud. Then it was back to the TAC for an Act of Remembrance with the 56 Div Association, as their Roll of Honour is now permanently housed in the Southfields TAC.

We say goodbye to **Jo Eldridge**, SPSI **SSgt Lynn**, PSI **Cpl Meads** and PSI **Cpl Williams**, the latter is leaving the Army in the next few months to become a personal trainer and attend as many film premieres and free dinners with the celebrities of London – did anyone see him on Hell's Kitchen? We wish them all the very best for the future.

CHARITY DRAGON BOAT RACE

On Sunday 7 October, members of 83 Sp Sqn and C Tp, 41 Sig Sqn took part in a Charity Dragon Boat Race on the Thames at Kingston. The race was in support of 'Born Too Soon' who raise money for the Neonatal Unit at Kingston Hospital and offer support and information to parents.

The Charity Dragon Boat Race team

The '*Signal Strength*' team was led by **WO2 Mark Eastwood-Bell** and **Sgt Jay Eastwood-Bell** whose daughter, **Lara**, was born 2 months earlier, weighing 1lb 15oz and spent 2 months on the Unit. After a short induction, the team were keen to hit the water. **Capt Mike Zazzi**, one of the only team members with Dragon Boat Experience, talked tactics with the team which all worked well in theory!

The team raced 3 times over a 250m course and it was harder than it looked. During the early races PSI, **SSgt Mick Lynn** had to rescue a Dragon's Head from a competitor's boat after the Harlequins Amateurs Rugby Team raced into the side of the Thames. **LCpl Sally Mucklow** realised she had the best seat in the boat as she drummed at the helm – it was definitely the driest!

Many teams were short of rowers so well done to **Sig Robert Finegan** and **Sig Mike Thompson** who found themselves doubling up for The Storks team made up from midwives from the hospital. *Signal Strength* also boosted their numbers in one race after **Sgt Jay Eastwood-Bell** coerced the Deputy Mayor of Kingston, **Cllr Bart Ricketts**, to join their team. The team eventually finished 7th out of 15 teams which was an accomplishment for novices – the challenge is on to better that next year.

INTER-CORPS AND ARMY INDIVIDUAL ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

As the name suggests, this event pitches the best that each Corps can throw at each other and also sorts out the best 'in class'. Not many units, let alone a TA one, can boast 2 Army Champions but on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 December 07, a team from 31 Sig Regt (V) competed and returned with some great successes.

Both the CO, **Lt Col Streete MBE TD**, and OC 83 (L) Sp Sqn, **Maj Terry Crosby**, won Army titles for their age brackets having competed in both day and night events in Colchester. In addition, the CO helped the Royal Corps of Signals Ladies team win to become the Ladies Champions. **LCpl Ali Roswell** nearly claimed some silverware and along with **LCpls Jennings, Ford** and **Mucklow**, they all did extremely well in this high level competition. All the competition results can be found at http://www.baoc.org.uk

5 (QUEEN'S OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj CL Murison**
SSM **WO2(SSM) M Taylor**

This has been another busy period for the Sqn ranging from recruit trg, regtl mil skills, officer trg, Remembrance and luncheons with the Oxfordshire Yeomanry Association. Congratulations go to **Sig Hitchens** who passed her AOSB and will join the January intake at RMAS as a regular Army OCdt. Also **Sigs Neubauer** and **Salmon** completed their trade trg including driver trg and now move from Recruit Tp to their Comms Tps. We also welcome back **LCpl Machin** from his tour in Iraq. Also, congratulations go to **David Hoggins**, the civilian fitter who was awarded his Lord Lieutenant's Award for his exceptional contribution to the Sqn.

OXFORDSHIRE YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON

At the end of October the Sqn assisted the Yeomanry Association with the running of its annual luncheon, which was organised by the former PSAO, **Maj (Retd) Bob Sheldon**. The luncheon was held at Falklands House, the home of Oxford University Officer Trg Corps, who once again allowed us to use their fine facilities.

The Sqn SPSI, **SSgt Welsh** acted as maitre d' to ensure the lunch ran without a hitch and the old comrades were looked after and waited on by current members of the Sqn.

There were 78 guests at this year's luncheon, with our guests of honour including the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and his wife, **Brig Inshaw**, **Cllr Couchman** and the Mayor of Banbury, **Cllr Kieron Mallon**. The old soldiers and their families enjoyed the day.

Sadly their numbers were down 6 on the previous year which brings home to the current Sqn the debt that we owe those few that remain and the need to support this event which we will continue to do.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Fensome**
A/SSM **WO2(FofS) M Byrne**

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON'S SHOW 2007

This year as in previous years, a contingent of soldiers from 41 (PLK) Sig Sqn, led by **SSgt Simon May,** took part in the annual Lord Mayor's show through the City of London. The group consisted of 2 Land Rovers, an FFR and a GS, plus the walking party.

We departed from Coulsdon TA Centre at 0730hrs to arrive at the FUP in the City no later than 0900hrs. On arrival we were given a briefing from the Parade Marshal as to timings and emergency procedures etc. We then had time to get some refreshments. The weather was dry, overcast and cold, and we expected it to pour, but luck was on our side. The parade started on time and we were 55th in the procession.

The members of the Sqn were dressed in a variety of uniforms including No 2 Dress and No 8 (Desert and Temperate CS95). **Cfn Noakes** from the LAD (who last year was part of the Army team which attempted to climb Mt Everest) was dressed in climbing gear. **Pte Shand** RLC asked to wear his CS 95, as he would like to see if it still fitted, as he normally only wears chef's whites. **Cpl Burgess** from C Tp, who took one Land Rover, told his party (**Sigs Tow** and **Hope-Wynne)** to "smile at the public no matter how cold it gets", to which they duly obliged.

The remaining members of the Sqn were from K Tp, **Sgt Ian North**, **LCpls Carol McMillan** and **Robin Young**, and **Sigs Danny Hopkins**, **John Lynch** and **John Corfield**. **Cpl Alison Kelly**, AGC SPS, our Sqn clerk, appeared with her pen at the ready should anyone wish to join up. The salute was taken by the incoming Lord Mayor of London, **Alderman David Lewis**.

There was a great atmosphere generated between the soldiers and the general public and the return march was completed by 1350hrs. Following lunch, the Sqn was stood down and we headed back to Coulsdon. All who attended agreed they had had an enjoyable time and asked to attend the following year once again to represent the Sqn and Regt.

KNELLER HALL ARE / RHYTHM FORCE

Elements of 41 and 83 Sig Sqns deployed to assist the Royal Signals Recruiting team for the above event over the period 20 – 22 September. The new venue provided an increase in real estate which allowed all Arms and Services to fully display opportunities that were available in both the Regular and Territorial Army. Also on the Royal Signals stand were elements from 10 Sig Regt, 71 Sig Regt (V) and 63 (SAS) Sig Sqn (V).

31 Sig Regt was represented by **Capt Cahill, Sgt Chadwick, Sgt McGarrity, Sig Lynch, Sig Tomaszewski** and **Sig Paulino**. The ground work had been ably prepared by **Capts Haines** and **Zazzi** ensuring that we were ready for a flying start on the first day. That said, I don't believe much can prepare you for the descent of 15,000 under-16 year olds and their ferocious appetite for pens, stickers, leaflets and anything else that isn't nailed down! Much was achieved over the 3 days, not least getting first hand experience of the work of the Royal Signals' Recruiting team and the introduction to many of the variety of roles and opportunities available in the TA.

The third day was an open day for the general public and this resulted in direct recruitment for the Regt. Pers that were spoken to at that event are already undergoing recruits trg with the Regt which is, I am sure, the true measure of the success of events like these.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY IN KINGSTON UPON THAMES

C Tp provided 13 soldiers for Remembrance Parades in 2 locations this year, with the majority supporting 256 Field Hospital (V) at Kingston. Both units and elements of the ACF marched through the Town before an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial, where **Capt Cahill** laid a wreath on behalf of the unit, and a service in All Saints Church. **Sgt Anderson** acted as I/C Tp for the march past with the salute being taken by the Mayor, **Cllr Shiraz Mirza**, and Deputy Lieutenant of the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

The representatives of local organisations were then well hosted for at a buffet lunch in the Town Hall whilst troops, families and friends returned to the TA Centre for an excellent lunch provided by 256 Field Hospital (V), the culmination of a large and very successful Borough Parade.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj I Holland**
SSM **WO2(SSM) S Hall**

The schedule has been packed with a Regtl inf weekend, a Sqn inf ex and Remembrance Sunday as well as a trade course all in the last couple of months. We also have about 15 soldiers currently undertaking their initial recruit trg weekends at Aldershot. Several soldiers from the Sqn also recently completed their trade trg at Swynnerton Training Camp, so well done to the following: **Sigs Murphy, Ambrose, Lewis, Hardy, Clark, Bonner** and **Platt**.

We continue to be overmanned, so a process of discharging non-attendees has started but **Pte Ben Bracken** completed his Class 3 Chefs course – so great to have another chef amongst the ranks.

Sig Jack Pile is now **OCdt Pile** as he has completed his officer selection and is now in the process of completing his officer trg. Finally the OC, **'Dutch' Holland** has received his promotion to Maj so a huge congratulations to him. We welcome back to the UK our previous OC, **Maj Anthony Lamb**, who has safely returned from 6 months in Iraq. We wish him luck with his new posting at RMAS, in Camberley, as their SO2 TA. Two other Sqn members depart these shores for tours with the Royal Irish Regt in Afghanistan. We wish them luck and safe passage, so all the best to **Sig Grace** and **LCpl Dogson** from 884 Tp.

Well done as well to **Sig Steven Pratt** and **Sgt Jo Butler** who now have become Mr and Mrs after getting married in October. We wish them all the best for the future. Our Civilian Clerk, **Jane Paulini** received her Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Service Medal in November. She has served the Sqn for over 15 years dealing with all recruit admin and paperwork as well the general day to day running of Sqn affairs, so definitely she deserved this award.

It was a sad farewell to one of our past PSIs, **SSgt Willie Loch**, but a great turnout and function for his funeral paid proper respect to such a well liked and respected man. To support his 2 favourite charities, the Sqn had a charity auction from prizes donated by Sqn members at their Christmas Dinner. Having combined the donations made at the funeral and funds from the auction a total of £1,000 was raised and will be divided equally between the ABF and the Royal Marsden Cancer hospital.

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col DE Sixsmith TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Legg**

HQ SQUADRON

OC **Maj Steve Wayman**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Heather Taylor**

Christmas weekend this year was very well supported by all the Sqns. The masses gathered at Strensall for what was to be a hotly competitive weekend. The Assit Course Competition was won by 90 Sqn but with a team with a combined age of less than the Trg Maj and QM, they had to concede to a Permanent Staff team lead by the Trg Maj, **Maj Guy Benson** with his trusty side kick the QM, **Capt Pete Griffiths**. They were last seen picking up there tartan shopping trolleys and fighting for 1st place in the Post Office pension queue. Sterling effort, Sirs.

The archery competition run by **SSgt Standing** of 50 Sqn produced one or two Robin Hoods, The Adjt, **Capt Jane Ellis**, on crutches managed a truly superb score, with the eligible use of a tree. Nice try, Maam.

The clay pigeon shoot was an interesting diversion. **Capt Rob Hood** of 50 Sqn tried the "Excuse me, my safety catch was on, would you mind awfully sending the clay again" routine. It can be found on You Tube!

The customary serving the Christmas dinner to the ORs went down a treat. **WO2 Neil Berry** and **Cpl Arthur Warner** did them proud. The fancy dress competition was of a very high standard. The CO, **Lt Col Sixsmith** came as "Austin Powers", the RSM **WO1(RSM) Legg** came as a pimp and the Trg Maj and QM as Jeeves and Wooster. Everybody's fancy dress was of the highest order. The skits went down well and the HQ Sqn crew of **Sigs Griffin**, **Davies**, **Lawrence** and **Cfns Cummins** and **Rooney** won the best skit of the night. Biggest cheer of the night was saved for the "mop" who guested as HQ Sqn SSM.

Finally the following mornings PT and carol service brought to end an emotional weekend. We now look forward to next year and the challenges it will bring.

49 (WEST RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Jenny Bowes**
SSM **WO2 Mark Alexander**

AMERICAN EXCHANGE VISIT 2007 BROADOAK
- by WO2(SSM) Mark Alexander

This year I volunteered for the exchange visit to the USA. After going to briefings, I was contacted by e-mail by E6, **Sgt Sharpe**. **Sgt Sharpe** was a member of C Coy, 156 Sig Bn based in Adrian, in the state of Michigan. We exchanged details and when and where to meet.

When I landed at Dulles Airport, Washington, I was met by a member of the National Guard who sorted out tickets for me to fly on. I was one of 8 going to Traverse City. Six to fly via Chicago, myself and **Sgt Cook** from the Royal Artillery had to fly to New York and then onto Traverse. I was due to meet **Steve** at Traverse City airport that night.

After a lot of hours in Dulles, we discovered our flight was cancelled. It wasn't until Sunday evening that we arrived in Traverse. We had to spend 2 nights in hotels and flew via Dallas, Texas and Cincinnati to get there. Having arrived, I was glad we were late as we were able to turn ourselves around before being shipped to the Forward Operating Base (FOB) on Camp Grayling's trg area. **Steve** said it was identical to the one he occupied in Kuwait.

We occupied the FOB for 7 days, living in what can only be described as circus tents along with 120 other people. Our tent was the least occupied. Every morning we left the FOB for daily trg out on the area. The unit spend their 2 week annual camp doing their version of MATTs. There was the usual NBC and First Aid, always stopping to take on water as the temperature soared. Luckily I did not collapse with the heat as others did; they had the medics queuing up to jab them with the intravenous drips.

The trg was excellent and I really enjoyed it. The second week was spent in camp, cleaning and tidying. I have never seen anyone spend so long on cleaning their own personal wpns. There was more trg, the military police ran the camp and organised a run around it. This was the third annual Warrior Run and every available person ran. There was also an organised visit for me to visit Detroit to watch a baseball game. My final day was spent looking at their eqpt and playing in a softball tournament, which we won. This was followed by a BBQ and drinks. I made plenty of new friends and would recommend the exchange visit to all. The return flights were uneventful and we all returned back in one piece.

Sgt Steve Sharpe visited the UK 3 weeks later. The SQMS, **Tommy Simpson** and I collected him and besides a quick shave and shower, it was straight into the field. We spent a couple of nights near Trowbridge, visiting Blandford (the Corp Museum) and Salisbury Plain. He looked at our eqpt and spoke with most of my Sqn pers and talked with many people who just wanted to say hello and find out why he was here. It did have its advantages being a visitor, the Master Chef and **Arthur** ensured he was well looked after at meal times. **Steve** enjoyed the ex as he did not have any wpn or webbing.

After a quite Sunday night in York, it was a long drive to Edinburgh. We stayed at 61 Sig Sqn's camp, a bus ride into town. (Many thanks to the PSAO and caretaker for that night.) It was a very late night in the city and an even later start the next day. Then it was back down to York for what turned out to be a very good ghost walk. Wednesday was spent in and around York with a visit to the Armouries in Leeds.

Thursday we went down to London, staying in the barracks in Southfields, 31 Sig Regt and again thanks to the Ops Maj and the Regt YofS for their assistance. The next day we spent around the sights. First, Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard then a quick walk through St James's Park and onto Horseguards. Then down Whitehall around by Westminster Abbey and across the bridge for a quick photo shoot. Then it was on the tube and into Covent Garden and amazingly enough, more beers there.

By this time we had seen and done enough, we needed a break. We retired to a steak house for our evening meal and then dragged ourselves back to Southfield's to watch the England game in the nearest sports bar. Another disappointing game, which the Americans couldn't understand but they will get better than us – they said.

Saturday was our last day together. We had breakfast at a local shop and then raced to Heathrow. Just to throw a spanner in the works, we went to the wrong terminal and then when we found

the right one, their flight had been brought forward. **Steve** has since e-mailed and thanked me for his visit. I would also like to thank all the units and pers who helped us to make this a success. I would also like to thank the officers and men of C Coy especially **Sgt Steve Sharpe** for making us part of their team.

Sgt Steve Sharpe with WO2 Mark Alexander

90 (NORTH RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Paul Denning**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Hunter**

REMEMBRANCE PARADE 11 NOVEMBER - *by Sig Allan Tate*

Hartlepool members of 90 Sig Sqn carried out drill sessions on their parade nights in the lead up to Remembrance Parade so that we could put on a good show for the Old Comrades and civilians in attendance at the Remembrance Parade.

The troops paraded at 0900hrs for a final drill practice and then moved to the Hartlepool Cenotaph at 1010hrs. All members, both young and old, had a long and heart warming conversation with the Old Comrades prior to the parade itself. Everyone in the Sqn felt humbled and proud at how much sacrifice was made for the freedom we enjoy today. The parade formed up under the direction of the Comd, **WO2(SSM) Hunter** with standards and colours to the front, 90 Sig Sqn behind and many representatives of many organisations behind them.

The parade as a whole set off at 1040hrs and marched proudly to the marching sounds of the Royal Marine Cadet Band and made their way to the Cenotaph. The Last Post was sounded by 2 young cadets stirring emotions. This was followed by the laying of the wreaths. 90 Sig Sqn's being laid by the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Hogg**

Once the parade was over without a hitch, all members of the Sqn along with many older soldiers and representatives from varying organisations retired to the TA Centre for a buffet and a few reminiscing beers! The mixture of young and old was an insight which the members of the Sqn thoroughly enjoyed and found humbling.

The Old Comrades were impressed and proud of what our generation has volunteered into and that they conduct themselves in a professional manner which echoes the past.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS (NORTHERN) BAND

DoM **Capt TW Milford** BA(Mus) LRSM
Band NRPS **WO2 DJ Crowther**

The Royal Signals (Northern) Band have been busy as usual with annual appearances at Remembrance Sunday in Middlesbrough and the Officers Mess River Ouse Cruise in York. The latter saw the newly formed Sax Quartet under the direction of **Capt Tom Milford** and the Brass Quintet lead by **WO2 Dave Crowther** entertaining officers and guests during the 4 hr cruise. These 2 groups also provided entertainment for the RSA Corps Lunch at Catterick in September.

Two outstanding events were held within 3 days of each other in early November. The first was the annual SSAFA concert held at the Dolphin Centre in Darlington and this year the band were joined by the 150 Tpt Regt RLC (V) Band and 102 Bn REME Pipes and Drums. The bands entertained a capacity audience with the faint "boom" of the nearby firework display in the background. The piece of music that seemed to stir the loins of many was the Band and Pipes playing of **Scott Sinclair's** "Hector the Hero" a true show stopper. A fantastic programme of music was enjoyed by all and many of the audience were heard to say "the best yet".

Our second musical extravaganza was a tribute night to the music of **Kenneth Alford**, the British March King. This event was organised and narrated by **Mr Ivor Shirley**, Chairman of the "Northern Military Music Group" as the first of many musical evenings. The event was held at Bradford Armoury and was very well attended and enjoyed by all. The evening did not consist entirely of marches; it was interjected with amusing anecdotes, "The Lightning Switch" and a fantastic solo performance of the Xylophone solo "Sparks" by the bands newest member, 17 year old percussionist **David McKeague**. The successful night prompted the theme of "The Music of **John Philip Sousa**" the American March King for next year's event.

As the busy Christmas season begins the band look forward to the numerous events taking place in 2008 for TA 100.

35th (SOUTH MIDLAND) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col MG Hanson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Overton**

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

"Once more into the breech dear friends" so the old saying goes; and what a year in prospect we have ahead of us with our focus primarily on the single largest deployment of the Regt in sp of current ops, in this case Op HERRICK. I have been delighted by the overwhelming response from all ranks to the request for volunteers for this deployment and it is now incumbent on the newly formed "Command and Leadership Wing" (CLW) to filter and refine in order to ensure that the Officer and Soldiers we deploy are of the highest calibre and match the skill sets required. OIC CLW **Capt Penny Mell** and her ever resourceful 2IC, **WO1 Terry Douglas** are more than a match for this task and will ensure that the team we deploy are as well prepared as they can be for ops.

I note that my Trg Maj, **Maj Steve Lockwood** has started to keep his hair short and I can only assume that this is to prevent him pulling it all out trying to balance Man Trg Days (MTDs) against the ever increasing demands and commitments on our TA Officers and Soldiers. That said we couldn't have a better man for the job.

We have once again sadly had to say goodbye to a highly valued and exceptional character in the form of **Capt Jim Taylor**, PSAO Sp Sqn whose long and distinguished career spanned decades. I don't think anyone will forget the photograph of **Jim** in his Y-

fronts sunbathing on the Falkland Isles, which was projected onto the Mess wall at his dine out. I know many members of the Sqn are still receiving counselling after the shock. But seriously, we will all miss Jim's boundless humour and we thank him for all his dedication and hard work over the years.

But every cloud has a silver lining and we are delighted to be able to welcome **Capt Tek Rai** as the new PSAO Sp Sqn taking post in April of this year; in the interim the Sqn is in the safe hands of **Capt Nav Muhammad** 2IC of Sp Sqn. **Capt Rai** is the first Ghurkha officer to be appointed as PSAO of a TA Unit and the Regt is delighted to be part of history in the making and we welcome both he and his wife to our family.

We also welcome **SSgt Jeffers Ford**, the new SPSI 48 Sqn who takes over from **SSgt Brian Wilson** who has taken the unenviable job of Trg and Courses SNCO in the CLW. We also welcome **Cpls Morrison** and **Carter** to the fold.

My heartfelt congratulations go to **WO1 Mick Doherty** who was awarded the CinC Land Forces Commendation for Meritorious Service which was presented to him by GOC 5 Div, **Maj Gen Farquhar CBE**. Congratulations also to **LCpl Imran** on winning the coveted "Stockdale Trophy" which is presented each year to the best junior Soldier. This also was presented by GOC 5 Div – so well done and a well deserved promotion to LCpl.

Maj Gen Farquhar CBE presents the CinC Land Forces Commendation for Meritorious Service to WO1 Mick Doherty

I end this foreword with a call to arms, we have a tough year in prospect, we do ask a lot of you and I know you give willingly, but I am once again asking that every member of the Regt step up to the plate to show everyone that we are the fighting 35th.

SUPPORT SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj William Henderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Mair**

EXERCISE MERCURY COVE SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2007 *- by Capt Bob Bath*

Ex MERCURY COVE was designed to allow members of the Regt to visit a Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) live firing range and then the RAC Centre Tank Museum in Bovington (Dorset).

The visit had 2 aims: one, to allow members of the unit to familiarise themselves with kit and eqpt used by other Arms and second, as a social and bonding event. It went something along the lines of:

'Twas a dark and dull morning in Canley when 31 brave and valiant members of the Regt gathered to tackle the 4 hr journey to the very edge of the world (well as far as you can go in Dorset without getting your feet wet), where we encountered the mighty dragon that is the Challenger 2 (CR2) Main Battle Tank. Its skin was hard and green, the very ground shook as the beast roared along the range and it belched smoke and fire as every dragon of legend should.

So what should we do? Run to the hills? Get a knight in shining armour to kill it? – No!'

We did what all good members of the Corps should do – we climbed all over it and pressed every button we could find!

On a more serious note we were very privileged, that the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry (RMLY) had made time in their very busy firing camp to host the Regt on this visit. Everyone was given a very thorough briefing on the CR2 by the closet tankies in our midst, **Capt Bath** and **SSgt(SQMS) Acton** both formally of the Queen's Royal Hussars. Now every member of the party can extol the delights of what happens when a High Explosive Squash Head (HESH) Round or a Armour Piercing Fin Stabilised Discarding Sabot or APFSDS, as it is affectionately known by the tank crews, hits a tank

After a fine example of a range stew, which was provided by the RMLY and devoured with lashings of bread, we headed to the RAC Centre Tank museum. This gave the troops a chance to see the humble origins of the tank and to have a good chortle at the RAC's "Little Willie" which was one of the first tanks to see service in WW1. All the visitors were then given a lecture on the merits of the single epicyclical gear train and how a tank turns on its axis – well OK, then maybe we just had a wander round and then came home.

There's a tank under there – honest!

By the end of the day the happy wanderers arrived safely back at their TACs tired but having had a day that was both fun and an education.

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Paul Rodenhurst**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Stowell**

The Sqn starts the year with a lot to be proud of, all of you have worked hard and given your time to the Sqn and it has made my job as OC that much easier and for that I thank you.

The Sqn is better recruited than it has been for years and we thank **SSgt Brian Wilson** and **Cpl Zoe Trimm** for all their hard work in managing both the influx of recruits and the many layers of trg that the recruits have to undertake to become TA Soldiers. We are especially delighted to have been instrumental in playing a very large part in increasing the Regt's Ethnic Minority (EM) recruiting by 101% in 18 months against what has been a difficult time for EM Soldiers wishing to join the TA. We are grateful that you are with us and proud to make a difference.

Since my last note, we have once again taken the lead for the City of Birmingham in organising and conducting its Festival of Remembrance, with the CO taking the parade, ably assisted by the RSM and the Regt providing the Pikemen/VIP Escorts, the firing party and one of the largest marching contingents on parade.

The Firing Party marks the start of the 2 minutes silence

My thanks also goes to my PS and my PSAO, **Capt Dave Tarrant**, who is not only heavily involved in the Remembrance Day parade but also takes on the task of organising the Officers Mess Christmas Ball which is held at the magnificent and historic building that is the Birmingham Council Houses. The Ball was a complete success and made so much better by music provided by the Band of the Royal Corps of Signals.

So to end I say to you "Bats up, balls in play – it's going to be a testing year and I know you are up for the challenge"

58 (STAFFORDSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj David McCormack**
SSM	**SSgt Purdon**

With the festive season seeming ever distant and no chance of putting our feet up and dreaming of mince pies and mulled wine, we set our hats to take on a very busy period for the Sqn which will primarily focus on mil trg and completion of MATTS.

But to move forward, one has to look back over what has happened since October 07 and firstly over the weekend 26/27 October. A healthy contingent of the Sqn took part in a live firing ex at Kingsbury Ranges culminating in an Inter-Sqn competition shoot. For some of the newer members of the Sqn, this was their first experience of both an ATR range and variations in live firing practices.

Special mention must go to **Sig 'BA' Henderson** who scored particularly highly on the practice shoots and quite disturbingly was heard on more than one occasion to be talking to his rifle! However it was our blend of youthful exuberance and experience in the guise of **Maj McCormack**, **Capt Scott** and **Sgt 'Kev' Hand** that would pit their wits against the other Sqns.

After much deliberation and at least 2 re-counts, the Sqn came up triumphant, winning both the overall shoot and the individual shoot for the ever reliable **LCpl 'Jase' Allison**. Congratulations to all members of the team, and if anyone can fathom out how **Sgt Hand** managed to scramble in and out of the fire trenches with such grace, then answers on a postcard.

Not only was November a time for the good people of Hanley City Centre to be concerned about stray fireworks and wet weather but the Sqn decided to unleash our very own "Samanda" look-alikes, **LCpl's 'Joy' Gilford** and **'Cez' Riley** in pursuit of raising money for Breast Cancer Research. Fitted out in very fetching pink T-Shirts with buckets at the ready, they raised a very impressive £140 in just 2 hrs. However, it would appear that most of the money raised was in the local hostelries around the City Centre, all in the name of charity of course!

After a good turn out for Remembrance Day, which gave us a chance to update the Sqn photo, the Sqn had a host of activities to keep them busy over the weeks in the lead up to Christmas. None bigger than our planned Battlefield/Cultural visit to The Historic Dockyards in Portsmouth organised by **OCdt 'Harry' Harrison**. This gave Sqn members an insight to life aboard RN ships from past to present and made MATTS weekends not seem so bad after all!

Finally, a big welcome back to the Sqn to **Sig 'Scotty' Knowles**, who has successfully completed a 6 month tour of Afghanistan in support of 12 Mech Bde and is now busy spending his op bonus on fast cars and.... well I will leave it up to your imagination! And also a mention to **Pte 'Chris' Budd** who was "Highly Commended" in the Regt's "Stockdale Trophy" for Outstanding Contribution to the Regt by a Junior Soldier. **Pte Budd** narrowly missed out to fellow chef **LCpl Imran** from Sp Sqn. It is now just left for the Sqn to look forward to 2008 with both the optimism and excitement we have shown for all our efforts in a year which is sure to be both interesting and challenging.

89 (WARWICKSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Chris Moseley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Wright**

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2007- *by Sig Donnison*

On 11 November, 30 soldiers from the Sqn proudly paraded with veterans of war and conflicts at the Festival of Remembrance in Rugby. As it does every year, the parade drew a large crowd, which in this day and age is good to see. Pictures of the parade got into a number of local news papers and this positive PR is always welcome.

There was an excellent turnout from members of the Sqn young and old alike, to remember those who have served and died in conflicts past and present. This was followed in our usual fashion with a reception back at the TAC, and a special thanks has to go to **SSgt Charlie Walker** and **WO2 Paul Holland** for laying on the food and in the time honoured tradition "A fine time was had by all" made even better by being able to rib the PSAO, **Capt John Standen** at the end of the evening.

WALK IN MY SHOES - *by SSgt Adrian Proffitt*

The Sqn was approached by the Rugby Advertiser about sending one of their reporters along to the Unit to sample what it was like to be a TA Soldier to "Walk in my Shoes" so to speak. The CO and OC thought this would be a good opportunity for a member of the local press to join us for one of our MATTs weekends. The weekend chosen was a live firing range weekend and so a bit of prior trg was in order.

Mr Stuart Turner ready for action

So we invited the reporter, **Mr Stuart Turner**, to visit the Sqn where we decked him out in all the finery of a TA Soldier, boots too small, helmet too big and jacket down to his knees – a perfect fit.

We then took him to Kingsbury Ranges and he did a splendid job of converting live rounds to empty cases. He even managed a grouping and this after **Capt Bath** had him leopard crawling through puddles up to the firing point - nice one. **Stuart** took it all in the spirit it was intended and had a fun day out with the Sqn. He spent a lot of time talking to Sqn members and the article he wrote was such that it was bigger than the paper normally prints, so it has been earmarked for publication in the Advertiser's quarterly magazine as a special feature. This is great news and valuable PR for the Sqn, so well done to all who took part and our thanks to **Stuart Turner** of the Advertiser for being "Up for the Challenge"

95 (SHROPSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Ann Downie**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) McIntosh**

The Sqn stands ready to meet the challenges of the New Year, with all that it has to bring. As a Sqn, we worked extremely hard in 2007 and I was delighted to take comd of the Sqn from **Maj Chris Lewis** and I am confident we will go from strength to strength in 2008.

The Sqn has played a full part in both Regtl and Bde activities including the successful Bde Recruiting Surge and its Op MIDLANDS CHALLENGE which saw 700 people respond to an invitation to join the TA.

My thanks as ever go to my PSAO, **Capt Alex Rodgers** who looks after the ship whilst I do my day job and who once again gave the soldiers of the Unit the opportunity to take part in many and varied AT activities – I don't know, where does he get the energy?

We had a good turnout for the Remembrance weekend and a full house for the Christmas function which we all enjoyed, but we now look forward to the fresh challenges of this year, starting with playing our part in the ROSOs, **Capt Bath,** Bde Recruiting Surge across the West Midlands in sp of Comd Regional Recruiting (CRR) and the national Army advertising campaign, followed by Midlands Soldier (143 Bde's ACE) then straight into supporting the Bde TAPO advertising campaign with boots on the street and the face to face meet. Then it's into the second MIDLANDS CHALLENGE and must not forgetting the OPTAG trg, so plenty for us all to get our teeth into and I look forward to sharing these experiences and events with you.

36th (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col M Smith TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) JF Lyons**

LONDON DISTRICT TA CUP FINAL 2007/08

36 (Eastern) Signal Regiment:	2
31 (City of London) Signal Regiment:	0

On a blustery Sunday morning on Sunday 25 November, the epic match of the season to surpass any other London derby took place at the RA Barracks, Woolwich. 36 (E) Sig Regt resplendent in their new team kit took to the field of play to take on 31 Sig Regt who had knocked out the previous season's winners, 71 Sig Regt, in the semi final. Despite the average age of most of the players, the match started at a furious pace but very quickly settled down to a battle of wills. Which of the two rock solid defences would make the first mistake? The first half saw few real chances and those that did appear were squandered as each team failed to capitalise on open goals. The first half ended all square and the teams retreated to the changing rooms for an inspirational team talk and regroup.

The London District TA Cup winning team

The second half continued in the same vein. The teams fought for every ball and every decision from the match officials. This was not a fine example of the beautiful game but the effort and determination on display certainly made up for this. Finally, with 20 minutes of the second half remaining, a rare mistake by 31 Sig Regt's back four, who were caught pushing up, left **Sig Tyler** clear through to score. He managed to compose himself with the opposition's defence bearing down rapidly and slotted the ball home to take the lead. Both teams fought out the remaining 20 mins in good spirit. Neither team was prepared to settle for the current score.

Finally as 31 Sig Regt desperately tried for an equaliser, with what was probably their best play of the game, the Regt secured their first trophy in the 95th min. **Sig Tyler** finished off with his second after a great team move by coolly knocking home the ball and extinguishing the opposition's chances to finish the match 2 – 0 to 36 (E) Sig Regt.

60 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Andrew Knight**
SSM	**WO2 Michael Egunjobi**

It's been a busy period for 60 (RBH) Sig Sqn with a wide variety of trg being undertaken at the end of 2007, ranging from a Battlefield Tour, Comms, Mil Skills, and Mandatory Annual Training Tests (MATT).

OCTOBER 2007

12 – 14 October. The Sqn conducted a Battlefield Tour of the Normandy Beaches. **Sgt Jo Hook**, from 43 Sig Sqn, 21 Sig Regt was our professional tour guide, supported by **Capt Andrew Linn** and **Capt Antony Saunders**. We had a short ceremony at the Commonwealth Cemetery at Ranville, where the OC laid a wreath and **Capt Andrew Linn** read the Eulogy.

At the German Cemetery at La Cambe, there was a complete contrast to all the other cemeteries. The atmosphere and the layout were dark, sombre and simple. It was here, at his graveside and those of his crew, that **Cpl Del Lobbett** REME and **Sgt Alan Roberts** AGC gave us an insight into **Obersturmfurher** (1st Lt) **Michael Wittmann** who was one of the most famous tank comds of WW2, who fought both in Russia and in France and was killed in Normandy.

The beaches proved an interesting point for discussion, not least of which was the bravery shown and sacrifice made by so many in the re-taking of Europe. The prospect of running off the ramp of a Landing Craft while under heavy fire sent a shiver down the spine of those attending. The visit to the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach was a moving experience and the scale of this fitting memorial will remain in many memories for a long while.

26 – 28 October. Regtl Mil Skills – the Mountvoy Trophy. The Sqn competed in the Regt's Annual Mil Skills Competition, this year conducted under very testing conditions on the Sennybridge Trg Area. Although not retaining the Trophy, the Sqn did win the Regtl March and Shoot Competition. The Sqn congratulates 45 Sig Sqn on their success in the competition, but suggests they don't get a special cabinet made to display the trophy . . . . . an unnecessary expense for something you will only have for a year!

NOVEMBER 2007

November saw the Sqn participating in Remembrance Parades and Services in Aylesbury, Bedford and Cambridge. A fine all-ranks Remembrance Dinner, attended by serving soldiers, wives and partners, as well as members from the TA Social Club, was held at Aylesbury on Saturday 10 November. The Sqn was pleased to welcome the Deputy Inspector General of the Territorial Army - **Brig Greg Smith TD DL** and **Mrs Smith**, as the senior guests. **Col Paul Wilmott** – Deputy Comd of 2 (NC) Sig Bde also attended with **Mrs Wilmott**. The opportunity to dine out **SSgt Paul Astell-Burt** was taken, who is calling it a day on his TA Service after a respectable 22 years! It was also a special evening for **Sig Val O'Regan** as she was promoted to LCpl. Finally, at the end of November, the Sqn provided secure voice comms for Ex HERMES ISONOMY II a UK Ops ex.

DECEMBER 2007

The final trg weekend of the year, 7 – 9 December, saw the Sqn completing its final MATTs trg, including a staggeringly cold and wet range day at Otmoor Range in Oxfordshire. The Saturday evening was taken up with a traditional Christmas Dinner with the Officers and SNCOs "waiting on" whilst the soldiers dined. The brave decision to conduct the Values and Standards Trg on Sunday morning saw the moral component tested close to its limit !

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col SJ Baker TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) AJ Wyatt**

This has been a period of farewells, welcomes and congratulations within the Regt. We have said farewell to both our CO, **Lt Col Andrew Smith MBE TD,** and to our RSM, **WO1 Mark Simcock**. We thank them for all they have done for 38 Sig Regt and wish them and their families every happiness in the future. In their place we welcome **Lt Col Steve Baker** from 12 Sig Gp as CO and **WO1 Andy Wyatt** from 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn as RSM. We wish both them enjoyable and successful tours with the Regt.

Lt Col Andrew Smith hands over command to Lt Col Steve Baker

Congratulations go to our Adjt, **Capt Abby Parkinson** on her selection for promotion to Maj and to **WO2(YofS) Marc Dunbavand** on the presentation of his Royal Warrant, the last act of outgoing CO, **Lt Col Smith**, before he handed over comd of the Regt to **Lt Col Baker** at the Manor Top TA Centre in Sheffield on Tuesday 27 November in front of a parade of all ranks from all the Sqns of the Regt.

Congratulations also go to the latest additions to the officer strength of the Regt. **Capts Andrew Harding** of 46 Sig Sqn, Derby and **Adrian Moran** of 93 Sig Sqn, Blackburn were selected for TA Late Entry commissions earlier this year and have now taken up Tp Comd appointments following the successful completion of their Late Entry Officers Course at Sandhurst. Finally, we congratulate and thank all members of the Regt's admin staff, both civilian and NRPS, led by RAO **Maj Steve Rose** for their tireless efforts to ensure the smooth transition of the Regt's pers and pay records to JPA and for the transfer of all pers to the revised 8005 establishment posts.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J P Ahern**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Coburn**

We welcome Sp Sqn to our ORBAT. It was formerly HQ Sqn which has been renamed and enlarged as a result of the implementation of our new 8005 Establishment Table.

CHARITY AUCTION - 30 OCTOBER 07 - *by LCpl Lisa Quinn*

With the Remembrance Weekend approaching, **WO1(RSM) Mark Simcock** wanted to do more for the Royal British Legion (RBL). So we brainstormed a few ideas and the idea of a charity auction being held at Sheffield Station to raise money was suggested by **Capt Linda Morgan-Monk**, PSAO HQ Sqn. The only way for an auction to work would be if people were generous enough to donate items to be auctioned off.

So **LCpl Lisa Quinn**, **Sgt Joanne Connelly** and I got to work writing letters and making phone calls to local companies and individuals within the TA. As you can imagine we were turned down by some but we were also successful with many others. Some of the companies we appealed to for sp were football clubs, local shopping centres, local entertainment complexes and activity centres.

We received sp from companies such as Sheffield United Football Clubm, who donated a club banner signed by the team players. Ponds Forge International Sports Centre donated a family ice skating pass, family swimming pass and day passes to its fitness suite; a local businesswoman agreed to personally design and create a cake to the successful bidder's specification; Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre donated shopping vouchers up to the value of £50; **LCpl Ricky Griffiths** donated the ice hockey stick used by the captain of the Sheffield Stealers which has been signed by all the players; **SSgt Mickey Rooney** donated a brand new IPOD docking station with alarm and radio and a 24 piece RBL 'Poppy' dinner set. Not only did **Cpl Graham Blyth** donate professional car care products but he also volunteered his services to give do professional valet service on the successful bidder's car; 93 Sig Sqn in Blackburn donated a large box of

platinum fireworks; **Sgt Joanne Connelly**, being rather handy with a paint brush, offered to paint a picture of the buyer's choice; **Pte Ben Stephenson** offered to prepare and cook a romantic meal for two in the winning bidder's own home; **Cpl Nick James** agreed to polish the successful bidder's mil boots for a whole month while the WOs and Sgts Mess donated a 38th Sig Regt tie and a fine bottle of port.

The Auction was held in the Junior Ranks Club at the Manor Top TA Centre, Sheffield after the end of the Trg Evening on Tuesday 30 October. An excellent buffet was laid on by **Sgt Joanne Connelly** and **Pte Ben Stephenson** to entice the bidders in, while the RSM agreed to be the auctioneer.

The auction started very successfully with the first item being **Cpl Graham Blyth's** valet service going for over £40 to **Capt Thelma Ward**. All items were selling very successfully with everyone enjoying outbidding each other and trying to confuse the RSM, especially the members of his Mess. The item that sold for the most amount of money was the Sheffield United banner which went for £50 to **LCpl John White**.

Thanks to the generosity of both the donators of items and the successful bidders, a total of £450 was raised for the Royal British Legion. Thank you to everyone that helped the event become such a success and especially to **Sgt Joanne Connelly** who helped me so much to ensure that everything came together.

46 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JS Hubbard**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) MP Hallam**

Since the last *Wire* notes, the Sqn has bade farewell to PSAO, **Capt Steve May** who has moved to RHQ pending his redundancy as a result of the implementation of the 8005 Establishment Table. In his place we welcome **Capt Ken Scott** who was previously PSAO of Nottingham-based 87 Sig Sqn which has been reduced to a Tp under the 8005 changes.

We wish **Steve** and his wife **Maria** every happiness in their new home on the Costa Blanca in Spain and can assure him that he will not be forgotten, not least by the keen golfers who are hoping to visit him from time to time, purely in the interests of keeping him up to date with the Sqn's activities of course.

We have also said farewell to our Sqn 2IC, **Capt Kev Gater**, who has moved to the post of 2IC with Sp Sqn in Sheffield.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A J Powell**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) T Grant**

- by Capt Hanish Fell

I believe the phrase is 'No rest for the wicked'. If this is true then the 64 Sig Sqn must have been dabbling in the dark arts of late. It only seems a matter of weeks since returning from Annual Camp in Fremington, Devon, but looking at the Regtl Trg Calendar it's hard to believe that in only 2 months we have managed to cram in a Sqn ICS weekend, a Regtl Cadre Weekend, Eqpt Care, the CO's Dining Out, the Remembrance Day parade, a Trade Camp and a Regtl ICS Weekend.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Year on year the format changes very little for a day that is possibly the most important in the Regt's calendar, yet the planning and preparation that goes into Remembrance Day never ceases to amaze me.

With the Sqn split between Sheffield and Nottingham, this year we had troops on parade in both locations. In Sheffield, the parade was ably led by newly commissioned **Capt Paul Cooper** and in Nottingham, the Sqn's contingent was headed up by **Lt Emma Kelly** both of whom, along with all the members of the Sqn who paraded, did a sterling job.

With the exception of the usual festive parties the Sqn can now look forward to a brief respite over the Christmas period. This will be needed as 2008 promises to be another busy and interesting year.

Sig Arnott has written a short piece about his time at Trade Camp, run by 38 Sig Regt, and about his experience on Ex WHITE WINTER.

TRADE CAMP 1 – 9 NOVEMBER - *by Sig Simon Arnott*

As with all good Army bases in the UK, Swynnerton is perfectly located on one of the coldest trg areas in Britain. Poor planning was certainly an issue in the siting of the camp as the nearest 'local' pub is a good couple of clicks away. Having said that, morale started on a high as we were all keen to learn and eager to get down to business.

The first of many 14 hr 'death by PowerPoint' days threatened to stamp out all traces of morale but at 2100hrs each day it was topped up to sustainable levels in the bar.

Motivation was a key factor in the learning process. For my syndicate this was most certainly kept at the highest levels due to the highly entertaining, yet somewhat unorthodox instructional style of 38's very own **Sgt Karl Dabell** – B syndicate will know what I mean.

A&P Theory – well what can I say? It's a pretty difficult job to make A&P entertaining, but still we worked at it until grey matter was flowing freely from our ears. After 6 days we were all fully psyched up for getting out into the field and doing some practical work.

The final ex came soon enough and we were given the opportunity to put our new found skills to use. It was a relatively easy 30 hr ex as it was non-tactical and we were allowed silly little luxuries like a few short hours napping time and hot food from the cookhouse. The skills instilled into us by our instructors all seemed to click together and we worked well as part of our tightly-knit cohesive Sects.

Overall the Trade Camp was highly successful and enjoyable. Our thanks go to all the staff, especially the often forgotten backroom staff without whom it could not have been such a success.

EXERCISE WHITE WINTER 23 – 25 NOVEMBER 07
- by Sig Simon Arnott

On Friday night we started out tired but enthusiastic, determined to show that we could do the job professionally with minimal fuss. We rocked up to the TA Centre in Derby at about 2230hrs and immediately went to work setting up the Comcen. Comms was the first order of the day as they had to be established by 1159hrs but with our Airwave capability that wasn't an issue.

One of the Dets at Derby was manned by a lone Sgt, so I was tasked to work with him for the weekend. Having just come off my Class 3 ICS Op Trade Course it was the perfect opportunity to practise setting up an 8ft mast and remoting it into a warm room. I certainly didn't fancy lying outside in the below freezing cold for hours at a time.

We both worked through until about 0330hrs by which point I was relieved for a much-needed 4 hr kip, just enough to keep me going. We soon settled into a routine for the rest of the ex and this allowed me to get some good hands-on experience with the kit.

It is fair to say that we were very lucky at Derby as we had 2 Class 3 Chefs with us, **Pte Ben Stephenson** and **Pte Gareth Ball** who both seemed to have the fantastic knack of making inedible food into a luxurious 3 course meal. This was greatly appreciated by everyone. All in all it was a good ex, and for me the start of a long learning curve as a Siggy.

93 (EAST LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj NP Reid**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) SB Hopkinson**

CELEBRATION OF A MILESTONE

The Sqn had cause to celebrate recently when on 26 October 07, the long serving Admin Officer, **Mrs Christine Tanczos** completed 20 years service with the Sqn.

During her time at the Sqn, **Christine** has been hugely active and supportive of all the soldiers and officers alike, even attending Annual Camp one year to pay the soldiers. She takes part in all the Sqn social occasions and attends the civilian AT package each year.

Maj Neil Reid presenting Christine Tanczos with a bouquet to mark her 20 years with 93 Sig Sqn

To mark this milestone, the OC, **Maj Neil Reid**, took time out from his busy schedule to present **Christine** with a bouquet of flowers and some gift vouchers. The members of the Permanent Staff then accompanied her for a quiet lunch. We look forward to many more years with **Christine** at the hub of the 'admin' helm.

WOS AND SGTS MESS DINING OUT OF LT COL AD SMITH MBE TD - *by Sgt Gaz Myers*

On 3 September 2007, 38 Sig Regt WOs and Sgts Mess dined out their CO, **Lt Col Andrew Smith MBE TD** who moved on to pastures new in November 2007, after spending over 15 years with the Regt, the last 2 of which were as CO.

Due to the CO's hectic schedule, dates for his Dining Out had been changed many times but eventually it was agreed to say farewell during the Regtl Annual Camp held at Fremington in Devon in September 07, where almost every Mess member would be present to give the CO the ideal send off. The evening began at 1830hrs with all Mess members assembling in the Fremington Trg Camp Mess.

It was at this point in the evening that the entertainment arrived somewhat unexpectedly in the form of HQ Sqn SSM, **WO2 Si Coburn**, who was wearing what can only be described as orthopaedic elf shoes, similar to those you would associate with an ageing physics teacher in a mid life crisis.

After the laughing had finished the CO arrived and was welcomed into the Mess by **WO1(RSM) Mark Simcock**. The CO mingled with the Mess members and chatted with the numerous people he had seen come up through the ranks during his time in the Regt. Unfortunately he couldn't enjoy too much of a tipple as he was anxiously waiting for news from Sheffield of his wife and the impending birth of their first child.

The evening consisted of a fabulous continental style buffet prepared by the Fremington Camp catering staff and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. The food was washed down with everyone's favourite tipple – free wine! Thanks must go to **SSgt (SPSI) Graeme 'H' Honeywood** for his outstanding devotion to duty in ensuring that the free wine was disposed of as quickly as possible. The RSM would also particularly like to thank **'H'** for the big hug he received at the end of the night – most people just ask permission to leave the Mess!

Once the meal was over, the RSM took centre stage. Enter **WO1(RSM) Mark 'Michael Aspel' Simcock** and his very own version of 'This is Your Life' with a comedy twist. Reeling off numerous key moments in the CO's time with the Regt, the RSM took every opportunity he could to barrack the man he had called boss for the last 2 years.

The best quip was about the CO being slightly 'tight-fisted' – that coming from a man who would starve himself rather than buy his own lunch! This continued for a good 10 minutes before the RSM finally got round to presenting the CO with his original Dining-In photograph from 2005 and an engraved sword and scabbard mounted on a plinth in appreciation for all the work he had put in during his time with the Regt, particularly his last 2 years in comd during which the Regt has achieved so much.

The CO also received another gift a couple of days later when his wife, **Michelle** gave birth to his son, **Henry** - a future CO? He's a definite look-alike for the CO but with more hair! After the presentation the wine flowed and the CO again got amongst the various gaggles of people for a general chinwag. Looking back on the event it has been noted that although the CO wore his Regtl Tie (for a change), he still didn't get the beers in so maybe the RSM was right to give him some stick!

The Regt would again like to thank **Lt Col Andrew Smith MBE TD** for all his hard work and time at 38 Sig Regt and would like to wish him and his family all the very best in the future.

THE TARA CUP COMPETITION 2007 - *by Sgt Zoe Schofield*

The TARA Cup is the RSM's Annual Competition strongly contested each year by the Sqns within the Regt. This year the newly amalgamated 64 Sig Sqn competed together and the new arrival, 93 Sig Sqn (formerly of 37 Sig Regt) was recognised as a new and formidable competitor.

In true TARA Cup style the competition started off with a kit check – easy some might think. Out came the favourite mascot and a last minute addition to this year's competition, a picture of the Ops Maj, **Maj Mick Fleming**, and the RSM, **WO1 Simcock**!. After minor deliberations-about whether or not a photo will do, we get our 'best' artist on it straight away.

Oh dear, our unnamed artist used a bit to much artistic licence and for some reason dressed the RSM like a clown – 5 points deducted straight away! We quickly clambered into our minibus and headed off to Braunton Burrows Trg Area.

The first stand was the surprise stand - an arsenal of foreign wpns that we had to strip, assemble and answer several questions on. First up is **2Lt Rob Agar** who had to carry out

NSPs on an M16 – no problems, he'd obviously done it before. Next up was **Pte Ben Stephenson** who had to strip the AK47. Stripping is not his problem! Then it was off to the next stand, timings were tight and the sand dunes were making our calves as big as Arnie's. The First Aid stand became a casualty extraction under fire. **WO2(SSM) Trevor Grant** wasted no time over diplomatic relations as he ordered the Sect to open fire. The NBC scenario went off with a bang (literally!) and then the comd task allowed some of our JNCOs the chance to shine.

The final stand was an observation stand based around an escape scenario. The leopard crawl through a bramble bush was not the most pleasant experience we've had but moral was high and nobody seemed that bothered about it.

It was the best TARA Cup for quite a few years and the day was finished off with a BBQ, a few beers - and for 64 Sig Sqn a shiny trophy that we received with pride and satisfaction.

64 Sig Sqn at the barbecue with the 2007 Tara Cup trophy

39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col CM Lankester TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) MJ Petts**

At the end of the year, it is an opportune moment to look back at what has been a tremendous year for the Regt. The Regt deployed operationally as part of Op OUTLOOK providing Military ICS sp to the Gold HQ in Gloucester, a short description of which appeared in the October edition of *The Wire*. HQ Sqn and 94(BY) Sig Sqn both deployed overseas to Germany to complete their annual camps and forge links with their regular Corps counterparts based there.

The Regt has also celebrated it's annual Skinners Dinner in Blandford on 13 October. As the main social event of the year, the officers of the Regt host The Master of the Worshipful Company of Skinners for dinner, reaffirming our link to this ancient livery company.

A multitude of changes have occurred with RHQ with the CO, Ops Maj, Adjt and RSM all handing over since the publication of the last *Wire* Notes. We welcome **Lt Col CM Lankester** as the CO, who took the reins from **Lt Col JS Adams** who departed to take up a post with the Defence Academy at Shrivenham and **WO1(RSM) MJ Petts** taking up the post as RSM from **WO1(RSM) CS Tucker** who has retired from the Army on completion of 22 years service.

HEADQUARTERS (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

OC **Maj CM Dawes TD**
SPSI **SSgt Gaz Proctor**

The Sqn continues to develop under the careful watch of the OC and SPSI who have kept us extremely busy with Annual Camp, Driving Cadre, CO's Cup Competition, Remembrance Parade and the Annual Christmas Dinner/Social Night.

Remembrance Sunday saw a well represented HQ Sqn leading the composite parade with 57 Sig Sqn in the centre of Bristol with the SVWO, **WO1(SVWO) Dickie Lee** laying the regtl wreath at the Cenotaph. **Cpl Andy Badman**, **Cpl Rich Brown** and **LCpl Tom Watson** also attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Colston Hall, Bristol.

This year's Driving Cadre was held at Swynnerton from 16 – 29 September where the MTWO, **WO2(MTWO) Dennis Griffiths** and his team managed to train and familiarise drivers from across the Regt in a variety of driving tests. Congratulations to **Cpl Mo Morris**, **LCpl Tom Watson** and **Cfn Stu Jones** who all passed their Category C+E Licence and **LCpl 'Foxie' Fox** who achieved his Category C Licence.

The Regtl Shooting Team continues under the guidance of **Maj Gus Loveridge** and **SSgt Merv Dyer** of 57 Sig Sqn and are busy practising for next year's TA Operational Shooting Competition. The Recruiting team have also been present at several local fetes and shopping centres in the hope to increase our numbers.

EXERCISE WESSEX TIGER 2007- *by WO2 Jayne Tuck*

Due to no centralised FTX this year, the Sqn had the opportunity to organise its own Annual Camp. HQ Sqn elected to spend the first 2 weeks of September in Germany, in split locations, undertaking a variety of trade-related tasks and AT.

We reported to Horfield TA Centre on Friday evening, 31 August, where we were pleased to finally meet 2 of our Cornwall based operators, **Sigs Emma Robinson** and **Carly Smith**. We were also pleased to welcome along 2 members of 57 Sig Sqn, **Sigs Dave Willcox** and **Lloyd Parsons**, both from the Gloucester Tp, who would be joining us for camp.

Following a relaxed evening and an early night, we departed from the TAC at 0600hrs on Saturday morning for the first leg of our journey to Dover. While on the 2 hr trip to Calais on the ferry "Pride of Dover", some of us took the opportunity to enjoy a good lunch in Langan's Brasserie. We finally arrived at 2300hrs on Saturday evening at Harewood Barracks, Herford, home of 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, who were to be our hosts for the next 6 days. Sunday was spent exploring the local area and hostelries at a leisurely pace.

On Monday morning we were given an introductory tour of the various depts in Herford by **Sgt Hemmings**. Our various cap-badged pers were then despatched to work in the depts relevant to their particular trades, where they would work for the next 4 days. The efforts of our REME craftsmen and Electrician Drivers were particularly appreciated by the Herford workshops, especially as they were working 12 hr shifts. The OC, **Maj Clive Dawes**, **WO1 Dicky Lee** and **WO2 Jayne Tuck** took on a mission to audit and redesign the Hammersmith Officers Mess property account, which included taking 309 photographs of the paintings alone. This was warmly received by our host unit. Our elusive 2IC, **Capt Phil Smith** was studying for his MK2 exam later in the week and was widely avoided due to the consistent moaning about the quality of the internet connection.

Activities at camp included a 10 pin bowling night organised by **WO1(SVWO) Dicky Lee**, despite not speaking a word of German.

Our radio operators under **Sgt Karen Hodges** were treated to a visit to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp by their hosts and returned quite moved.

On Thursday 6 September, we departed for the transit accn at Sennelager Camp en route to the British Mohnesee Sail Trg Centre, where we arrived on Friday afternoon, to be welcomed by the Chief Instructor, **WO2 Johnny Johnston**, his wife **Jackie** and their staff.

Sunday morning kicked off with a swimming confidence test in the Mohnesee River – definitely one for the hardy! Some of the sights this morning were definitely not for the faint hearted. Over the next 5 days, we had the opportunity to participate in a number of water based activities, including wind-surfing, kayaking and dinghy sailing, as well as walking and cycling in the surrounding area. Most of our pers made full use of the water related facilities, despite the disappointingly poor weather! **Sgt Phil Hall** was to be found weed collecting all week, and **Sgt Caroline Carter** was seen windsurfing into the distance, eventually to be recovered by the rescue boat. **Sgt Andy Gray** managed to turn his dingy completely upside down and spent an hour getting it upright. The OC, **Maj Dawes** bobbed when he should have ducked, and ended up with a lump the size of an egg from his dinghy's boom. He was not the last! **Sgt Mike Stawrowski** decided to try his hand with the German fish, and despite his claims of a bumper catch, no evidence was forthcoming. **Cpl Luke Cemlyn** and **Sgt Phil Hall** both attained their Level 1 Windsurfing certificates.

On Monday 10 September, one of our RAMC medics, **LCpl Nanny Nash** celebrated her birthday with our help and we were also joined that evening by our CO, **Lt Col John Adams**, and RSM, **WO1(RSM) Carl Tucker**, who visited us for 2 days with their driver, **LCpl Kevin Reeve**. The following evening we organised our own Cheese & Wine Party – noted for more wine than cheese!

On our last trg day, Wednesday 12 September, we all arranged to meet at the Mohnesee Dam. Some paddled there by kayak under the guidance of instructor **Sig Emily Peniak** from Herford, some cycled and the remainder of us walked, all finally meeting up around lunchtime. The café at the dam was seen to do a roaring trade. Thursday 13 September was spent as a social day in Dortmund before commencing the return trip on Friday. It was more social for some, especially a small group (who were navigationally challenged) who ended up going down a very disreputable street (or so they claim)!

This was an enjoyable and entertaining annual camp which was, for many of us, the first time in our entire careers we had had the opportunity to venture overseas with the TA!

We wish to pass on our special thanks to the 1 Div team at Herford, **Johnny** and **Jackie Johnston** and the staff at the Mohnesee Trg Centre and most of all to our Permanent Staff, **Capt Terry Morrissey**, **SSgts Gaz Proctor** and **Mark Aston** for making it all possible!

HQ (NSY) Squadron in Germany

CO'S CUP - *by Lt Keith Taylor*

Over the weekend of 5 – 7 October the annual CO's Cup weekend took place in Sennybridge trg area, under the watchful eye of the new Ops Maj, **Maj John Williams**. Four teams were entered this year, with 57 Sig Sqn fielding 2 teams and a team each entered by 94 Sig Sqn and HQ Sqn. The defending champion, **Lt Andy Doherty** was again leading a team from 57 Sig Sqn with the HQ Sqn team led by newly promoted **SSgt(SQMS) Pete Rendall** keen to make up for last year's disappointment of 2nd place.

The competition consisted of the teams navigating their way between a series of stands across the area, each organised by the Regular Staff and SNCOs from across the Regt. There was also an OPFOR from Sussex ACF, designed to test the abilities of the teams in the core mil skills, emphasising the "soldier first" attitude. Many stands required the teams to perform essential tasks such as Battle Casualty Drills (BCD) and it was here that the HQ Sqn casualties were to be found. **WO2 Jayne Tuck**, **SSgt Sue Burdge**, and **Sgt Karen Hodges** all made up to look incredibly injured and ill. The Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) stand pushed the leaders to prioritise tasks to achieve the aim while making sure their soldiers didn't become casualties themselves while under fire. The stand organisers had clearly put in an enormous amount of effort, with vast quantities of Pyro, fake blood, machine guns and even airburst chemical weapons adding to the all-important realism of the situations that the soldiers had to react to.

On the final day the scores were close and the teams got the chance to make the difference based on their physical strength, endurance and teamwork on the assit course. The HQ Sqn team put in a sterling effort on the assit course, and was the only team to finish the whole course with all its members, thus winning the stand – however it was not enough and we were just pipped at the final post by a single point by the eventual winners, 94 Sig Sqn from Windsor.

57 (CITY & COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Iain Sainsbury**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Ben Newby**

EXERCISE MYSTERIOUS LYNX - *by 2Lt Andy Peters*

With the silly season in mind, on Friday evening 57 Sig Sqn set off for a "fun weekend" consisting of an inter-troop competition and a Christmas party under the name of Ex MYSTERIOUS LYNX.

Capt Hook, Maj Sainsbury and Capt John sample the delights of Ex MYSTERIOUS LYNX

The Sqn arrived at the accn, kindly lent to us by C Coy 6 RIFLES, and after a quick opening brief we started mentally preparing ourselves for the competition.

The ex was a competition between 3 teams based on the geography of the Sqn: Bristol Tp team, Gloucester Tp and Sqn HQ. The first event consisted of a quiz based on the history of the Dorset and Devonshire Regt.

For the second and third stands the teams started off split in half, with some of the team doing a shooting stand and the rest starting a 'ready steady cook' type challenge, under the strict supervision of a trained RLC Chef. Once the shooting had finished the teams continued with their cooking. The challenge was to take the items provided and come up with a starter and main course for our 3 very picky judges. We also had to ice and decorate a Christmas cake. After a bit of a slow start and a rather large amount of planning, the teams all managed to surprise themselves with their culinary creations.

After the fun of the morning, it was time to get changed into green kit and head for Blandford for the next couple of stands. The first stand of the afternoon was a set of 3 comd tasks, one of which was quite easy for those of us who had watched Die Hard 3 (based on the scene where the 2 lead characters had to use a 5 litre and a 3 litre container to measure out exactly 4 litres of water to defuse a bomb). The second stand was a classic march and shoot competition. The course was just over 1.5 miles as a squad with the added fun of carrying a tyre, followed immediately by a shooting competition. The scenario for the shoot was 60 rounds in about 1.5 minutes with the aim of killing as many of the assaulting enemy as possible. Although some people were not looking forward to the physical side of this stand, everyone put in lots of effort and came away with a good sense of achievement.

This concluded the events for the day and everyone returned to the accn to fight over the few hot showers and get ready for the Christmas party. After pre-dinner drinks in a local pub we returned to our accn and sat down to our meal. As is customary the Officers and Seniors served the meal and for added fun (and to encourage discussion and cause confusion) the Officers moved places for each course.

After the meal, the 3 teams performed some skits to be judged buy our 4 judges. Gloucester Tp did a mix of amusing events from the past year, culminating in a repeat performance of 'Gay Bar' by **Maj Iain Sainsbury**, while Bristol Tp entertained everyone with a rather interesting episode of Blind Date.

Sunday started with a bit of fun PT organised by **WO2(SSM) Ben Newby** before a much needed fried breakfast. The weekend was finished perfectly by a trip to the Tank Museum in Bovington. A very good weekend was had by all and congratulations to the winners of the inter-troop competition, Bristol Tp.

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE IN BRISTOL - *by 2Lt Jo Burke*

A soft veil of rain fell as members of 57 Sig Sqn formed up on College Green on Sunday 11 November. It was with a great sense of pride that we marched through the crowd lined streets towards the Cenotaph, where the Remembrance Day service took place. Joined by serving regulars, reserves, veterans, uniformed cadets and other civil and military representatives, and of course supported by members of the public, we paid our deepest respects to the treasured memory of fellow comrades.

As the 2 minute silence settled across the city, we remembered the immense selfless sacrifices that make up our history and shape our present; sacrifices made by countless, brave individuals which have allowed us today to live in freedom and democracy. We also paid tribute to our service men and women still serving our Queen and country in various deployments around the globe. Having colleagues currently deployed on ops made the service especially poignant as we prayed for their safe return. Our thoughts also went out to the families, friends and communities that allow our Armed Forces to do the job they have to do and are often the ones left behind when tragedy occurs.

The service was well attended, with **VAdm Trevor A Soar OBE** taking the salute. The Lord Mayor of Bristol, **Cllr Royston Griffey**, the former Lord Mayor, **Cllr Peter Abraham**, the Lord Lieutenant of Bristol, **Mary Prior**, and The Lord Lieutenant's Cadet were also in attendance.

Bugles played, wreaths were laid and the rain stopped. Clapping crowds lined our route back to College Green as we marched, heads held high; the National Anthem swelling in each and every one of our hearts. We made our way back to our TAC for a traditional curry supper; sitting down with each other and our precious families and friends who support, love us and make being in the Reserve Forces possible. It was a day to remember, a day to commemorate and most certainly a day to feel incredibly proud to be in uniform.

94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Vince Connelly TD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Matt Chapman**

In early September, 94 (BY) Sig Sqn deployed to Salisbury Plain for its Annual Camp, Ex ARRCADE FALCON 07, under the comd of **Maj Vince Connelly**. The ex was one of the largest of its kind and involved over 600 soldiers from more than 4 Regts and was (supposedly) the last time Ptarmigan would be deployed on this scale. ARRCADE FALCON consisted of 4 main phases, a comms ex on Salisbury Plain, Sennybridge and Swynnerton. Then after returning to TACs we moved to Germany for 5 days of activities, including an acquaintance with the other ARRC ICS assets, some mil skill trg and the Bde Comd Cup Competition.

Once we had a arrived at Keevil airfield, we began a busy 24hrs of receiving orders and undergoing a PACEX to ensure nothing had 'shaken loose' on our move down the M4. We all had a somewhat disturbed night due to a rave happening in a barn about 200m away!

94 Sqn's role was to provide Combat Net Radio (CNR) sp to the ex and our primary task for the first phase of the ex was to provide CNR coverage for the move to Sennybridge. This was a challenge, not only because of the geography but also because the police had insisted that the ex didn't use the Severn Bridge but had to go up past Swindon, through Gloucester and Monmouth. After some careful planning using computer software to predict radio coverage and identify possible site locations by the Sqn Yeoman, **SSgt(YofS(V)) Dave King**, a Recce team was deployed under the comd of **Lt Ed Cutts**. They rapidly confirmed the locations, RRB sites and checked radio coverage along the route. Once they returned to Sqn HQ, a set of orders were given and a total of 9 dets and RRBs deployed. Although they were delayed slightly by a low flying C17, within 8 hrs of deploying, the rebro chain had been established and it was possible to communicate from Keevil all the way to Sennybridge.

On the Wednesday, the ex moved to Sennybridge and although it was hard on the vehs and crews, everyone arrived safely, albeit with the REME doing some sterling work at the side of the road on several occasions. The radio coverage proved excellent and for the duration of the move (over 12 hrs) there was traffic across the net.

Once the ex had moved up to Sennybridge, the Sqn's task changed to providing the CNR sp directly to the notional Bde HQ and associated Regts. This was a task that 94 Sqn are more used to and quickly established a robust all informed CNR network. On several occasions the Bde Comd's Conference Call was carried out over CNR, which was a real testament to everyone hard work and professionalism.

The Sqn also provided 5 dets to sp Ex Con. Their tasks ranged from providing CNR connectivity for the Staff and Umpiring OPFOR to feeding ex play, by acting as the Bde staff out on the Trg Areas. After a slightly less arduous move to Swynnerton, near Stafford, the Sqn regrouped and enjoyed some well deserved downtime on the Saturday evening. On the Sunday we hosted some VIPs including the Sqn Hon Col **Brig Tony Verey**, and then moved back to Windsor. Once everyone had arrived back at our

TAC there was the usual turning around of vehs and getting ready for the next phase of the ex.

The coaches arrived on Monday afternoon for the move down to Elmpt, in Germany. The next couple of days were spent being briefed and having demonstrations of the other signals assets that are associated with the ARRC. This was mixed with some more unusual mil trg including prisoner searching and mine detection. There was also an opportunity to have some R&R in the evenings. This included a Sqn smoker and a Go Karting competition, which everyone enjoyed.

The last day consisted of the Comd's Cup in which the junior soldiers took part in a very well organised competition that consisted of 'it's a knock out' style games. Once this had been completed, the coaches picked us up and we travelled through the night back to Windsor. Overall the ex was both enjoyable and challenging.

94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron on Remembrance Day 2007

ARMY

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col FER Whichelo**
RSM	**WO1 P Coates**

EXERCISE ROMAN HORSESHOE FINN 07

Ex ROMAN HORSESHOE FINN was a combined ex to Italy over the period 5 – 14 October 07 in which 50 members of the Regt deployed. It involved a battlefield study of Monte Cassino and the Hitler Line, AT in the form of high level trekking in the Gran Sasso National Park and an Initiative Ex in Rome. The Hitler Line is a key battle honour of the North Irish Horse, and the traditions of this famed unit are continued through B (NIH) Sqn QOY and 69 (NIH) Sig Sqn, 40 (U) Sig Regt.

The group were split into 6 sections. The first 3 sections travelled initially to Monte Cassino to conduct the battlefield study, while sections 4, 5 and 6 drove to the Gran Sasso National Park area of the Abruzzo Mountains.

The first phase of the ex for me was the battlefield study. **Maj Christine Woodrow** and **Capt Keith Dowell** were the OICs of this phase and did an absolutely fantastic job, from arranging all the admin to delivering the lessons on the ground. All the sect had worked hard in the months prior to the ex in order to deliver thorough presentations immediately prior to going out onto the ground to study the 4 individual battles. We all stood in the valley looking up at Monte Cassino in awe, imagining what we would be thinking had we been ordered to attack using only the eqpt available at the time. During this phase we were very fortunate that the Bde Comd, **Brig Hargreaves** and our Hon Col, **Col Ian Henderson** were able to visit us. A veteran from the North Irish Horseshoe, **Lt Donald Hunt** who had actually fought on the Hitler Line also accompanied us and was able to give us a first hand account of the battle through the eyes of a young Tp Comd. We were immensely grateful for this insight; it added a lot of realism to the battle and made us think about the realities of war.

LCpl Swindell in the British Cemetery

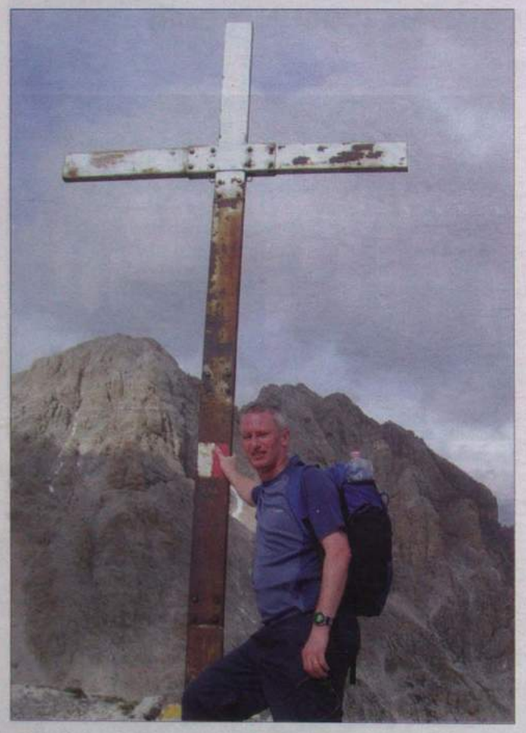
After 2½ days of studying the various battles we jumped in our minibuses and navigated our way to the Gran Sasso National Park. The AT phase was headed up by the QM, **Capt Bob Pye**, ably supported by RQMS, **WO2 Fitz-Patrick**, **Sgt Symons** and **Sgt Morris.** Less the RQMS, the directing staff for the AT departed Clonaver Park early for a near 2000 mile road trip to the Abruzzo region of Italy carrying all the rations and AT stores. Having conquered the narrow, twisting roads through the Italian Alps the advance party were able to spend 3 days checking the routes and conditions to enable the ex participants to gain the maximum from the 2½ days on the mountains.

The next few days were challenging but incredibly enjoyable. The groups were put together in such a way that everyone, regardless of ability, was challenged. As we found out, the Gran Sasso offers some fantastic mountain walking, climbing and skiing in winter and is only 2 hrs from Rome and 2½ from Cassino. The

accn was a large villa broken up into 3 apartments (Villa Collecimino) and was a 30 min drive from Rigo Piano which is at the southern end of Gran Sasso.

Capt Sam Burgess and team

There were 2 main routes that were walked. Route 1 was from a well defined car park 3km from the Campo Imperatore (1766m) to Vado di Corno and then west rising quickly to 2490m at the summit of Mt Aquila. The views were dramatic and with each step offered yet more and more camera attracting scenery. From the summit a steady gradient with yet more views and the promise of a bar at the car park (2091m). This route was excellent for the more able walker. For those who found this sort of activity beyond anything they had ever undertaken before, the route was adapted to start and finish from Campo Imperatore.



The Padre, Maj Ian Gamble carrying his cross up the mountain

Route 2 was deceptive. From Prati di Tivo another ski resort about 5km due north of Campo Imperatore, it offered a very different (less vertigo inducing) route due south through a dramatic valley ending in a significant gradient before emerging with a fabulous view of Assergi and the valley some 4000ft below.

With the arrival of the CO(JSMEL), the opportunity arose to walk the more experienced people along an un-recced route starting near Rigo Piano to the peak of Mt St Vito following the ridge north west before descending to the refuge at Fonte Vetica. It offered spectacular views. It started walking in clouds and then climbed above cloud level where we could see peaks popping above the clouds for miles around. The high barren plane of Gran Sasso was basking in the sunshine when all the valleys below the cloudbase were being rained upon.

After 2½ days walking, we again jumped in our minibuses and headed to Rome for the final phase. Meanwhile **Capt Pye**, **WO2 Fitz-Patrick** and **Sgt Symons** packed up ready to complete the long drive back to Clonaver.

The final 'Initiative' phase was organised by **Maj Barry Skinner** and **Maj Robert Finlay**. If you have read 'Angels and Demons' by **Dan Brown** you'll have a good idea what this phase consisted of. We remained in our sects as we tabbed across Rome to find the answers to clues and get our group photographs taken in various locations. The evening ended with a group dinner followed by skits. **Capt Trevor Henry** excelled himself and did a very good impression of **Al Capone**.

Our thanks and appreciation goes to all those who helped organise such an excellent ex, in particular **Lt Col Whichelo**, **Maj Woodrow**, **Maj Skinner**, **Maj Finlay**, **Capt Dowell** and **Capt Pye**.

IRISH VETERANS ASSOCIATION REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND 28 – 30 SEPTEMBER TIPPERARY - *by Maj Montgomery*

69 (NIH) Sig Sqn received an invite to take part in the Irish Army Veterans Remembrance weekend in Tipperary. The weekend was organised by **Mr Mick Haslam**, Chairman of the Tipperary Trust, whose aim is to bring together the various disparate veterans organisations in the South. The highlight of the weekend would be a parade to the newly built Veterans' Memorial erected in the grounds of the old Tipperary Barracks. This is the only veterans' memorial in the south of Ireland and is therefore of great political and emotional significance.

The first activity of the weekend was to get to Tipperary! And as the song says it is indeed a long way. For some Sqn members from the North, ably guided by chief recce scout **SSgt 'Pathfinder' Ritchie** who detoured via Newfoundland and arrived almost 8 hours later, it was a very, very long way!

The official start was on Friday evening, when the Tipperary Trust, organisers of the weekend, held a 'meet and greet'. The assembled audience included members from the Sqn, the North Irish Horse Association, Irish Army and Reserve Veterans, the British Legion, foreign reserve organisations and several Defence Attachés from their embassies in Dublin. Two local Mayors appeared and everyone made speeches and socialised. Later that evening, the Mayor of Tipperary escorted everyone on a tour of the town ensuring adequate refreshments were provided en route. The evening finished in a local hostelry where traditional music was greatly enhanced by the singing talents of **SSM Gamble** and drum player extraordinaire **Maj Montgomery.**

Saturday morning was rather more subdued and sombre with an organised visit to the War and Famine Museum just outside Tipperary town. This was very informative and moving and it educated most of us on the real impact the famine had both North and South of the border. As it rolled into the afternoon, people drifted away to prepare themselves for the formal black tie dinner to be held that evening.

The black tie dinner was extremely high profile with all the previous players attending but reinforced by several Ambassadors and the GOC Southern Comd, **Brig Gen Hayes**, as the guest speaker. Everyone was greatly impressed by the efforts of the Squadron, especially **Sigs Cole** and **Booth**, who had bought brand new tuxedos for the event; all had miniature medals displayed and the maple leaf pin badge, a very famous battle honour worn by the North Irish Horse.

The OC was delighted to be invited to sit at the top table with the Mayors, DAs and GOC and was soon exchanging war stories with the Master at Arms for the Irish Navy. The food and wine was plentiful and too soon, it was time for the formal speeches. Before this however, **Cpl Wilson** presented himself along with pipes, in full regalia. He duly proceeded to delight the surprised audience with a stirring performance of old Irish and military tunes. His parting piece, a rendition of 'Kilaloo', the North Irish Horse march, was greeted with cheers of delight from not only the Sqn but many of the old Irish Veterans. It was a great surprise and lifted the tone of the evening to a different level.

Tipperary Memorial Trust 2007
Cpl Wilson, Mr Mick Haslam (Chairman Trust), Mr McGowan (NIH Assoc), Maj Montgomery OC, Mr Lynch (NIH Assoc), SSgt Ritchie, Mr Lyle (NIH Assoc), Sgt Lynch, Sig Cole, Sig Booth, WO2(SSM) Gamble

The first to speak was **Mr Mike Haslam**, Chairman of the Trust who started by thanking everyone for attending and gave particular praise to the Sqn for their efforts. Next came the Major of Guillimont, near the Somme in France who spoke with the aid of a translator. This was followed by the GOC who gave a long speech on the role of the Irish Army in the United Nations. Soon it was the OC's turn when, without the need for a translator, thanks were duly given and presentations made to the GOC, the OC of the local Irish Army Reserve and the Tipperary Trust. Sadly after lots of fun the wee early hours came soon enough and it was time to retire as thoughts of the day's parade loomed.

Sunday morning began with an ecumenical service in the local Church of Ireland with yet again, official guests from the various embassies and Irish government ministers swelling the ranks. After this, the parade assembled outside and the Sqn, looking smart in dark suits, NIH ties and medals joined the ranks with the Veterans, Irish Army, Army Reserve and Irish Army Band for the parade through the town to the Memorial Arch. The sun was beating down as the Veterans set off following, to the Sqn's surprise, orders in Irish! The OC had escaped to the saluting dais by the Memorial Arch and took his seat beside the hierarchy ready to watch the march past. This was the first time British Army troops, regular or reserve, had marched through Tipperary since 1921 when the British pulled out from the same barracks we were now marching to – a point not lost on the many assembled journalists and photographers.

Following the march past, the parade formed up behind the arch as **Cpl Wilson** was once again called upon to play the pipes and he did so beautifully playing a lament as he marched along the front of the dignitaries. This was appreciated by everyone and a special moment for many who were there to remember not only their Regt but individual relatives whose names were inscribed on the arch.

Wreaths were then laid with the Sqn and NIH Association making their own presentations.

A short speech of thanks was then made by the GOC and Trust Chairman who thanked the Sqn yet again and reminded us about next year's event. He is determined to ensure we are there and maybe even in uniform should the politicians think the time is right.

The efforts of the Sqn and the way they so willingly joined in the activities rather than simply observe was warmly commented on by several ambassadors and the GOC himself. The effort put into actually being there, the immaculate turn out and behaviour and the extra effort of **Cpl Wilson** whose piping really made a difference and an impact on both occasions was well received and genuinely appreciated by everyone. As my first formal event with the Sqn, albeit a small detachment, it certainly made me proud to be a part of a Sqn with a long and distinguished title and history. The Sqn would like to take this opportunity to thank the CO, **Lt Col Whichelo** and the British Defence Attaché in Dublin, **Col John Steed** (late Royal Signals) for their support in gaining official permission to attend from both governments and bad luck in having permission to wear uniform and head dress rescinded at the last moment.

All in all, the weekend was the perfect mix of fun and formality and the warm invites to make this a standing event for the Sqn have not fallen on deaf ears. Next year, we will return with greater numbers including Belfast, so PSAO get this onto Blenheim for 2008!

MEDAL PARADE AND VISIT OF GOC NORTHERN IRELAND
- by Lt Farmer

On the evening of Tuesday 30 October 2007, the GOC NI, **Maj Gen Brown CBE** visited the Regt at Clonaver Park. The evening was designed to enable him to see firsthand the capabilities that the Regt could provide both inside the Province and across the UK and allow him to present medals to members of the Regt.

Upon arrival the GOC met the Officers from the Regt before receiving a brief from the CO on the current ICS capabilities of the Regt and an overview of recent and planned future trg. Following this, it was time for him to visit a Silver HQ which had been established that day within Clonaver. **Maj Montgomery** spent some time with the GOC explaining and demonstrating the range of facilities that could be established in the event of emergency and how this capability can and has been used to great effect on the mainland in recent months.

With time moving on, the GOC made his way into the drill hall for the medal presentation ceremony. During the presentation he took time to speak with and congratulate each of the recipients in turn and in particular spoke at length with **LCpl Andy Bradshaw**

The proud medal recipients: WO2 Holmes, Sgt George, LCpl Bradshaw, Lt Farmer and Maj Finlay

who received a Campaign Medal for Op HERRICK in Afghanistan. There was one surprise promotion at the end of the evening, **Sig Youll** was promoted to LCpl. He seemed genuinely surprised but not to the same extent as **Sig Millar** who fainted at this point.

With the medal presentation over, the Chefs served another of their increasingly famous curry suppers and the GOC spent time meeting the troops and senior ranks of the Regt before departing.

85 SIG SQN CHARITY FUNDRAISING - *by Maj David Wilson*

In July 2007, members of 85 Sig Sqn, along with a few interlopers from 69 Sqn completed a sponsored walk to raise money for charity – the twist being that the walk in question was the annual 100 mile blister-fest in Nijmegen. Having allowed sufficient time for aching feet to heal, representatives from Northern Ireland Cancer Research visited Sqn HQ in Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn on Tuesday 25 September to thank the team for their efforts and receive a cheque for £1,865.02. The sudden appearance of 2p was unexpected; rumours that the outgoing and incoming RSMs contributed a penny each are, of course, entirely unsubstantiated.

The marching and fundraising team were: **Maj David Wilson, 2Lt Lindsay Fulton, SSgt Cathy Barker, SSgt Glenn Campbell, SSgt Colin Sanlon, Sgt Maggie Robertson, Sgt Scott Robertson, LCpl Richard Hazard, LCpl Maggie Mulholland, Sig Tyrone Howarth, Sig Christine Murray** and **Pte Houston Wilson**. Well done to all for their efforts and pains.

BOWTAT CONTINUATION TRAINING - *by YofS Rudd*

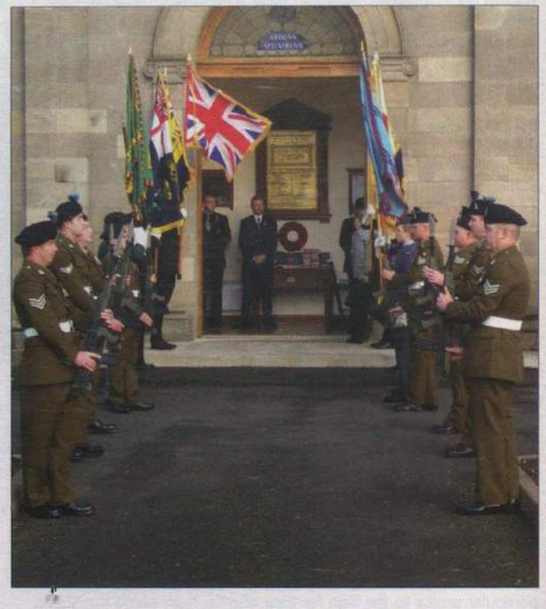
On conclusion of a 5 day BOWTAT package led by 32 Sig Regt, the Regt Ops team took the opportunity to extend the BOWTAT deployment to incorporate a comms continuation package located from MOD West Freugh. With accn in the form of a disused aircraft hangar, soldiers travelled from Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, the BOWTAT Trg location, arriving late on Tuesday 30 October. Many spent the first hour at West Freugh looking for their tour guide to complain that the accn was not as advertised in the brochure. Alternate accn was identified which was clear of bird droppings and dust and which also had great views and a green plush carpet. Since the alternative accn was outside on the airfield with green canvas walls, it was not long before 'Hotel Hangar 4' was deemed as warm and comfortable.

The trg programmed commenced with CRYPTO Authorisation and 3 hrs of KIPLING. This was a great opportunity for the operators to revise their CNR skills and then have the opportunity to confirm all aspects of their trg over the next 3 days.

With the assistance from RSS Blandford the ops team deployed the soldiers under trg on Ex RADIAL ARM towards the Galloway Forest. It was during this ex where at 5km intervals up to 35km the deployed dets tested their CNR eqpt into control where the signal strength was interrogated to enable the soldiers to understand the effects of freq/range and terrain when communicating.

BRITISH ARMED FORCES MOTORING ASSOCIATION (BAFMA) – EXERCISE ROADMASTER 07

The Regtl BAFMA team were again successful in the Armed Forces Driving Championship Ex ROADMASTER. This year the ex was held at Longmoor trg area. Crews representing all 3 Services from the UK and Germany as well as the Dutch Army took part over the period 16 – 18 November. Combating very strong competition the team of **Maj Ian Kyle, WO2 Denis Watts, Sgt Wendy Cush** and **Mr Billy Lyle** finished 1st in Royal Signals,1st in Northern Ireland and1st in Aerial Challenge. The Aerial Challenge was not how high a Land Rover could jump however **WO2 Denis Watts** and **Sgt Wendy Cush** did try to inspect the bottom of a slit trench and had to continue in 2 wheel drive only.



The Colour Party from 69 (NIH) Sig Sqn (Limavady)

Regrettably on a sadder note we pass on our condolences to **Sgt Wendy Cush** on the death of her father **Bobby Cush** (an ex member of the Regt). **Wendy** unfortunately heard of the sad news during the ex.

69 (NIH) SIGNAL SQUADRONN (LIMAVADY DETATCHMENT) *- by SSgt McDougall*

Remembrance Sunday. The Sqn's commitments in the north west are considered the most important of the year with **Sgts Adair** and **Hunter** laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in the centre of Londonderry, a tradition dating back to when the Sqn was based in Clunny Camp in the town. The wreath laying ceremony in Limavady is the Sqn's main commitment with **SSgt Palmer, Sgts George** and **Lindsay** and **Cpl Ritchie** and recently returned from Kosovo, **Cpl Black** performing Cenotaph Guard in the morning and Colour Guard in the afternoon, interrupted by one or two little drinks, just to keep warm. The rest of the Sqn paraded through the town to the church service. The whole day was rounded of with the normal social drink or two.

Permanent Staff Day Out. As part of a promise that the permanent staff from the Limavady Det would do some sort of day out every month, it was decided that **SSgt Paul McDougall** should lead a day out hill walking in the Mournes, involving staff from RHQ. Originally planned for early autumn, the end of November promised different challenges. The day of the walk was typical NI weather driving winds, sleet, rain and fog – ideal hill walking conditions. Obviously it was a high work load and not the conditions that reduced the numbers from a healthy 10 – 12 to 4. The Limavady team set off from Bloody Bridge and the Belfast team left from Newcastle to meet at the summit of Slieve Donnard. 3 hrs later, the group of **WO2 Dean Rudd, SSgt McDougall, Sgt Ricky George** and **Sig 'Boydo' Boyd** sat and had brew and discussed some work details. We will stick to E-mail in future

Limavady Det Soldier Lunch and Range Day. To kick off the festive season, Limavady held their annual soldier lunch and range day at Magiligan Training Centre and in the TA Centre. It started with a 9mm Pistol range where the soldiers were invited to check zero in different firing positions, before a competition shoot. In perfect conditions of rain and wind, **Sig 'Jamie' Booth** separated himself from his partner **Sig 'Zane' Cole** long enough to walk away with a spectacular win with 10 head shots from 10 rounds and scoring bonus points for shots in the sun glasses on the borrowed PSNI targets. Special mention has to go to **Cpl 'Paddy' Patterson** who deliberately aimed off the target to get the lowest score for the day but came 3rd from last – well done dead eye dick. On return to the TA Centre, the SNCOs of the Det followed tradition by serving the Junior Ranks their lunch and a couple of cold cans. The Lunch and Range Day was finished off with a SNCO v JRC games night and some pre-hangover refreshments.

71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO — **Lt Col CS Tallents TD**
RSM — **WO1 P Joyce**

265 (KCLY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

Following the activities of our Regtl Annual Camp in September, the Sqn settled into its pre-Christmas routine of MATTs, maint and trade trg. The Sqn welcomed **SSgt Trevor Evans** as its new SPSI in October, while **Sig Ian Rivett** returned from his CMS (R) course a lot wiser and a few pounds lighter. **Sigs Dean Cailes, Gary Henery, Stuart Hill** and **Andy Turner** completed their initial 2 week basic trg in October, while the rest of Sqn deployed to Longmoor to catch up on their MATTs.

Unfortunately, the members of the Sqn turning out for the Regtl football team couldn't prevent a defeat by 31 Sig Regt in the semi-final of the LONDIST TA Cup but they vowed to return next year and have their revenge.

In early November, **LCpls Brett 'Bomber' Harries** and **Steve 'Taff' Williams** became the first members of the Sqn to become 'Bowmanized.' We look forward these 2 very able LCpls putting their new skills into practice. The Sqn was also invited to take part in the annual Lord Mayor's Procession on Saturday 10 November. Traditionally, seen as a 68 (IC&CY) Sqn commitment the other Sqns within 71 (Y) Sig Regt had the honour of providing 2 pers in open topped Land Rovers to participate in the procession.

LCpl Williams and **Sig Carl 'Crazy' Crane** were selected and set off from Bexleyheath at 0630hrs, with rain in the air! Fortunately it cleared by the time they reached Lincoln's Inn to muster with the other Sqns. The procession started at 1100hrs and the Regt was cheered by the thousands of spectators who lined the streets. At the halfway point, as they ate their packed lunches, provided by the Lord Mayor, 2 D-Day veterans (who were to march on the return section of the procession) showed great interest in the Sqn's veh and decided there was space in the back from them to travel! However, Health and Safety and the Hon Col being present on the return route meant they could not join them. The procession finished at 1600hrs, a complete and memorable success for all those involved with apparently the largest unrehearsed parade in the world.

Sunday 11 November was the annual Remembrance Parade, 265 Sig Sqn and its Association paraded through Bexleyheath for the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial. SSM, **WO2 Adrian Keeble** soon encouraged the wayward marchers back into step. It was as poignant as ever with the addition of friends and family paying respect to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice. After the OC's, **Maj Simon Palmer**, address we caught up with old comrades in the bar over a drink and an excellent curry lunch prepared by the superb chefs at Woolwich barracks. **SSgt Stu Ridgwell** led a small group of soldiers down to Brighton in the afternoon to pay their respects to former Sharpshooter, **Jonathan Bracho-Cooke**, who tragically lost his life in Iraq in February, having joined the regular Army as a commissioned officer in 2005.

December saw **Sig James 'Jimbo' Sutton** making a safe return from his deployment on ops in Iraq. While **LCpl Jeff Porter** and **Sig Aaron Pinchbeck** found themselves heading off to Kosovo after a successful selection for 697 Sig Tp. With the Sqn now recruited up to its maximum strength, it has never been in a healthier state and ready to meet the challenges of 2008.

68 (ICCY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

EACH ONE TEACH ONE - *by Sig Shanell Johnson*

On joining 68 (IC & CY) Sig Sqn, I noticed the impact it could have within my civilian job. I work with young people excluded from mainstream education, on a provision which aims to help them attain qualifications and increase their employability.

I asked the Sqn if they could help me reach out to these students, by joining us on an Enrichment Day in July 2007. These days are designed to show the students the options that are open to them in the world of work. The task was ideal for our local Cadets, 35 (ICCY) Sig Sqn ACF.

During the last days of the school term, the Army Cadets true to their ethos visited Newham College and spoke to the Pre-16s; they promoted achievement, and the importance of being a citizen.

On their arrival they were greeted with suspicion as not many people in military uniform ever visit. They pulled up in the Land Rover and peeled kit out of the back. **Lt John White** gave a talk about how he has been able to improve his life through the Cadets. **SSgt Mike Baynard** spoke about the feeling of belonging to something as important as the Army Cadets and how important that was to him. This rather personal address got the young eyes in the room looking up and listening carefully.

Sgt Marion Robbins put things into perspective. She explained: "Before you mock that old person collecting their pension at the local post office, you should consider their past efforts. They could be a part of the reason we are all living in a democracy with free education and health."

Cadet LCpl Charley Robbins (daughter of **Sgt Robbins**) – a cadet their own age – introduced them to life in the field. She got them to put up a basher, cock using mess tins and eat the famous boil-in-the-bag burger and beans. It was a sight that will be talked about for years to come; all the students on the front grass outside the executive's office.

The fitness challenge was set when **SSgt Mike Baynard** started talking about fitness. One of the students said: "but you're like old enough to be my granddad". He ate his words when even the young fit pre-16s were seriously beaten in the challenge. It was an amazing time for them. I know for many, the idea of belonging is a very distant concept and to have my most troubled Pre-16 student express his thanks made the whole day worthwhile: "Miss, this is the best thing we've ever done, thanks."

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

4 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC **Maj PR Griffiths**
RSM **RSM (WO1) Batley**

4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (204) is now deployed on Op TELIC 11. Following the Mission Rehearsal Ex at Hohenfels, Bavaria, the Sqn enjoyed some well-earned pre-tour leave before completing the RSOI package in Kuwait. Unit pers are now deployed across Iraq in sp of MND (SE) forces. Finally, it's congratulations to the RSM on his success in the LECB.

MISSION REHEARSAL EXERCISE – HOHENFELS.

After many months of preparation, 204 Sig Sqn reached the final hurdle before deploying on Op TELIC 11. An early start and a 9 hr coach ride from Osnabrück saw the Sqn arrive at the American run facility in Bavaria and in no time at all, the ex was in full flow.

The three Tps all had very different roles to fulfil, as they will do throughout the deployment. Euphrates Tp was responsible for the op and maint of the Bde HQ and Tigris Tp provided the deployable capability. Life Sp Tp found themselves being dragged in many different directions with airport runs to collect staff and also camp administration falling under their charge.

Initially, the tempo was high for Euphrates Tp with the building and manning of HICON and simultaneous build of the Bde HQ which, after some long hours and re-supply runs to the hotdog vans, was completed in good time. Tigris Tp had a very different ex with lots of trg and preparation of kit and eqpt. This proved to be a great assistance to the Tp who were getting to know their new Tp SSgt, **Tom Woodall** and Tp Sgt, **Jez Skelhorn**.

With the pace of ops well within the Sqn's capability, visits to the PX were frequent and some very interesting purchases ensued. Among them were 'Combat Underwear' and enough Gatorade to sink the *Titanic* all over again. With Sqn Ops working long hours and simulated IDF attacks at night, it was a very happy Sqn when Endex was finally called and it was not long before the soldiers and officers were loaded onto buses for the long journey home.

With the final 2 week ex under our belts and ticks in all the boxes, only pre-tour leave stands in the way of our deployment on ops. It has been a long process to get this far, with a lot of effort going into everybody's trg and getting the Unit ready to deploy. A key member of that team has been **WO2(RQMS) Midgely** who sadly won't be deploying with the Sqn due to the Bde's impending move back to Catterick. Many thanks for all your efforts RQ. Next stop, Basrah!

RECEPTION, STAGING AND ONWARDS INTEGRATION (RSOI)

The RSOI package was conducted at Camp Buering, Kuwait and was the culmination of several months of preparation and trg for Op TELIC 11. The package was excellent and very relevant for the current climate and tempo of ops: honing the Sqn's basic mil skills from first aid to ranges to mounted/dismounted patrol lanes. Both the trg and welfare resources were first rate.

Without doubt, Baskin Robbins and Subway made record profits as the Black Rats transited through the Camp! Luckily, there was a healthy amount of PT to safeguard our svelte physiques and get the Sqn used to the slightly warmer, drier climate of southern Iraq. Morale was provided in abundance with the Washington Redskins' Cheerleaders (one for the boys) and Thanksgiving American style. It was almost a shame to leave and deploy to the sunny climes of Iraq.

Sig Horsfield in all the gear

Crowd control

Dismounting a Snatch

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

OC **Maj RJ Carter**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Ord**

ALPHA TROOP

OC **Capt McMillan**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Smith**

- by Cpl Garrett

With 2 major exs throughout the summer and autumn, it's been a busy time for the Sqn.

Our first deployment was to Canada in sp of MEDICINE MAN for 7 Bde, with most of the operators leaving in early July. We covered different posts, from manning the Ops Room to driving big American beasts, Temporary Staff Vehs (TSV), over the Prairie. This unfortunately led to **LCpl 'Billy' Burns** rendering 3 TSV VOR, with **LCpl 'Wolfy' Adams** not far behind. It was a long, hot and interesting summer and we all benefited improving our trade and driving skills, and learned a lot about Medicine Hat and the surrounding areas with our numerous "cultural" visits. Overall it was an enjoyable deployment and we send our thanks to the Permanent Staff in BATUS for looking after us.

Almost as soon as we returned from Canada, we were off again – this time to Poland, back to Drawsko Pomorski Trg area. We all looked forward to getting back to Armour and deploying the HQ again but due to movement restrictions we arrived earlier than usual. This gave us a good opportunity for some MATTS trg, and a chance to improve some of our soldiering skills, which we all enjoyed. **Cpl John Ryan**, posted after 5 long years with the Sqn, made the most of his final ex, constantly reminding us of his impending move to 16 Sig Regt and how we would be lost with out him. On the return journey, **Cpl 'Matty' Mathews** driving with **LCpl 'Scotty' Macdonald** managed somehow to roll a Land Rover on the straightest stretch of autobahn. Fortunately neither was hurt, except maybe their pride.

What do you think of the boss lads...wicked

A sad farewell to **Sgt Wicks, Cpls John Ryan, Johnny Howell, Joe Howells** and **Emma Watson**. Hello and welcome to **Cpl 'Jonesy' Jones** and **Sig Craig Hopkins** ....and **SSgt 'Smudge' Smith.**

BRAVO TROOP

OC **2Lt Wells**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Wedge**

- by Cpl Ritchie

The Sqn has been busy for the last few months due to commitments in Canada and Poland. I returned from Op TELIC 10 in July 07 to join the rest of the Tp on an AT trip to the Mohnesee Yacht Club. Everyone who went on the trip enjoyed the activities which included dinghy sailing, rowing, canoeing and some mountain biking around the local area. There was plenty of time to have some sporting fun and then relax and unwind with some beer in the club or local pubs.

LCpl Bean and LCpl Dodgson attempting to Canoe!

In September we were in BATUS where a number of us were tasked to provide temporary staff sp to the MEDICINE MAN 4 and 5 exs. This involved a mixture of ops room jobs and driving jobs covering the staff deployments onto the prairie area. I was tasked with driving a TSV red top which was a lot of fun driving all over the prairie. The majority of the guys went onto shifts in the Ops Room or Excon but myself and 3 others namely **Cpl 'Ken' Lawson**, **Sig 'Yozza' Yeomans** and **Sig 'Sorbs' Sorby** got to do the driving. Under the watchful eye of both **YofS Rogers** and **YofS Brooker** the exs went ahead and everyone got into a routine.

In between shifts and driving details there was a chance to do some sightseeing either in Medicine Hat or down to Calgary. Even **LCpl Bean** and crew from the rebro det managed some time off. Some of us even went down into Medicine Hat to celebrate Halloween and got dressed up for the occasion. There were a couple of ghouls and vampires down town that night I can tell you!

After the exs finished in late October, some of the Tp returned to Germany and some went to help Alpha Tp in Poland. Soon it was November and time for the results of the Sig to LCpl board. Congratulations to the members of the Sqn who came off the promotion board, they include **LCpl 'Matt' Brooker**, **LCpl 'Ben' Kimber**, **LCpl 'Sara' Raby** and **LCpl 'Yozza' Yeomans**. It was an extra treat for them all to be presented with their promotions while in BATUS and we celebrated that night in the Longhorn Club.

We say goodbye to **LCpl Raby** – good Luck on your recruiting tour. Goodbye to **Sgt 'Si' Burns** who is posted on promotion. We wish all the best for the outgoing **Lt Maben** who is off to Blandford on posting. He has been Bravo Tp OC for over a year and has now earned his Captaincy. With that a welcome to **2Lt Wells** as our new Tp OC. Also a welcome to **SSgt Wedge**, who is our new Tp 'staffy' and he takes over from **SSgt 'Phil'Oulton** who has moved to the QM's dept.

LCpl Burns finds a friend on the prairie

Sunset over the complex in Canada

SHQ TROOP

OC	**Capt Howe**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Welsh**

EXERCISE UHLAN EAGLE - *by L/Cpl Hooley*

October into November has been a busy period for 207 Sig Sqn as we prepared for and then deployed on Ex UHLAN EAGLE to Poland. The Sqn spent 3 weeks in Poland in order to support a 1 week Bde ex in support of 2 Royal Anglians BG.

The first week of the ex was spent briefly setting up the HQ and testing comms, followed by an extended period of MATTS trg, PT and other mil skills trg. This included veh navigation using route cards and trip counters, convoy anti-ambush drills and a night navex for the juniors.

Needless to say by the time the ex started, 10 days after we had deployed to Poland, spirits were "high", and everyone had a deep love for the country. The ex ran smoothly and for most of us was at a slower pace than the trg period had been.

The weather made things interesting as heavy rain turned the HQ site into a swamp. This was followed a few days later by snow as we were about to tear down. Still even the hassles caused by the snow weren't enough to extinguish the light at the end of the tunnel of an ex that felt a lot longer than it was. The snow also provided an interesting insight on the inner psyche of the Bde staff officer, as they let the child out and started hurling snowballs at one another.

The post ex period has been a mix of the usual kit turnaround and the wind down toward Christmas with sports and functions etc. Eyes are now turning toward next year and the preparations for Op TELIC 12.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Tp would like to warmly welcome: **Sig 'Peanut' Hern** and **LCpl 'Jason' Bourne** straight from Blandford.

The Tp would like to say farewell to: **Cpl Jim 'Strasse' Street** who is off to Civ Div, **Cpl** soon to be **Sgt 'Rocky' Rokovada** who is off to 1 Div HQ & Sig Regt, **LCpl James Hooley** who is off to 22 Sig Regt. The Tp would like to wish you all good luck and all the best for the future.

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261)

OC	**Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM	**WO1 A Morris**

RE-SUBORDINATION OF 261 SIGNAL SQUADRON FROM 101 LOGISTICS BRIGADE TO 11 LIGHT BRIGADE
- by 2Lt J Climpson

With the op tempo as it is, many of us could be forgiven for our narrow view of the bigger picture. However, here at 261 we have been afforded a chance to take that all important "Condor Moment"; an additional 1 star HQ is required to maintain the levels of commitment we currently have in Iraq and Afghanistan. 261 Sig Sqn have been selected to provide the ICS sp to the new HQ. The formation will revive the 11th Armd Div identity and insignia as seen above in the form of the Black Bull and we will say goodbye to "Sammy".

The Sqn will be part of this new formation from its inception through all the trg to its culmination and an op tour in Afghanistan in October 2009 – Op HERRICK 11. It is an exciting time in the Sqn as you can expect, with all eyes firmly set on the goal of HERRICK 11. Sadly this rebirth will only last until May 2010 when the formation will be disbanded and all the units re-subordinating to their original Bdes.

EXERCISE PRIME BULL - *by 2Lt J Climpson*

Ex PRIME BULL was a tactical scenario based FTX involving all elements of the Sqn from 24 October – 2 November 2007 on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA). The aim of the ex was to train, practise and execute det level procedures and tactics to Collective Trg (CT) level 1 in preparation for the transition to 11 Lt Bde.

For some members of the unit this was the first ex where they had to be self sufficient on their dets. This could be up to 2 days before being re-supplied. For other members, this was a good chance to hone skills and show what they were capable of. The main tasks the dets faced were: deploying in pairs (bricks) to a pre-recced site, set up comms providing sp for BG formations and remaining concealed throughout. These tasks were completed to varying degrees of success with the pers less able to comply with SOPs going on some very long road trips and getting contacted by a few of the disgruntled Hampshirians. On the whole, the ex proved to be a great success; and some valuable lessons learned for the future.

ARMY RELAY CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS
- by LCpl H Jackson

As the cross-country season finally dawns on us, out come some finely tuned athletes raring to race. This particular race was held at Tweseldown Racecourse near Aldershot and is quite well known throughout the Army community. The 3.2 mile course included a few hills, mixed terrain and a river crossing just to add some flavour! The aim of the race was to complete the route as fast as possible before the next man in the 4 man team goes, and so on.

YofS Charnley Taking the race very seriously

We managed to put out 3 teams, 2 male and 1 female. The A Team consisted of **Capt Spencer**, **LCpl Homes**, **Sig Keighley** and **Sig Smith** and they finished a respectable 4th. The B Team consisted of **2Lt Climpson**, **SSgt(YofS) Charnley**, **LCpl Morris** and **Sig Brown** who did not do quite so well but it is the taking part that counts! The female team was made up of **Sgt Silvester**, **Cpl Lancaster**, **LCpl Jackson** and **LCpl Tuppen**. This team also finished 4th, which was a great achievement and in the main they were beaten by APTC runners.

Overall, the race was a very enjoyable way to kick off the season, with a gruelling trg schedule to come, getting us prepared for the remainder of the season.

DRIVER TRAINING - *by Cpl P Iles*

The MT was tasked to organise a driver trg package for the Sqn. The package was split between the two Tps with each being allocated 1 week.

Monday was used to teach the Tps about the wonderful world of MT paperwork with **Staff Hyland** starting the day with a lesson on FMT 3 action. If the students hadn't had enough excitement they were then treated to a lesson on 1005s by **LCpl Challis** and route cards by **Cpl Butcher**. On Tuesday, the Tps were let loose on the unsuspecting public by writing their own route cards. They had to select a route from Aldershot to Colerne.

Wednesday had **Cpl Egan** and **Cpl Girvan** testing out the written route cards to see how much the students had learned. Everyone did really well with just a few roundabouts and other little things missing from the plan…nothing important. Thursday was trailer reversing day. The cones were set out on the trg area and the students had to reverse their trailers into a bay. At the end of the day all students were tested and timed on a little course. The best time was by **Cpl Girvan**, and the slowest time was by **Sig Smith**. We watched him for a while but it was nearly knock off time so we left him to it. We tried to return the next day but were called out on a 6 week ex to Norway but luckily we got back just in time to see him finish the course.

Friday had to be the best day …it was recovery day! So off to Rushmore trg area we went. The students had to wait behind a wood while **Cpl Iles** parked a Land Rover in a thigh deep pond. The students had to drive round and formulate a plan to get the Land Rover out. Everyone managed the task in good time except **LCpl Andrews** who dived in, swam round to the Land Rover, got it out then treated us to an impromptu striptease…in the middle of the pond. All in all it was a really good fortnight, especially when **SSgt Hyland** got bogged with **Cpl Girvan** who left him waist deep in cold muddy water, while he went to get another Land Rover…which also got bogged in! Eventually they got a Daf to get them out. Luckily none of the students saw any of this and are unaware of what happened unless they are reading this.

102 LOGISTIC BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (262)

OC	**Maj Andy Parfitt**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Des Holroyd**

B TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt A Jankiewicz**
Tp SNCO	**Sgt M Tiplady**

102 LOGISTICS BRIGADE HQ PDT – CIVPOP EXERCISE
- by Sig Holmes

The Bde HQ are to deploy on Op HERRICK in January 2008 and as part of our supporting role to them, we were tasked to provide pers for the CIVPOP phase of their PDT. It was Tuesday when I finally got down to Haltern to start the CIVPOP phase of the ex. We were helping out the Inf boys with some demos on contact drills back at camp in order that the lessons ran more efficiently. When we got to Haltern, we were shown to our small but cosy rooms where I thought I was going to find some battery chickens, but instead it was the rest of the lads and Tp Sgt getting ready for the day's activities. Unfortunately, we were to be demo troops again, which meant we had to do all the work while others watched. Nevertheless, that was to change over the next few days.

DAY 1

The group I was with started off with basic patrolling techniques and extraction drills under contact during foot patrols. After the demos we went for some scoff and the Bde Staff went out to practise what they had been shown. We got together a 'local militia' and together with the Sappers we set up an ambush at the end of a track junction. We lay in wait for the convoy to approach. Then,all of a sudden….. Boom! The gates of hell opened as the 'militia' unleashed fury on the Bde Staff. That was enough for them that day.

DAY 2.

This was where the fun began (for us anyway). We got into our glad rags and hit the town – well the mock Afghan village, i.e. a range hut, without a door or 4 walls. We sat in the 'hut' drinking lukewarm brews waiting for tasking from the Inf. Tick, tock, tick, tock, finally a transmission came over the radio for us to do a 'shoot and scoot', so again we found ourselves lying in the dirt getting our rags and pyjamas wet. Did I say that it was freezing? Meanwhile the patrol was making its way up the track from the mock-up FOB that we had built for them previously. As they approached, we took aim and released our safety catches. As

they walked by, we opened fire causing them to retreat. We legged it back through the trees before making a hasty get away on authentic looking Afghan/German 15 seater mini buses. No-one suspected a thing, apart from the Bde Staff Snatch wagon we accidentally drove straight up to.

A few of us at a time were taken off throughout the day to be random nuisances around the camp gates and fences. As we sat down to our scoff in the hut we could hear the Sappers bombing the camp with their P4 simulated IEDs; this must have come as a surprise to the Staff as they were having their scoff too. Later that night, **Cpl Hewitt**, **LCpl Campbell**, **LCpl Kenyon** and I went to ambush the QRF who were deployed because of an IDF attack.

As the vehs came out of the gates, **LCpl 'Baz' Kenyon** fired his magazine into the Snatch, I let an entire magazine off as well, but the 2 vehs failed to stop so we dived into the wood line and ran up a track to follow the QRF. We hid in the wood again whilst smoke and illumination was being fired all over the place. We hit the vehs again but they just bugged out, so we changed our objective and attacked the camp.

It was like a scene from Rambo! I was Rambo of course. We had numerous muzzle flashes pointing in our direction as we legged it up the illuminated road into the back of a Rover. We made haste up the track back to the 'hut' for some tea and celebratory bonfire and then we sacked it for the night.

DAY 3 OR SHOULD I SAY DAY 2½ AS IT WAS SO EARLY

We went for an all out attack on their convoy as they passed the traffic accident we had mocked up. I waved them in and they seemed so friendly it almost felt wrong that I was leading them straight into a massive ambush. When they came into the killing zone, the explosions went off and the militia opened up with everything they had left in their magazines. Once the convoy had cleared up and seen off a few suicide bombers, they extracted to an emergency HLS and so came Endex.

EXERCISE DISTANT HALBERD – PHASE 1 - *by Sig Forshaw*

Ex DISTANT HALBERD was the first Bowman HF ex involving individual dets I had taken part in, apart from Main or Fwd HQ builds, so I was ready to learn the new kit and get used to life as a single det. We started off in the Sqn garages with a PACEX to make sure all the kit was in working order and that we could establish comms between all the radios involved.

Our det then deployed to Ravelin Barracks in Hameln. With **Cpl 'Kenny' Everett** as our Det Comd we arrived and set up for the next couple of days.

The kit worked well with no comms problems between us and all the other dets. After a few days of shift work and getting into routine, we got the order to move to our next location in Hohne. We got there but only after a slight problem involving a minor RTA which meant we had to be recovered back to Gütersloh.

The next day we got our kit together and once again set off to Hohne. We arrived safely, recced and then chose the location in which we wanted to set up the det. After raising the masts and antennas we found that the establishment of comms between ourselves and the other exercising dets was relatively simple.

Having achieved this successfully, we spent the next 3 days at this location, accustomising ourselves with the Bowman kit and learning how to admin ourselves as a single det.

As a result of previous trg and experience, plus a guiding hand and a lot of helpful direction from **YofS Tharby** and **Cpl Everett**, our det helped 262 Sig Sqn to become one of few units in the Corps to have passed data via HF over a distance of 750km.

Before I knew it the RSM arrived at our location to whisk me away to 'my date with the gate' as I was on guard the next day.

A TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt D Reader**
Tp SNCO	**SSgt T Dunbar**

EXERCISE DISTANT HALBERD - WEEK 2 - *by LCpl Croucher*

Having completed the first week of the ex, deployed as separate dets, we returned to Princess Royal Barracks to re-organise ourselves in to our main role, i.e. Main HQ. We completed our turn-around and set sail for Elmpt; many knowing that the easy bit was behind us and the gruelling task of setting up Main HQ was looming ever nearer. However being close to pay day, we were able to re-supply on Haribo sweets; instant morale boost!

The road move went fairly smoothly and we arrived in Elmpt before last light to set up Main HQ. The complex went up in good time during the early hours of 2 November, allowing us to get into a shift pattern – as well as our doss bags!

We stayed in Elmpt for 3 days before we were told to deploy Main to a location in Hohne. Meanwhile B Tp with Fwd HQ stayed in location to allow comms to continue.

A long road move followed, in fact the longest road move I've ever been a part of. Many hrs later, most of the packet arrived in Hohne ready to set up Main HQ again. We had suffered a blow to our tent building party when the veh carrying some of the eqpt broke down and needed road side help to get going again. Most of us, fairly tired by now, hammered on and set up as much of the complex as possible.

The following morning the veh arrived and we were able to complete the build and get back into a shift pattern once again. Achieving this allowed Fwd HQ to tear down and move to Haltern. On 6 November, we were told of our move to Hameln. Having suffered torrential rain over the last 48 hrs, the ground was essentially a quagmire. This made the task even more enjoyable. There is nothing like the smell of wet tentage in the morning! The road move to Hameln went smoothly and we all arrived in location eager and raring to smash up the complex, however the rain had been there as well, meaning more swamp. A veh and its generator, along with a Rover were bogged in and needed recovery. **Capt Reader** decided to change the complex location to a hard standing and building began.

However the Sqn OC, seeing our efforts with the wet tentage and seeing how clearly fatigued we all were, took pity and stopped us mid-build, allowing us to get some well earned sleep in preparation for the move back to Gütersloh, Endex and a warm shower.

INTER TROOP COMPETITION 07/08

RACKET SPORTS DAY - *by Cpl Mears*

Friday 30 November saw Rounds 3 and 4 of the Inter Tp Competition take place 'slap bang' in the middle of 1st lines and RSIT – a welcome break indeed, or was it! I'll try and remain unbiased as best I can; not so easy as you'll soon find out.

Round 3 was a racket sports competition with badminton and squash running simultaneously during the morning and tennis and table tennis straight after lunch. Each Tp entered a 4 man team per event, meaning 16 people were thrown into a hat and drawn into a knockout-style format, the Tp with the most guys in each round being the eventual winners. Also, individuals were only permitted to enter 2 events.

The badminton final was contested by **Sig Dixon** and I. Somehow **'Dicko'** scraped through to the final playing an array of journeymen to get there. My progress was considerably more difficult on paper, though not in reality (no offence lads, but the draw was fair!). As perhaps you can tell, I won, enough said. Squash seemed to be a more fiercely contested competition. The final saw **Cpl Marshall** take on **2Lt Long** in what I gather

Cpl Hewitt feels the power of Sgt Tiplady!

was a pretty close run thing. However **Cpl Marshall** (who was probably the pre-competition favourite) came out on top, although by all accounts **2Lt Long** did have a game point. Word on the street was that he bottled it!

Unfortunately, Princess Royal Barracks did not have any tennis courts in a playable condition, so we used those at nearby Mansergh Bks. The rain would have stopped play in Wimbledon and Flushing Meadows, but not us. We managed to battle the elements and get on with it. **Cpl Callaghan** made it into the final with relative ease, disposing of **Cpl 'Jimmy' Hewitt** along the way. Again I made it into the final, coming from 2 – 0 down to win 3 – 2 in the Semis against the Squash King, **Cpl Marshall**. It would have been nice to play a set in the final but light was against us. Fortunately, I came out the winner 3 – 1, if you've forgotten my name, check the author.

The Table tennis was held in the newly furnished WRVS. The final saw **Cpl 'Speedy' Thomas** take on self proclaimed ex-junior County and World Champion, **SSgt 'Tris' Dunbar**. **'Speedy'** won – he never travels without his Flexolite Ping Pong Paddle! Overall winners were Alpha Tp by some considerable margin; my Tp funnily enough.

EXERCISE UHLAN EAGLE – SAFETY COMMS

It was time for another Ex UHLAN EAGLE in the depths of DPTC Poland, when 262 Sig Sqn were asked to support 7 Armd Bde with providing Safety Comms for their last ex of the year. Led by **SSgt (YofS) Nolan**, we deployed 3 RRBs, 1 EXCON veh for Ex UHLAN EAGLE and 1 extra Bowman FFR for our own internal Long Range HF ex (Ex DISTANT HALBERD).

The 262 Signal Squadron Safety Comms Team

THE EYES OF EXCON - *by LCpl Howe*

During Ex UHLAN EAGLE, I was responsible for running EXCON, which provided 3 radio nets. These were the VHF Safety, Observation Control and our own HF Engineering Net. All nets were supported by using 3 RRBs for the duration of our stay. EXCON's main responsibilities were making sure that the VHF Nets were maintained for the duration so that the exercising troops were safe in the knowledge that should they have a CASEVAC report to send, we had it covered!
This type of reporting provided excellent trg to the younger Sigs, as it was all real-time casualty problems that had to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Once received, the EXCON/Ops Room became a hive of activity with Med, Aviation and OC EXCON all hovering over us waiting for the outcome of the report!

Not only did we manage the safety issues, we managed the re-supply demands from up to 8 RRB dets, of which only 5 belonged to us! Initially we re-supplied our own RRBs – with the help of the Army Air Corps. Private air-taxi was the norm for us at EXCON during this ex!

EXCON also became a place where continuation trg was carried out for individuals. Trg included Mast/Antenna Erection and Veh Initialisation – where **Sig Farrell** put up a mast in the quickest time, however **LCpl Mitropoulou** was the fastest erecting her Droopy Dipole in 'inclement weather conditions'.

Overall the running of EXCON was a success and we had no major problems. All operators involved within EXCON gained a lot of useful experience from the ex.

THE EYES OF A YOUNG SIGNALLER - *by Sig Farrell*

On 17 October 07, 15 members of 262 Sig Sqn began the deployment to Ex UHLAN EAGLE in Poland. During the journey, we stopped off at 7 Armd Bde in Hohne, where we began our mini-PACEX to prove that our Comms Mission of providing a Safety and Observation Control Net worked without problems.

On 18 October, 262 and 207 Sig Sqn's advance parties deployed to Poland. Later that day we stopped at Prenzlau for our 10 hr enforced rest, which allowed us to catch up on our Driver's

Sig Farrell – getting to know her detachment

Hours. On 20 October we arrived at Konotop Hotel, DPTC, which is where EXCON and other sp facilities were to be set up. Later that evening our RRBs were deployed to given locations and after a long night of establishing comms we were already settling into a routine.
During the ex, we all managed to get a flight on the Gazelle to and from the EXCON location. That was fun as we flew over the battlefield, where the armr were carrying out their ex. During the ex, **LCpl Madgewick's** RRB managed to get their bergens stolen by the local population and had to sit around in sleeping bags until **SSgt(YofS) Nolan** and **Cpl Acton** saved the day and did a bit of shopping for them.

Saying that, my det, RRB Bravo, had plenty of visitors, all asking for cylumes and anything else that looked Gucci. We had to put out trip flares, which had been issued by 207 Sig Sqn. As we were collocated with other unit RRBs, **Sig Dixon** managed to wake the whole site up when he accidentally set one off.

We also managed to get back to EXCON for a bit of PT, hot shower and some continuation trg on antenna's and Bowman Initialisation. The trg and ex as a whole were very useful for the Sigs in the Sqn and we all managed to improve as time progressed.

During our recovery, we split our 7 vehs into 2 packets. Amazingly the first packet managed to get lost. By the time we had re-navigated back on track, all was going well until we had a little RTA. Luckily nobody was hurt and the vehs, along with myself, **LCpl Nurse** and **Sig Dixon** were escorted back to 2 Bn REME, Fallingbostel. We remained there until we were recovered by 262 Sig Sqn. The other packet was well on its way towards Gütersloh by this time, until it also had an RTA as a result of an articulated lorry bumping the last veh in the packet. Again luckily, nobody was hurt and they were back on the road in no time.

Finally, back at Gütersloh Camp, we spent the next couple of days turning the dets around ready for inspection, prior to going on a long awaited long weekend! The ex was fun; I learned a lot about my trade and different aspects of my det and its role. It was very beneficial for Class 3 Operators and we were able to almost complete our 3 – 2 Taskbooks!

THE EYES OF A RRB DETACHMENT COMMANDER
- by LCpl Madgewick

I was the Det Comd for RRB Charlie, which was positioned furthest away from EXCON. This caused no problems with establishing and maintaining comms, where my willing and capable crew members **Sig 'Flipflop' Sandle** and **Sig Chestnutt** assisted with the set up and day to day running of the RRB.

My RRB consisted of 2 Bowman vehs as our Sig Sqn is not scaled for 3 RRB Roles Installations. These 2 Bowman vehs provided the VHF Safety, VHF Observation Control and HF Engineering Nets. During our 3 weeks living in the arduous Polish weather conditions, **SSgt(YofS) Nolan** allowed us to spend 2 nights at EXCON. These days consisted of a spot of PT, continuation trg, a hot shower and some decent food! Once back in our field conditions, we looked forward to our daily re-supply, which was delivered by members of our Squadron at EXCON. In addition to the trg carried out at EXCON, **Cpl Acton** provided some first class Basic Life Saving trg, so that we could live safely in the knowledge that if we had an accident – we could attempt to resuscitate each other!

LCpl Madgewick – only saves lives in the warm!

As we woke up wearing only our long johns and night wear, we quickly learnt that sleeping on our eqpt was not enough! The local population had somehow managed to get into our sleeps tent and stolen our bergens and other loose items from right under our noses (or so to speak). On the previous night there had been heavy rain and the noise complete with the noise of 2 generators, meant that the Radio Watch crew did not hear the Polish pulling our bergens from under our camp beds while we slept!

The ex was a complete success and everyone came away having learnt something new.

12 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228)

OC **Maj RJ Watts**
RSM **WO1(RSM) RD Burrows**

The warriors have now returned from HERRICK, the tans are fading and a new trg program looms on the horizon for next year. The emphasis has been very much on bringing all the soldiers back to the fold who had previously been attached across Helmand to other units and re-establishing Sqn identity through Tp led ventures, sport competitions and Sqn functions, to bring the alcohol tolerance levels back up to normal.

The Sqn also conducted a medals parade and church service with the Bde HQ on 16 November which saw the medals presented to the soldiers by **Brig Lorimer**, Comd 12 Mech Bde; followed by a curry lunch and a visit to the soldiers and families by the SOinC, **Brig Flint ADC**.

Morale is high and the Sqn is now looking forward to a well-earned Christmas break to re-charge before coming back to another busy year in the Bde with 2 visits to BATUS and another TELIC tour buildup.

Brig Lorimer presenting Op HERRICK medals to Lt Nick Purdy, YofS Tom Anscomb and FofS Daz Ware with the OC, Maj Taff Watts, in attendance

EXERCISE ACE ADVENTURE (ALPHA TROOP)
- by LCpl Cooper

The Sqn recently returned from Op HERRICK 6 in Afghanistan, with the final elements returning on 29 September. The reward for our tour was a quick 3 days of leave, followed by a period of relaxed MATTs trg and a further 2 weeks leave; the bulk of our POTL being taken over Christmas in December.

Our return signalled a relaxed yet busy and important period starting with the reformation of the Tps, with Alpha Tp taking on the responsibility of HQ Main. With a few members of the Tp away on various driving and career courses, the remainder of the Tp took part in a 2 week Tp bonding ex. The importance of this was paramount as many members of the Tp were attached to the various BGs throughout the tour and during the pre-deployment phase, so this was a good opportunity for us to get to know each other again both socially and in the work place.

Our first port of call was organised by **Lt Nelson Reynolds** who took us to Blandford to visit the White Helmets motor cycle display team. By the end of the day we had all done some basic balancing acts on the backs of the bike; we all had a go on the quad bikes and most of us got to have a ride on one of the display bikes. The team put on an excellent day for the Tp which was enjoyed by all – thank you.

Our next visit was organised by **LCpl JJ Cascarina** to play air-soft in Portsmouth. Air soft is an upcoming adventure sport similar to paint balling, but instead of paint balls the guns fire BB pellets. The event was played with a fun offensive spirit and all who went were instantly hooked on the sport.

The main event was a 2 day visit to London organised by **LCpl Conan Williams-Toy**. A visit to the Imperial War Museum was followed by dinner at Planet Hollywood and a night out on the town. We stayed in the Victory Services Club, taking advantage of the 'Haven for Heroes' discount scheme which was set up to provide serving soldiers who have recently returned from Afghanistan or Iraq discounted accn in London.

The fortnight was finished off with the Sqn medals parade and Remembrance Service at the Bulford Garrison Church. The medals parade was obviously the result of a very successful op tour and capped a very enjoyable couple of weeks.

EXERCISE ACE VENTURE (BRAVO TROOP) *- by LCpl Coakley*

With the ending of a very successful tour of Afghanistan with 12 Mech Bde, 228 Sig Sqn is now entering a new chapter in its formation. One of the first changes was the reforming and re-roling of the 2 operator troops. Alpha Tp has now taken on the mantle of running Bde Main HQ, using the newly acquired 43 series 'Bulldog' as their primary mount. Meanwhile Bravo Tp's new responsibility is the op and manning of the Sqn's FFRs.

After a much needed 2 weeks post tour leave, Bravo Tp, under the guidance of **Lt Purdy** and **SSgt Gronn** readied themselves for a week long 'bonding ex'. The main aim was so all the operators in the Tp could get re-acquainted with each other after having spent the majority of Op HERRICK in out-stations or attached to the various BGs in the rear link role. Day 1 of the ex consisted of traveling to Eastbourne TA Centre where the Tp spent 2 days with 31 Sig Regt. Daytime activities included hill walking and orienteering, which meant pub stops at every waypoint! During the evening, the Tp was briefed up and instructed by members of the TA. In return Bravo Tp members delivered briefs on duties they had carried out whilst serving in Afghanistan.

The next morning saw the Tp traveling to London, where they spent Wednesday visiting the National Army Museum and the National History Museum. On Thursday we visited the Imperial War Museum followed by the Ceremony of the Keys in the Tower of London, all suited and booted. The night ended with everyone sampling London's hectic nightlife which left many Tp members the worse for wear the next morning. Everyone had recovered to camp by lunchtime Friday having spent an interesting and very eventful week together.

LCpl Parkinson enjoying a coffee

SUPPORT TROOP DAY OUT *- by Cpl Haley*

On Thursday 8 November, Sp Tp of 228 Sig Sqn assembled at the MT, bound for Bramley Trg Area. The journey went smoothly without any significant geographical embarrassment, fortunately for **SSgt Nick Trethewey** who organised the day's activities.

On arrival, the gathered members of the Tp from LAD, QMs, Techs and the MT were broken down into pairs. All the teams were briefed by **SSgt Marc Beckett** and issued a map of the area with a series of checkpoints. The weather at this stage was pleasant, with a slight chill in the air which was soon forgotten about when teams got moving across the trg area at best speed. The later groups had the torrential downpour to contend with, especially **Sgt 'Ken' Tuckey** and **Cpl Chris Jacks** who were not looking amused when they hit the finish line.

Cpl Simpson and **Cfn Pocock** were the first away and managed to get round the course but endured a mock contact by the RAF at their first checkpoint. The teams all arrived at the finish after some quality navigating around the trg area. The fastest team comprised **LCpls Craig Williams** and **'Jobby' Jobburn**. This was a very useful refresher on a prime mil skill.

Sweaty and hungry, the Tp were then taken to Bramley TA Centre for a shower and then changed into civilian attire for the evening's entertainment. The minibuses were then loaded back up with a freshly cleaned Tp all keen for a hearty dinner and refreshments. Minibuses departed for Reading and on arrival, the local Weatherspoon's pub was soon occupied by a gaggle of hungry soldiers all ordering what turned out to be some quality pub food all washed down with a few well earned beers.

Once everyone was fed and watered, the next destination was Jongleur's Comedy Club. Once again the men all headed straight to the bar to get some pre-show drinks where the Tp Comd and QM, **Capt Dave Rook** said a few words of thanks to the organisers and presented the winners of the orienteering with their prizes.

An excellent evening's entertainment ensued by 3 diverse comedians. The highlight was watching the entire seated Reading FC squirm after their recent performances without any backlash! A minibus departed after the final act for a stop off in Salisbury followed by the next trip straight back to Bulford in the early hours after sampling Reading 'by night'. All in all, a resounding success and we look forward to the next event after POTL.

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216)

OC **Maj Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Brown**

SQN PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING - *by SSgt Jones*

The Sqn having been informed that it will deploying on Op HERRICK 8 started its pre-deployment trg with 2 x 1-week range packages on the Hythe ranges on 3 – 7 October and 3 – 7 December. The ranges which included IBSR, top cover shoots, 2 man CQB, GPMG shoots, 4 man urban CQB and veh anti-ambush drills with wpn familiarization on the GPMG, LMG, UGL, and numerous foreign wpns. Most of the range package being geared from the lessons learned from the Rear Link Dets on Op HERRICK 4.

The first range package got off to a surprisingly good start with some hot and sunny weather, with many people basking in the sun like lizards. It seems to have also helped with the shooting as the majority of the Sqn went through without a hitch, followed by some equally good shooting on the MMTT range under the watchful eyes of **SSgt 'Silverback' Setchfield** giving helpful advice such as: "when the targets cross you can get two for the price of one."

A more sobering event was the wpn effects range with **Cpl 'Stoppy' Stopforth** demonstrating that most of the things you would take cover behind don't actually stop bullets, such as walls and trees. I now believe the purpose of the humble sand bag has taken on a new meaning to the lads as it only takes a few to stop a GPMG round.

Next on the agenda was IBSR and 2-man CQB being run by **WO1(RSM) Mick Brown** and **SSgt Mark Dunnachie** with the lads strangely giving maximum effort in the RSM's presence...

Just so the lads didn't think this was going to be an easy week, wpn lessons were run each evening by our now resident wpn experts **Cpl 'Steely' Steel** and **Cpl Stopforth** giving the familiarisation on the GPMG, LMG, UGL and foreign wpns. As the ranges continued everyone got to practise their moving target drills on the top cover shoot. Finding ourselves moving and not the target was a new experience for most of us, which we took some lessons away from. Alongside this, **Sgt 'Carlos' Walker** ran day and night defence shoots on the new and improved Hythe defence complex with some of the strangest sound effects and smoke machines working overtime.

The week then culminated with an urban 4 man CQB run by **Sgt Walker** giving everyone a feel to a 360 degree built up environment. Also running along with this was the RSM on the veh anti-ambush range giving everyone an opportunity to debus from a Snatch veh and break contact as a 4 man team.

Needless to say the range camp in December ran along the same lines as October but this time the weather was not so kind to us with a lot less sun and more torrential rain and gale force winds. This aside, the Sqn are now as well prepared on the mil front for the up coming op as our resources and time will allow.

EXERCISE TROPICAL STORM

A team of 12 deployed to Belize on 4 September to sp Ex TROPICAL STORM with 5 SCOTS BG. The Sqn's tasks whilst out there were to provide one Rear Link Detachment with the BG and the remainder working in the Bde Fwd HQ with the Bde staff who were HICON for the Ex.

On arrival in Belize we were immediately assaulted by the oppressive heat and extreme humidity but after a couple of days acclimatising and doing some build up PT, conducted by **Cpl Bart Dunseith**, we were feeling more at ease with it.

While the BG conducted some Jungle Trg prior to the FTX, **SSgt(YofS) Williams** squared us away with a trip to San Pedro, where we had the opportunity to do some SCUBA diving and see the remarkable coral reefs. Unfortunately **Sig 'Rooney' Griffiths** scared all the wild life with his horrible looks, so we never saw any fish.

After nearly 3 weeks of preparation and site recces we deployed to the jungle to build the HQ in warm and welcome driving rain, where **SSgt Billy King's** umbrella came to the fore. Once the HQ was built and hammocks were set up, the Bde staff arrived and we then settled into a routine of 8 hrs on, 8 hrs off.

Living under the canopy managed to show some members of the Tp that 'admin' isn't a small town in China. We were extremely lucky to be given some lectures by the Jungle Warfare Wing's Chief Tracker **Eddie** who taught us many tips and tricks.

Sweating in Belize

Near the end of the ex we managed to secure a visit to the local Mayan ruins, which were in fantastic condition considering they were well over 1000 years old. At the end of an outstanding ex, the Deputy Bde Comd congratulated us on an excellent job well done. We then finished off and returned to Price Camp to pack all the freight and go on our R&R package – Cancun Baby! – Where we spent 5 days soaking up the sun and sampling the delights that Cancun has to offer. We returned home a few days later with great tans and having gained a wealth of experience communicating in an austere jungle environment. It was a location that I was gratetful to experience and an opportunity that none of us will forget.

EXERCISE GRAND PRIX

Eight members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn deployed to Kenya on Ex GRAND PRIX over September and October to assist with the PDT of 1 R IRISH BG.

We spent the first few weeks in preparation for the main ex, during which time **Sig Boggon** and **LCpl Jack** managed to get onto a safari, taking in the sights of the local nature reserve, which included having their photo taken with a real life rhino. The 4 members of A Tp who deployed early then had the hardest day of the ex, which involved a round of 18 holes in the baking sun.

When conducting a comms recce of the local area, we encountered lots of animals including giraffes, elephants and herds of zebras but the most exciting encounter went to **Sgt Mick Richardson** and **Cpl 'Ginge' McGowan**. While out on the area they had veh problems and had to tab back to their other Land Rover in the base location and when about 5kms into the tab they encountered what they thought was a cow but upon closer inspection turned out to be a pride of fully grown lions. They tactfully withdrew and ran full pelt to the veh. Both **Sig Boggon** and **LCpl Jack**, who were at the base location, remember well hearing **Sgt Richardson** shouting "Get in the vehicle" while sprinting at full throttle towards them. Needless to say they didn't go out walking on the area again!

The main body of the ex involved the BG taking part in numerous live and dry firing serials, which was then followed by a short R&R package around Nairobi. Finally, after nearly 6 weeks in a foreign country, we were all glad to fly home in November and onto our next task.

Guess where?

EXERCISE EAGLES MOTIVATION

This year has proven to be a very busy period for the Sqn in the build up to deployment on Op HERRICK 8. However **Sgt 'Fraggle' Fraser** managed to organise Ex EAGLES MOTIVATION for Sp Tp in South West Wales, a low level team building adventure. After an 8 hr journey across Britain we finally found Penally Camp, Tenby. Unfortunately winter is not quite the season to be doing team building exs but nevertheless spirits were high and everyone was looking forward to an action packed week.

The first day consisted of hill walking and the coastal path proved to be a luxury after some harsh Sqn PDT! After covering a stretch of coast, **LCpl Phil Steadman** was delighted to spot a café which welcomed us in for lunch. After a quick stop we endured the remaining trail until reaching 14 Sig Regt who were kindly hosting us for Clay Pigeon Shooting in the afternoon. **Sig 'Jenny' Wrenn** proved the existence of beginners luck by smashing all his clays and achieving top score. Wednesday was the day that everyone was dreading: surfing and kayaking in the Irish Sea. Everyone changed into wetsuits and braved the winter weather with **LCpl Adam Mason** doing his best Baywatch impersonation. Wary at first, we slowly edged into the water and then in true airborne fashion jumped in! Fortunately no-one got hypothermia and most actually said that they enjoyed it! The last day was filled with Archery, Golf and Go-Karting which saw **LCpl Ross Boyle** proving that 'steady Eddy' doesn't win the race after being lapped countless times. Overall, the ex was an enjoyable and welcome few days away from the hectic pace of the Sqn.

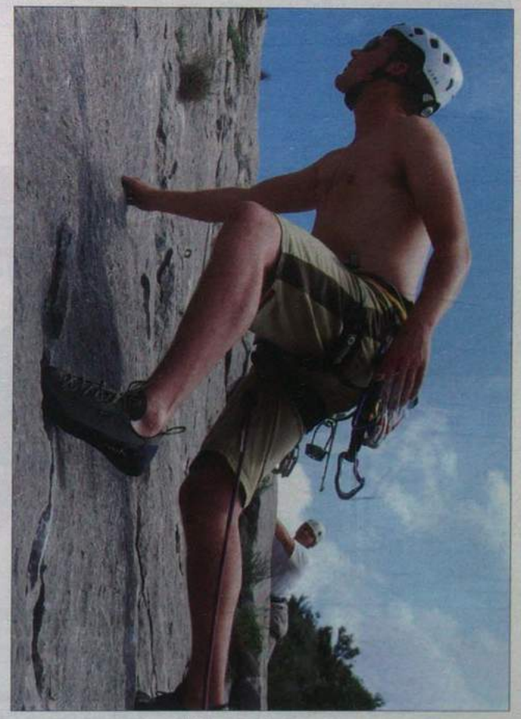
EXERCISE MERCURY RISING -*by Lt Lee*

On 6 November A Tp flew out to the Costa Blanca coastline of Spain, leaving the cold, wet, miserable weather behind in search of that hot summer feeling again. We were staying at a large villa called 'The Orange House', situated just outside Benidorm and run by an ex-REME soldier and his wife.

Each day we travelled to local crags, where we were taught new skills and techniques to overcome some cheeky climbing routes and to qualify for our Rock Climbing Proficiency (RCP). Everyone except **LCpl Ball**, who nominated himself 'Head chef and pan bash', climbed at least one multi-pitch route up some ridiculously high mountains and many other single pitch lead climbs as well. **Cpl 'Steely' Steel** and **Sig 'Harry' Harper** proved that there really is a 216 Para Sig Sqn mountain rescue team, as they helped assist 2 Spanish civilians off the rock face to safety.

We also managed to take advantage of some of the other attractions in Benidorm, like the beach and the Go-Kart track, where unfortunately **Cpl 'Ginge' McGowan** spent more time in the tyres than on the track but after being in his car recently, we can all clearly see why.

The 10 days on the Costa Blanca was a great opportunity for A Tp to bond and unwind away from the normal working environment, especially before we deploy to Afghanistan next year. We just wish there could have been a little bit more sun so we could get an awesome tan for Christmas leave. Maybe we will have to join **Sig Townson** and spend all our wages on sun bed sessions?



Lt Lee having a rest

HERRICK 4 PAINTING – COMBAT OUTPOST

In early December, Comd 16 Air Asslt Bde, **Brig Carleton-Smith OBE** unveiled the specially commissioned HERRICK 4 painting. The painting, by well known mil artist **David Rowlands**, is of 2 operators from the Sqn working as part of an RLD alongside soldiers from 3 PARA in Now Zad. The RLD teams operated in many of the combat outposts including Musa Qala, Kajaki, Sangin and Garmsir. Though the painting is largely based on photographic evidence from Now Zad, it could easily represent the scenarios in any of these locations.

The unveiling of the new painting "Combat Outpost"

Many of those present at the unveiling had deployed on HERRICK 4, and commented on how well the scene in the painting represented their experiences of the op. **Mr Rowlands** enjoyed the opportunity to gain immensely positive feedback on his work and was glad to hear that the soldiers could not find a single fault in continuity!

As a Sqn, we are all very proud of what was achieved in Afghanistan, and it is only right that this image now takes centre stage in our historical room amongst items and pictures from the Airborne Signals glorious past, all the way back to its inception in 1941.

AIRBORNE OFFICERS DINNER NIGHT

- by 2Lt 'Dangerous' Sleigh

Saturday 17 November saw the annual Airborne Signals Officers' Dinner Night take place at Caythorpe Court, Lincolnshire. Caythorpe is the historical home of the Airborne Signals so was the perfect place for Airborne Signals Officers past and present to meet up and reminisce.

The evening was organised by **Maj Cowan** and **Lt Prentice** but much thanks for the success of the evening must go to the chefs, **Sgt Carney** and **Cpl Vincent**, for the superb food.

Thanks also to **Sgt Griffiths** and his team for giving up their weekend in order to set up the venue as well as providing an excellent standard of service throughout the evening.

As a fresh 2Lt and the most junior man present, I had a fantastic opportunity to come face to face with many of the names that are still so often mentioned in the corridors of the Sqn. As Mr Vice, I also had the opportunity to make a fool of myself in front of such distinguished guests as **Maj Gen Robins CB CBE** and **Brig Jackson MBE**, as well as my next CO. Which I duly did! From my fairly limited experience I knew that it was up to Mr Vice to say grace and propose the toasts but of course I had not been told that it was the job of everyone else to place as many hurdles in my way as possible.

Apparently the napkin filled with talcum powder trick is one of the oldest in the book and I was also thrown by an impromptu toast that I managed to get wrong. However, I am pleased to say that everyone seemed to be having far too much fun to care about my floundering and I got off pretty lightly.

I awoke the following morning to find that the evening had carried on long after my bed time. I saw many of the younger officers bearing the scars of various mess games that occurred well into the small hours. We were all most grateful, albeit slightly guilt ridden, to find that everything had been cleared away before any of us were in a fit state to help.

So instead, with very sore heads, we headed back down to Colchester, recalling countless stories from the previous evening and all of us with a sense of pride to be part of such a privileged club as the Airborne Signals Officer.

Airborne Signals Officers' Dinner Night 2007

19 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

OC **Maj TJ Downes**
RSM **WO1(RSM) S Fidler**

BRIGADE CPX 12 – 23 NOVEMBER 07

The Sqn deployed on the Bde CPX on Monday 12 November. The first week of the CPX consisted of a Sqn plug up in Gaza Bks. With the Bde HQ set up in good time and comms in and working, all that was left was titivation before the staff arrived.

On the following Monday, the Tp deployed to Shaiba trg area to set up the complex once again. With the rain lashing down the troops worked extra hard to get set up and working. With the OC inspecting at 1200hrs, **Cpl 'Kibbs' Kibble** rallied his team together to ensure everything was in place, working and in order. After the OC's inspection, we were then left waiting for the arrival of the Bde staff. After some more titivation and more tent erecting the CPX began. With **Cpl Kibble** in firm control of the complex and **Cpl Andy Pennock** and **Cpl Jamie Russell** having RadCon in order, the Tp was split up into shift patterns. Luckily the chefs were only cooking lunch in the field, so pan bash was kept to a minimum but who were we to complain when **RSM Stu Fidler** and **SSgt Ady Clarke** were getting stuck in each day. Friday was soon upon us and the CPX started to draw to a close and with a potential early knock off looming, the HQ was torn down at breakneck speed, helped by the organisational skills of **Sgt Spry**, a recent addition to A Tp. Back at Gaza, **Cpl 'Ces' Brown** was eventually broken by **LCpl 'Dicko' Dixon's** antics and decided that a wash down in the back of a DAF was required. With a wet **LCpl Dixon** and a very tired Tp an early knock off was just reward for a hard and successful week's work.

RANGES AND BATTLE LESSONS 26 – 30 NOVEMBER 07

With Ex PANTHERS CHALLENGE, a low level patrolling ex in Otterburn, only a week away the Sqn travelled down to Strensall ranges to practise our drills. Monday consisted of First Aid and CBRN. Whilst in the chamber we were all entertained by **LCpl 'Dicko' Dixon's** choking as he scrambled to pick up his dropped canister, no thanks of course to **Cpl Kibble**. The next day we were put through our paces by **Cpls 'Frosty' Frost** and **Craig Eden** and **Sgts Del Spry** and **Dougie Porter** with lessons on patrols, veh anti-ambush drills, contact drills and patrol reports. These lessons were spread over 2 days with zeroing, grouping and an APWT taking up the remainder of the time.

SQUADRON CHRISTMAS FUNCTION – 29 NOVEMBER

On Thursday 29 November, the annual Sqn Christmas function took place, providing a welcome chance for the Sqn to get together in an informal (and masked) environment for the second time since returning from Iraq. Fun was had by all, and many were rather surprised to see a horse, **Cpl Andy Holden**, cutting some impressive shapes on the dance floor after only 1 G&T.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Steve Clout**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Collins**

GENERAL NEWS

OCdt Mark Oxley has successfully completed his TA Commissioning Course at RMAS (September 07) and now becomes a 2Lt in the Sqn. He retains his role as Tp Officer in 855 Tp. **2Lt Richard Torley** is promoted to Lt.

PLANNING WEEKEND

The Sqn Officers and SNCOs convened at Corsham for their annual Planning Weekend in September 07. This was an opportunity to review the year so far and look forward to deployments for TY 2008/09. **Maj Steve Clout** opened with his 'State of the Nation' address followed by TOT, **Capt Paul Masheter's** review of the deployments so far and a summary from each Tp FofS. The Sqn has had an excellent year with a number of very successful deployments. The assembled group were also treated to the sight of photos of **Sgt Bal Kang** in his 'Borat' costume – winner of the 856 Tp 'Fancy Dress Award' during the deployment to Cyprus.

Sgt Andy Wheeler also gave an overview of his 6-week deployment to Iraq with 7 x 81 Sig Sqn soldiers. **Col Hugh Robertson**, Comd SGRS, gave an interesting lecture on leadership. Finally, a briefing and run-through of the new 'Workplace Induction Package' material was presented – now mandatory for all soldiers, every 3 years.

WARWICK DINNER

The Saturday evening of the Planning Weekend saw the Officers Mess Warwick Dinner take place. The Dinner expertly arranged by **Capt (Lt Col Retd) Tim Craven** is an annual event (previously held in Warwick, hence the name!) where the Serving and Retired Officers assemble in Corsham. This year was somewhat unique, in that the last 7 OCs were present.

The Magnificent Seven: John Abram, John Watson, Bernard Harrison, Bob Manifold, Craig Tillotson, Ian Calvert, Steve Clout

MATTS TRAINING

In October, the Sqn ran a MATTS Trg weekend for those who did not attend Out-of-Camp Trg in Sennybridge. It was also an opportunity for those needing to re-attempt a particular MATT to do so. The trg was a huge success – all soldiers were able to pass all required MATTs (even **2Lt Richard 'Blunderbuss' Smith** managed to fire enough 5-round groups successfully, something that eluded him at Sennybridge) and all enjoyed the pleasant 6-mile Sunday morning stroll around Colerne, otherwise known as the TA CFT. Our thanks to 21 Sig Regt (AS) for allowing use of their camp and facilities.

OTHER UNITS

JOINT SERVICES SIGNALS WING (DIGBY)

CO **Wg Cdr TL Quigley** RAF
USM **WO2(SSM) J Sowden**

FOREWORD - *by Wg Cdr T Quigley*

JSSW(D) has experienced a very busy autumn period with work underway assessing the utilisation of mil pers focussed on tasking in direct sp to mil ops which will result in a fundamental review of Sqn structures and the establishment. The unit has been heavily involved in sp to Ops TELIC and HERRICK, with a shifting emphasis moving towards Afghanistan. The Joint Mission Support Centre has been further developing its capability. Additionally, the unit is continuing to sp deployed ops with 43 pers detached on op duties over the Christmas period, which has focussed our minds somewhat when sending Christmas parcels! A renewed focus has been placed on trg and in particular MATTS. It has not been all work however, with an Oktoberfest, Station Bonfire Night, charity events such as Children in Need, success for the third year running in the 100km Steele Mortimer rowing challenge, winter AT expeds planned, and success in winning a regional finals award in recognition of RAF Digby's support to the Prince's Trust. Phew...!

JSSW(D) MILITARY TRAINING DAY - *by Sgt 'Mick' Hepworth*

A fortunate side effect of a unit power upgrade was the opportunity to conduct some mil trg at JSSW(D). Within minutes of hearing of the opportunity, the USM, **WO2(SSM) 'Yorkie' Sowden** was on the drill square marking out the ranks. The news of a service dress parade sent panic among the ranks and Supply Flight, who quickly ran out of tailoring chits. On the day JSSW(D) put on a very smart parade with the CO, **Wg Cdr Quigley** inspecting; now everyone has their Service Dress we can do it again.

After some Sqn admin time it was over to the Trg Wing (GDT) to provide a mil interest period. As the majority of the station comprises RAF, where the mention of the word 'military' can cause a crowd outside the Med Centre larger than a Manchester Derby, we decided on 2 lessons of camouflage and concealment and observation techniques. Once the Med Centre ran out of sick chits, we had approx 60 people, both Army and RAF. After the theory side of the lesson was given. a few got ready by re-living their favourite film moment in 'Predator' by the excessive use of cam cream. Everyone was split into groups of 3 in order to carry out an ex of locating 10 mil objects within a chosen area. Whilst doing this, my staff noticed a lack of enthusiasm; everyone looked like a member of a cult on the verge of committing mass suicide. **Cpl 'Stevie' Higgs** of the RAF Regt boosted morale the only way he knows, he got everyone to throw in a quid, winner takes all. All of a sudden the RAF meant business (anyone would have thought they had bet their mortgage on it). At this point I only felt it right to boost the moral of the Army by promising PT till you drop. if they lost to the RAF. This method seemed to work wonders but I must admit the winning team was joined by an RAF Sgt. The winning team was made up of **WO1(YofS EW) 'Dean' Lightfoot**, **WO2(YofS EW) 'Mark' Eizzard** and **Sgt 'Stevie' Horrell** who located all 10 objects in 21 mins and more importantly took the prize money. Overall, everyone seemed to enjoy the lesson and I'm sure they cannot wait for the next Trg Day. Keep smiling JSSW(D) the USM loves you and more is to follow.

2 SQUADRON

OC **Sqn Ldr Fraser Gray** RAF
2IC **Capt Thompson**

We would like to welcome to 2 Sqn, **Sgt Howarth** and **LCpl Martin**, who is one of the first people to transfer from the Radio Operator trade group and we wish him luck. We bid a fond farewell to, **Sgt Nash** who left us for an enjoyable seaside assignment to 14 Sig Regt, **Cpl Newton** who has switched sides moving to 1 Sqn and **Sgt Wilkes** who is moving to the Air Warfare Centre at RAF Waddington.

2 SQUADRON CHRISTMAS BALL

The Christmas party this year was held at the County Assembly rooms in Lincoln. It was a sophisticated affair with collars, ties and cocktail dresses, which slowly descended into drinking games and drunken dancing. It was nice to see the majority of the Sqn turn out, with the women being barely recognisable in their glamorous attire and the guys looking uncomfortable in their buttoned up shirts! The evening ended with a quiet bus ride home, (with a guided tour of Lincoln courtesy of **SSgt 'Caz' Thompson**), and everyone looking forward to starting work the next morning.

EXERCISE DERWENT CHALLENGE

Ex DERWENT CHALLENGE was a 2 Sqn Force Development and AT day to the Peak District National Park. The aim of the ex was to remind pers of some of the great feats accomplished by the RAF during WW2, and in particular the exploits of 617 Sqn, 'The Dambusters', while enjoying a day of hill walking in the Derwent valley.

The day got off to a promising start with the weather being particularly kind to us, so as a result, shorts was the order of the day, with sun block at the ready. We arrived at the visitor centre of the Derwent dam after the short journey from Digby in order to 'carb up' prior to the gruelling march ahead of us. After taking in some of the memorabilia from the visitor centre, and enduring recitals from **WO Mike 'Bomber' Black** on the exploits of The Dambusters, we set off on a circular route via the Derwent Edge ridge, to the second of the dams, the Howden.

Both teams eager for the off to the ice cream van

The early pace was set by **SAC Briggs**, closely followed by **Cpl 'Fierce' Falconer** who astounded us all with their pace and durability. Although not a race by any means, the 2 captains pushed us all hard in the searing heat during the early stages of the route. Despite the glorious day and beaming sun, **Sgt 'Gaz' Nash** in true Royal Signals fashion insisted on demonstrating his field-skills and latest fashion sense by modelling the latest in all-over headgear, attempting to protect himself against the completely harmless Heather Fly. Had it not been for **Cpl Falconer** taking a tumble towards the latter stages of the day, it would surely have been a close run thing to the finish. However, some would say that **Cpl Falconer's** misfortune may have been at least partly due to the 25kg of kit he was carrying, 15kg of which was his secret go faster recipe, something which looked remarkably like Ribena. Inevitably, Team **Briggs** took the honours of first place, in the end by a country mile, and was justly rewarded by first place in the queue for ice cream at the finish.

A fantastic day was had by all, and we wait with baited breath for the next in the series of FD/AT days promised early next year.

Sgt Nash worried by flies!

JSSU(V) NORMANDY BATTLEFIELD TOUR

Over the long weekend of 14 to 17 September, JSSU(V) undertook a trip to the sites of the World War II Normandy landings. Unable to completely fill the 50-seat coach from its own numbers, the Unit offered places to a limited number of pers from JSSW(Digby) and then filled the rest with wives and partners as 'paying' guests. The 12-hour journey from Digby to Normandy via Chicksands, Dover, and Calais was strenuous to say the least, but morale remained high throughout and a tired but happy group arrived at the Novotel in Caen. The tour programme began in earnest the next morning. The actual tour had been put together by a professional battlefield guide, **Maj Martin Ashley Taylor** and he certainly earned his money. We began with a trip to the Merville Battery, one of the most spectacular actions by members of the Para Regt and followed this with a very informative visit to Pegasus Bridge, the site of the tremendous operation by glider borne troops of the British 6th AB Div. Lunch was taken at the famous Café Gondrée, the first building to be liberated on French soil. In the afternoon of that first day, we also visited SWORD Beach and retraced the footsteps of the Green Howards as they 'tabbed' inland and through the village of Crepon. From there we moved on to Arromanches, the location of the British Mulberry harbour, traces of which can still be seen in the bay of this picturesque village. Saturday night was spent enjoying the outstanding gastronomic delights of Caen before the group prepared itself for what was to be an even more demanding day's trek.

The first place visited on Day 2 was Pointe du Hoc, scene of a heroic action by a small force of US Rangers, which has been left pretty much as it was at the end of the fighting in June 1944. From there we moved on to the notorious OMAHA Beach, the part of the Normandy landings which incurred the most numerous Allied, mainly US, casualties. Our guide insisted on leading us up a narrow trail to the high ground so that we could get a feel for what the assaulting troops had to negotiate as well as provide us with a commanding view of the entire beach area. As well as visiting these historic sites, the group also took the time to visit UK, US, Canadian and German cemeteries to pay our respects to the fallen.

The whole tour culminated in a brief ceremony at the British cemetery in Bayeux, where our youngest TA soldier, **Sgt 'Clair' Warburton**, escorted by **WOs 'Bob' Rhodes**, and **'Tim' Hutchinson** (RAuxAF), laid a wreath on our behalf. Amongst our 'guests' on the JSSU(V) Battlefield Tour were **JT 'Ben' Kay**, JSSW(D), and **SSgt 'Blair' Anderson**, USAF.

JSSU(V) NORMANDY BATTLEFIELD TOUR - *by JT Kay*

After a 2-hour drive with the mandatory stop for a healthy breakfast at McDonald's, we arrived at Chicksands to a bit of a surprise. Nobody had told us that we were taking soldiers who were actually there during the war, **Capt 'Nige' Watton**. The week before I'd put my name down for the tour, I had been looking at prices on the Internet to go there as a civilian, which ranged from £400 to £600 for a 4-day tour. If it meant that I could do it for free, I was more than willing to endure the smell of TCP on the coach for a few hours. As it turned out JSSU(V) weren't as scary as you would imagine. It took a while to stop calling everyone "Sir" but was finally achieved thanks to a couple of Vins de Blanc. Day One started with a trip to Pegasus Bridge where I had an experience that I feel it most fitting to share with you all. Outside Café Gondrée opposite the Pegasus Museum, there was an old gentleman called **Dick** who was wearing several medals and a USAF cap. I always find it interesting talking to older generations (as I had on the coach) so I decided to ask him what he had planned for the day. It turned out that **Dick** had flown B26 Marauders before, during and after D-Day for missions over France, Italy, Germany and across the Pacific. **Dick** had lost several friends and told me that he felt it his duty to visit France, where many of them had fallen, to pay his final respects. Words, I felt, were not enough thanks for what he had done, but **Dick** was one man amongst thousands who risked everything for us. As he walked off, aided by a walking stick and accompanied by a minder, I thought about how we take our freedom for granted. To many of us WW2 is something we have to learn about in order to get our History GCSE, but being there has really helped me to understand how much we owe our older generations, and how grateful I am that they gave so much.

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

OC **Maj AS Johnson**
USM **WO2(SSM) S Tressider**

CCU CYPRUS WALKDOWN 2007- *by SSgt Tony D'or*

This year marked the 25th year of the Cyprus Walkdown. This annual event has developed over the years into one of the biggest charity events in the BFC calendar and this year was no exception. Right from the initial planning to the execution stage, the committee wanted to make this year bigger and better than all the previous events. The number of team entries was very healthy and so was the amount of sponsorship money donated by various local companies and agencies supporting the Unit.

The day loomed and a very early start was required by all pers competing and also those assisting with the admin tasks throughout the day. It was going to be a long one! Teams and sp staff started to trickle in to Episkopi gym at 0500hrs and slowly the registration process started. There was an air of excitement and nervousness amongst the contestants. Teams had travelled from all over the Island. We even had entrants who had come all the way from UK to take part in the Walkdown!

Teams chatted with each other, trying to extract information on the best route and gain as many helpful hints and tips at the last hour. At 0615hrs, **SSgt Tony D'or** delivered a thorough safety brief and then all of the teams made their way out to the coaches, ready to be transported up to the trout farm in Platres, which is where the race starts.

On arrival at the trout farm, the teams were called forward ready to start at 0800hrs. As the nerves started to set in, many contestants headed for the toilets just to get rid of some body fluids! Some ventured there on more than one occasion! The CO, **Wg Cdr Chris Featherstone** started the event at exactly 0800hrs and the race was on. Teams started to move off at 30 second intervals under the careful eye of **Sgt Des Lang** and **SSgt Alex Dack**.

As the morning progressed the temperature was rising. Many teams made it to Checkpoint 1 and 2 before it started to get hot. By mid-afternoon the CBF, **AVM Lacey** ventured to Checkpoint 3 to cheer on the teams coming through before making their way to the finish line. Exhausted but still enthusiastic, the teams made there way up the last hill with the end in sight. The relief and massive sense of achievement could be seen on everyone's face as they crossed the finish line. Throughout the afternoon, one by one, teams made their way across the finish line and headed straight to the bar for a cool drink! This was the number one priority for the hardened athletes.

The presentations for the race were conducted at the unit bar, the Jimmy Ross club. The CBF, CO and representatives from various companies who sponsored the event handed out the prizes to the various category winners. The overall winners of the event were 'Eat my dust' in a time of 3hrs 3 mins. The team comprised **2Lt Miller**, **LCpl Thompson** and **Sig Davies**. The CO and his team 'Red Red whine' were hot on their heels with a very respectable time of 3hrs 23 mins – maybe next year boss!

Overall winners: 2Lt Miller, LCpl Thompson and Sig Davies with AVM Lacey

Overall, the day achieved its main aim and that was to raise as much money as possible for charity. Approximately £3000 was raised and this money will be donated to various charities. The main beneficiaries this year are BLESMA and also the youth services in Cyprus. Thanks must go to all the members of the committee who put in a lot of time and hard effort to make the event a great success and also a very big thank you to the sponsors for their very generous donations. Last but no means least well done to everyone who participated in the event. We hope to see you back next year and try and break the course record of 2hrs and 34 mins!

CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL 4-DAY CHALLENGE 2007

Over the period of 29 November – 2 December 2007, CCU entered 2 teams in The Cyprus International 4-Day Challenge. The event consisted of 4 days of racing over varied terrain and distances around the Paphos and Akamas areas, with each individual's race times added together over the 4 days to give an overall finishing position. The teams consisted of **Wg Cdr Chris Featherstone**, **Flt Lt Helen King**, **Capt Ian Peers**, **WO2(USM) Steve Tresidder**, **SSgt(FofS) Paul Floyd**, **Sgt Wayne Stewart**, and **Sigs Dave Best**, **Matt Clark** and **Russ Matthews**.

The teams arrived on the first day at The Coral Beach Hotel in Paphos along with 230 other serious runners, some of whom were internationals, for the event briefing where we realised what we were letting ourselves in for. The first race was a 6km Time Trial starting from the hotel where each runner was started in alphabetical order 15 secs apart. The CCU Team donned our BT sponsored running vests and it was at this point **SSgt Paul Floyd** was told to remove his one-piece lycra speed suit and put on a team vest.

The second race was the one we had all been dreading and the one that proved to be the hardest of the 4-Day Challenge. The 11km Hill Run started on the coast above Paphos and ran for 4km along a track close to the beach before making a sharp right turn into the Akamas Hills. This is where the pain began. The remaining 7km ran from sea level to 600m along a winding, seemingly never ending track. Unless you were an elite runner, you ended up walking at least some of the distance and even walking was painful. By the end of the race there were some very tired and sore runners. The first runner to finish for CCU was **Capt Ian Peers** in a time of 1hr 1min 33secs.

On the morning of the third race there were some very quiet and tired runners on the minibus as we travelled once again into the Akamas Hills for the start of the Half Marathon. The start was at an altitude of 200m and proceeded upwards to 500m over the ensuing 7 miles (more hills). The final 7km was all very rocky underfoot and descended from an altitude of 500m to sea level, so as you can imagine there were a lot of runners coming off the hills at uncontrollable paces trying not to break their ankles. The best time for CCU was 1hr 34mins 55secs, once again won by **Capt Ian Peers**.

By now most people's legs were hurting, no-one wanted to think about tomorrow's race and the communal Vaseline tub looked like a mini Eden Project.

It wasn't long before we were all lined up in The Medieval Castle Square in Paphos for the start of the 10km final race. From the outset it was very difficult to get the legs moving and all we could think about was the finish line and a well earned medal. But in the final 800m of the race we were all greeted by hundreds of cheering spectators and **Sgt Wayne Stewart** even managed a sprint finish to pip **WO2(USM) Tresidder** to the line.

By the end, the whole team managed a few smiles as we posed for team photos sporting our Cyprus International 4-Day Challenge medals. The final results showed some excellent overall performances: **Capt Ian Peers** finished in 23rd place overall with a time of 3hrs 42mins 30secs

The CCU Teams show off their medals

Special thanks must go to British Telecom for kindly sponsoring the team. Thanks must also go to **Cpl Scotty Lewis** and **Cpl Tam Rennie** for driving us to and fro from races and for being

'Team Photographers'. Thanks also to **SSgt Kips Fisher** for being duty 'Waterboy'.

AKROTIRI TROOP

Troop OC	**Capt Paul Williams**
Troop SSgt	**SSgt Tony D'or**

Since the last edition of *The Wire*, the Tp has been very active, despite manning levels still remaining low. Support to HQ BFC in various MATT packages is becoming a fine art for **Sgt Steve Cooper**. Range days are his speciality! On the ground, the guys have been meticulous in finishing off various comms projects, most notably the installation of the explosive storage area. A very high profile task as it is the foundation and blue print of all the explosive storage areas within the MOD! The CCU Walkdown was a major success. This year's event was organized by **SSgt Tony D'or**, with competitors coming from the UK and all over Cyprus to compete in this prestigious event. Overall a tremendous amount of money was raised, totalling £3000.

In the not to distant future RAF Akrotiri is having a major re-organisation and this involves the Tp with all the comms requirements during the re-wire and move of the Station HQ. The role of the station is now a forward mounting base and is proving to be a very busy area with a high turnover of troops passing through on op deployments and also stopping over on de-compression. The troop wishes the best of luck to all the guys that have recently left on posting or promotion. We hope that you get replaced soon!!

EPISKOPI TROOP

Troop OC	**2Lt 'Dusty' Miller**
Troop SSgt	**SSgt Ian Farrow**

The Tp has been very busy lately both working and competing in several major island wide sporting events. Our very own organised CCU Walkdown and the Dhekelia Dash organised this year by CCU. Congratulations also go to **LCpl Tommo Thompson** and **Sig Mark Billingsley** on representing the Army (Cyprus) at football.

The Tp recently conducted a day of presentations for all JNCOs and Sigs. All the presentations were informative and well presented with many having a humorous slant, most notably **Sig Meredith's** presentation on Nordic Skiing and **LCpl Hamilton's** on how the Euro will affect Cyprus. The latter not perhaps a very humorous subject but you had to be there.

Finally the farewells and arrivals, we've lost 3 members of the Tp recently: **LCpl Matt Sunderland** and **Sig Matt Davies** both to Civ Div and **Sig Chris Meredith** to 10 Sig Regt, good luck to those in their future careers. Coming in we have **Sig Daisy Dougherty** from Blandford, so welcome to her.

DHEKELIA TROOP

Troop OC	**Capt Ian Peers**
Troop SSgt	**SSgt Glynn Fisher**

Dhekelia Tp has been very active despite low manning levels. The majority of the Tp took part in the CCU Walkdown, which for some turned out to be quite a painful experience. We were also responsible for organising this years Dhekelia Dash, which is the largest event for Dhekelia Garrison. Headed by **Capt Ian Peers**, the Tp was split into teams and sent off to carry out various tasks. The Dhekelia Dash was a great success and overall a tremendous amount of money was raised, the sum of £3500. The Tp can now look forward to organising next year's event – at least next time we'll have a little more notice.

The Tp was pleased to present a demonstration on how things work within the Tp to our new boss **Capt Moody** who will be taking over next year.

Congratulations to **LCpl Chris Pain** on successfully completing his potential officer's course, he has now lost the ability to read a map! Congratulations also to **Sgt Chris Sankey** on passing his SCLM. Farewell to **Sig Stu Adams** who leaves on promotion to 101 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. Finally welcome back to **Cpl Matt Caddy** on his return from Baghdad.

Well done to **SSgt Ian Farrow** and Episkopi Tp for getting well beat at cricket against us last month.

1st NATO SIGNAL BATTALION

CO	**Lt Col David Bizley**
RSM	**CWO(RSM) Greg Power** (CAN-A)

In another busy period for the Bn, some key pers have come and gone. We say farewell to **WO1 Pete Asplen**, posted to Blandford at very short notice on commissioning and **Sgt Billy Copland** AGC who moves to Catterick. We thank you both for your contributions over the last couple of years and wish you and your families every success in your new units. A big welcome goes to **Cpls Ben Redfern, Richard Beasley** and **Ross Fernie**.

628 Tp are now well established in Kandahar having taken over from the Danes. We wish them all well for 2008, and hope **Capt Ally Biggs** can join you after his short period of malingering in intensive care. What some people will do to get off a deployment!

Bn life continues at pace with a number of high level presentations of the latest asset, the Theatre Liaison Kit (TLK) by **Cpl Finlay** and his able crew.

We also have a multi-national crew on standby to deploy to ISAF to join 628 Sig Tp for more Project Implementation work across theatre. Not surprisingly for a NATO project this seems to be slipping to the right, so it looks like its safe for them to buy the Christmas turkey and look forward to the trip in the New Year.

Congratulations to **LCpl Tom Harrison** on completion of his BCDT instructors and AAPTI courses. Also to **Cpl Phil Williams** on the completion of his SAA course. I'm sure that you will be utilised to the full keeping us fit for deployment in the New Year.

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT COMPANY

OC	**Commandant G Eerdekens** (BEL-A)
CSM	**WO2(CSM) S Munro**

Congratulations to **Commandant Guy Eerdekens** on assuming comd of the Coy vice **Capt Tom Kelly** who stepped into the breach to lead 628 Sig Tp on deployment. The CO is looking forward to Tom's return when he will be most gainfully employed in Bn HQ.

EXERCISE ARDENNES DISCOVER - *by Sgt Wilf Warnes*

After a busy year of ex and deployments the CO decided that the Bn and its multinational staff deserved a change from the usual work programme. **Cpl Tim Sluman** came up with the idea of a battlefield tour to the Ardennes allowing some of the Bn staff to take in the battles and scenery of the Battle of the Bulge as depicted in the TV series Band of Brothers.

The tour started very early in the cookhouse where thanks to **Sgt Martin Holmes**, a hearty breakfast was provided for all

participants, well almost all. Joined by our colleagues, **WO1(RSM) Graeme Poulter, Sgt 'Jumper' Collins** and **Cpl Donna Roundtree**, from HSG Brunssum, we set off for Bastogne. Upon arrival at the 1st Belgian Arty Regt Barracks, a short ceremony was conducted by the Deputy Comd, **Lt Col Klocke** (DEU-A) presenting a Bn plaque to **Maj Brohet** (BEL-A) in thanks for the use of their barracks and in the interests of forging NATO relations.

From there on, the battlefield tour really began. We were instructed by our tour guide **Mr Martin King** that the temperatures endured during the conflict were down to -28C. As we all stood there shivering in our fleeces, hats, gloves and berghaus jackets in a paltry -2C, no amount of imagination could make us believe how the guys lived in foxholes during this time and survived, let alone fought.

The tour commenced at the overpowering Mardasson Hill Memorial

Our first stop was the American Memorial at Mardasson Hill which dominates the surrounding skyline.

Constructed in the shape of a star, the monument was dedicated by the Belgian people to the liberating American forces and is used as the main location for American Remembrance Day in Europe.

From there, a short journey took us to the hamlet of Foy and its surrounding wood land where the men of Easy Coy, 2nd Bn 101st Airborne, 506th Para Inf Regt (Band of Brothers) were dug in under fierce artillery barrage. Amazingly the foxholes are still there after 60 years.

Martin King starts Day 2 with a few basics – This is a big gun

For the remainder of the first day we visited numerous points of interest around the local area which still bore evidence of the battles some 60 years ago.

Places like Prummerberg ridge where 400 Engineers from the 168th Engr Combat Bn held off the Germans for 7 days and nights until they were down to only 100 men and forced to retreat.

Finally, after a very full day, we retired to Bastogne to commence with the evening's cultural activities. In the true tradition off Brits on the Continent, we employed the standard technique for communicating with the local Flanders population.

When pointing failed, we resorted to the not so fluent GCSE French of **LCpl Tom Harrison**. Probably not one of the more tactically astute decisions of the ex but highly amusing to the participants and equally bemusing to the local population.

The following morning's reveille at 0630hrs proved to be a challenge to some, with the continental breakfast being a bit heavy, no names. **Cpl Andy Peters** and **LCpl Daz Jamieson** did mention they could do with an early lunch though.

Starting Day 2 by concentrating on the town of Bastogne, we visited a number of locations significant to the battle, including a visit to the HQ of **Gen Tony McAuliffe** (USA-A) from where he famously replied to an offer to surrender from the encircling German forces with the single word: "Nuts!"

The weather was no better than the day before but the interest factor took away the chill, well just about. The tour concluded with a visit to the American Cemetery at Hamm and the grave of **Gen Patton**.

The Cemetery also contains the remains of one British soldier, a Scotsman by the name of **PFC William England**.

Tour over, we returned to Maastricht better educated and with eyes open, something that could not be said for the masses of soldiers and officers who gave their all in Bastogne and the local areas.

LATE NEWS

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

CO **Lt Col CSK Paterson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) G McGachy**

The action never stops here in Herford and 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt has once again enjoyed a busy period. As always, the battle is to achieve a life balance between work and play and a glance through the next few articles shows that both are in abundance. And just when we thought it was safe to breathe easily, the forecast of events leading to and through the New Year is as jam packed as ever.

The next 2 months sees preparation for the Christmas Stand Down, the Christmas Fair, Regtl Battle Camp, Cadre Course, and Shooting Competitions, Regtl involved in 3 winter sports disciplines, the Malta Marathon, and much, much more.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj AHT Garrett**
SSM **WO2(SSM) RD Heynes**

EXERCISE NOMADIC DIAMOND 30 – 16 OCTOBER
- by LCpl Scott Robertson

After a strenuous few months involving passport, money and document issues, we were finally set for the trip of a life time; we were going to the USA to see one of the great wonders of the world, the Grand Canyon.

On the morning of 1 October we were packed, set and ready to go. When we landed in Las Vegas International, the sun was shining and a whole new world was laid before us. The next 2 days saw us acclimatise to our new environment and recover from the jet lag that seemed to have affected many of us.

However, the morning of 3 October soon arrived. It seemed a shame that we had to leave Las Vegas so soon, but we knew that we would see it all again on our 2 days R&R phase at the end of the exped. The journey was a long and strenuous one almost all the way to the Canyon but this was all quickly forgotten when we finally arrived at the Grand Canyon National Park entrance. After purchasing our entrance tickets and camping permits, we decided to go to a viewing point. It was here that we were truly struck by the sheer size and beauty of the Grand Canyon.

The Grand Canyon Expedition pose for a group photo

We spent a total of 9 days in the Canyon, where we saw many of its glorious wonders and sights. The walking was tough, very challenging and strenuous. We saw a lot of wildlife and we were truly taken aback by some of the great beasts we saw on our travels. This included large stags, various other forms of deer, wild mountain goats, eagles and other large birds of prey. The most exciting it seemed was when we came across a tarantula. We were warned of other predators within the Canyon limits that have been known to be dangerous, such as mountain lions and snakes. This was the sort of information that provided us with a real sense of adventure.

During our days hiking, it was important that we took on plenty of water as the sun was constantly beating down on us and there was a high possibility of dehydration and heat stroke. During the 9 days trekking we were also improving our map reading and other vital skills needed to be in the 'wilderness' with a group of people. In the evenings we would have lessons from the exped leader, **Capt McLeod** and there was always someone to ask if we had any questions.

After the 9 days, we were awarded with our SMP qualification, giving many of us a true feeling of accomplishment and happiness for all our hard work. We then left the Grand Canyon with a great feeling of self fulfilment and contentment and headed to Las Vegas for some well earned R&R. On the way to Vegas, we decided to stop at the Hoover Dam. This once again, was a truly amazing part of the exped. Tourists filled the roads and viewpoints here and it wasn't a wonder because we were all awestruck by its size and structure.

Overall this was a fantastic trip, where everyone has learned loads – all inspired by one of the great wonders of the world, The Grand Canyon. A huge thank you has to go to the exped organiser **Lt Macintyre**, our exped leader, **Capt McLeod** and the rest of the group, **Lt Champion**, **Sgt Trott**, **Cpl Allen**, **Cpl Bradbury**, **LCpl Collins**, **LCpl Turvey**, **LCpl Sievwright**, **Sig Garnett**, **Sig James** and **Sig Robertson** for a truly awesome time.

EXERCISE PREMIERE LINK/CHAIN 17 – 26 NOVEMBER
- by Sig Richie Richardson

Ex PREMIERE LINK/CHAIN, based in Germany, was a Sqn level ex designed to test the members of 201 Sig Sqn. The ex began on the morning of 17 November with Hawk, Eagle and SHQ Tps lining up their veh in packets on the main square in Hammersmith Barracks, ready to deploy to their locations, either Goldbeck or Bisperode.

After a long drive through a multitude of different weather systems the Tps eventually arrived in location (a local farm and hotel in Bisperode) with numb behinds, high spirits and glad to see that they were situated in a sheltered area – meaning not having to erect a camouflage net.

Unfortunately these high spirits were not to last long as the Tps began to set up their comms eqpt. They soon realised that the hard standing that they were on was exceptionally tough and resistant to having an earth spike hammered into it. Not long after setting up and getting comms in and working, the heavens opened and non- stop rain poured over the them for the next 3 days and nights.

In the afternoon of 20 November, the Tps were given a ready to move order and had 3 hrs to end the comms and pack away their dets ready to move to a new location. By the time everything had been packed away and vehs were lined up in packet order, the sky cleared and the sun shone down and morale was lifted. The second location looked like an abandoned WW2 prison camp, surrounded by razor wire and filled with buildings that were eroding and falling apart.

On the morning of 26 November, the Tps ended comms, packed up and moved to the final location of the ex. When in the final location, routine kicked in as usual with sleeps tents and comms being set up to the other trunk nodes. When teatime came around everyone was given a 24 hr ration pack and told to get cooking but we were not having any of that after living on fresh food for the last week! So we sent a recce rover off down the road to the local Burger King we had passed on the drive into location.

While in the final location of the ex, there was a wild rumour flying around that the ex was ending early and we were going back to camp on the following morning. By 2200hrs this wild rumour turned out to be true. All the comms were ended, the detts were packed away and everyone was sent to bed to get a well deserved sleep before the drive back in the morning. At 0730hrs the following morning, the vehs were lined up, first paraded and headed back to Herford.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Oliver**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) D Churchward**

EXERCISE PREMIER LINK/CHAIN - *by 2Lt Jenny Hollins*

Ex PREMIER LINK/CHAIN was conducted from 17 to 25 September 07. The aim of the ex was to train 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt to CT Level 3. The ex was split into 2 phases. Phase 1 was Sqn level trg and Phase 2 was Regtl trg under the guidance of Regtl Ops. 211 and 212 Sqns combined to provide a Div Silver HQ, while 201 Sqn provided the Ptarmigan link and also found time to do a bit of 'gardening' of the ex area thanks to SSM 201 Sqn. The ex went well with lessons learnt by all Sqns. It proved to be a good build up for 4 Bde MRX.

REGIMENTAL BOXING - *by 2Lt Jenny Hollins*

After six weeks of intensive trg the Regt Inter-Sqn boxing competition took place on 29 November. Previous to the competition, 3 prelim bouts took place on 26 November. There were 10 bouts on the night, 2 female and 8 male fights. All fights lasted all 3 rounds which made for a night of good fighting.

Previous years champions 211 Sig Sqn were pipped at the post by 201 Sig Sqn who took the main prize of Regtl champions. However 211 Sig Sqn did gain Best Boxer with **Sig Barguss** putting in a fantastic performance. Best Bout was in the final fight of the evening, between **Sig Rickets** of 201 Sig Sqn and **LCpl Bedford** of 211 Sig Sqn.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Pearce**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S McGuckien**

BCIP 5 OPERATION FIELD TRIAL - *by Cpl I Mulligan*

The Operational Field Trial of Bowman BCIP 5 was to take place in Sennelager for most of November. 212 Sig Sqn were the lead element, supported by the rest of the Regt. 20 Bde were leading for the trial but the Regt had commitments as HICON, TRIALCON, SIDECON, and a variety of other CONs, when we weren't busy. After our warm up on Ex PREMIER CHAIN, we were fairly happy with our field skills and I'm happy to report that all of the 43s made it out of the gate for the road trip from Herford to Sennelager, although not all of them made it as far as the trg area.

It didn't come as a massive shock to us to find out that the plan had changed between us leaving Herford and arriving in Sennelager. We were shocked to find out that the plug up for the trial would be conducted on the Mandalay Range and not on the parade square as advertised. Needless to say, we shifted up a gear and the sp chain around us bounded in to place to fulfil our new needs. The plug up was a busy time for us, and **Capt Todd**, **WO1(YofS) Milne** and **SSgt(YofS) Richards** were kept on their toes trying to iron out the problems inherent with plugging up a new system. I was fortunate enough to have **Capt Russ Moody** with me on my det, helping me out with the problems I had around my det and getting the brews in.

Although the PACEX was not fully completed, other time constraints meant that we had to move to our next location. There are quite strict controls for movement of Panzers around the range, so a quick turn around was needed and an interesting cross country move took us to the Urban Dismounted Training Area (UDTA). Once again, the 43s played a blinder, and the only veh to break down was the 434. Fortunately the Foden was on hand to give their LAD buddies some help!

The move in to UDTA was emotional. Everyone was tired and we only had a small space to build our HQ and a short amount of time to do it. A quick and impromptu Crypto Security Lesson from **WO1(YofS) Milne** re-sparked our enthusiasm and we once again felt like the First XI. We had a couple of days to complete the set up and we came up with some interesting methods for elevating antennas, which probably aren't in any RSTIs. With every sun rise, the staff seemed to change their minds on the internal set up of the HQ and we became quite proficient in internal reorganisation.

In all, the trial went well and we were glad to be back in Herford at the end of it, having a Sqn BBQ, watching the football and drinking a few beers. We are looking forward to seeing the plan for the Sqn with regards to BCIP 5 but feel that we are well ahead of the curve with the new generation of Bowman.

STATION BONFIRE NIGHT - *by Sgt Charlie Hart*

The 2007 Herford Station Bonfire Night was held on Saturday 3 November at Werre Strasse in Herford. For the second year in a row, it was to be organised by 212 Sig Sqn and this year the pleasure fell to me. Planning started back in July but last minute changes meant that everyone was still panicking up to the last minute! I was quietly confident that everything would be OK and I had the German Liaison team on my side to help with any hiccups. I extend my thanks to **Crissie Kelly.** The morning of the event snuck up on us with the pace of life in the Regt and other commitments taking up a lot of our time. All of the Sqns banded together to help out and by lunch time there was a respectable looking wood pyre waiting for its day of reckoning. I breathed a sigh of relief as the fireworks contractor arrived to set out his wares and we discussed the option of a few 'surprises' during the display! With the Herforder Beer stall, and the fast food vendors in place, we were ready to go and give the public a spectacle.

As the public arrived and started purchasing refreshments from the stands, it was time to light the bonfire. A healthy addition of petrol meant that the bonfire went up with a flash, and the addition of a couple of "booby traps" by the (professional) fire works contractor meant that is went off with a bang! The fire works were accompanied by the normal oohs and ahhs, but like everything fun in life, it was all over too quickly and it was time to go home. As the last stragglers were evicted from the Beer Stall, we tidied up and were finally back in the Mess by midnight.
I would like to thank everyone who helped out in making the bonfire a success, and we raised over €800 for charity during the event.

I would like to especially thank **Capt Russ Moody** for his help and the time he put in to the event, even though he would not be present on the night.

ADVENTURE TRAINING

SERIOUS HIGH ALTITUDE TREKKING

31 (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT

SERIOUS HIGH ALTITUDE TREKKING

Very High Altitude, Desert-like Environment, Intense Sun – a Risky Strategy - but it Worked!

In August 2007, 13 members of 31 Sig Regt set off for one of the most challenging trekking areas in the world – Ladakh in India. In the very north of India sandwiched between Tibet and the disputed territories of Kashmir and Jammu (Pakistan), it is very dry, barren and remote but more significantly, it lies at a very high altitude with little or no infrastructure, deep into the mountain range.

Within 24 hrs of departing the UK, the group found themselves exiting one of the highest commercial airports in the world, Leh at 3500m; it is no wonder that most people feel 'woosey' after a few hours as the effects of altitude kicks into the body. Even the threat of 'Delhi Belly' was overshadowed by what Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) can do to you here. Carrying our bags to the 2nd floor of our accn was like completing a TA CFT!

During our acclimatization period, we were well and truly "Buddhist temple'd out" – as interesting as they were! **Sig Ben Carter** became a local and we had a good look at the local markets and even the hardiest trekkers did not drink alcohol, such was the threat of AMS!

What we didn't expect was the high level of mil presence, who are there because of the zone between Pakistan, India and Chinese Tibet, over which they constantly have disagreements. As such, several members of the group managed to get invited into the Indian Army Divisional Officers HQ Mess. A fine collection of mess silver and mil artefacts added to the enjoyment of our time in Leh; even the most junior members of the group suddenly became 1 star officers and above!

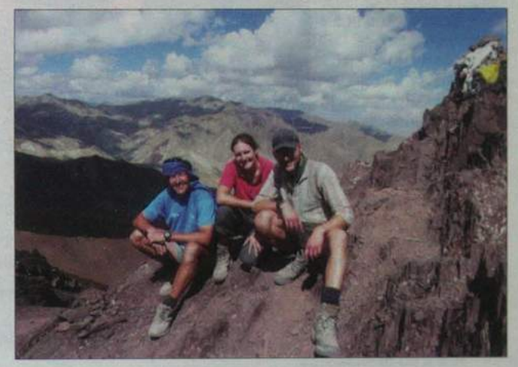
Acclimatisation over and with anticipation growing, it was time for our baptism of fire! With the exception of the Leaders, this group had very little experience of such conditions and were about to embark on 11 days of very remote, high altitude trekking with temperatures ranging between 5 – 38 C with little shade and very intense sunlight. What was worse, in order to complete the chosen route, our very experienced exped leader **Maj Terry Crosby** had deliberately chosen a risky strategy of crossing the 5200m Konmaru La Pass on Day 2 of the trek – it broke just about every rule in the acclimatisation book but there was little choice! **LCpl James Winrow** certainly felt the effects, his face was white and he wasn't the only one – it was time to descend down to Nimaling and to the safety of a lower altitude. You could tell we were OK, because out came the Trivial Pursuits after another vegetarian meal!

After that lesson on what altitude can do to you, the 3 day trek down the Markha Valley at a lower 3800m was superb. The scenery is world class and a geologist's dream. No time to rest however as we were forced to ford the fast flowing, deep, ice

Glacial river crossing

cold glacial river no less than 7 times. **LCpl Sally Mucklow**, **Sig Mark Bint** and **LCpl Mark Fleet** decided to wash at the same time as crossing! Washing and living off the water from the ice glaciers was an experience never to be forgotten.

Well acclimatised by now, the final 4 days of the trek took the group back over 2 very high passes and also to the Advance Base Camp of Stok Kangri, which at 5400m is the same altitude as the Thorung La in Nepal, the highest Pass in the world. **Sig Mark Bint** even had his 23 birthday there on the glacier!

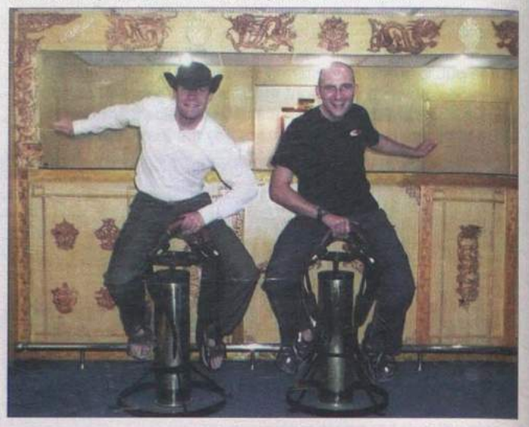


Maj Terry Crosby, LCpl Sally Mucklow and Cfn Malcolm McLaren (all from 83 Sp Sqn) on the 4900m Stok La Pass

With no injuries to speak of, this intrepid and enthusiastic group of TA soldiers completed this arduous and challenging trek in harsh conditions with great pride and elation. The scenery, flora and fauna and influential Buddhist culture that surround Ladakh are all captivating beyond words. These very friendly people are at ease in their world as hard as it may seem to us.

LCpl Sally Mucklow just below the 4900m Stok La Pass

The bonding on a trek such as this is immense and it was somewhat disappointing to have to leave it for the hustle and bustle of Agra (as nice as the Taj Mahal is) and then of course Delhi! The inside of a beer glass was good as was the McDonalds and Subway sandwich on the way back from Heathrow!



LCpl James Winrow and Cfn Malcolm McLaren in the Officers Mess!

SPORT

1 SIGNAL BRIGADE BOXING

Whoever said that boxing was an inhumane and barbaric sport had obviously either missed or ignored the bravery, determination and pure guts it takes to stand up in a boxing ring and fight another man or woman.

Twenty four boxers rose to the challenge in December as 1 Sig Bde came together at Elmpt Station to slug it out for bragging rights between the ARRC Sp Bn based at JHQ, 7 Sig Regt and 16 Sig Regt, both based at Javelin Barracks, Elmpt and 22 Sig Regt from Stafford in the UK. The preliminaries had been fought 2 days prior to the main contest and for the first time female bouts were on the card for the gala event, sponsored by Mitsubishi Motors. The female bouts were all contested by members of 7 Sig Regt, namely **Capt Bonnett**, **Sig Spilsbury**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig Poppleton** with **Capt Bonnett** coming out on top on a majority decision and **Sig Poppleton** in her first ever bout causing 2 standing counts in the 2nd round before being declared the victor.

The scoring for all the bouts was based on the Amateur system of points scoring with 3 judges awarding a maximum of 20 points per round to the winner and the loser scoring less. The winners of the event would be the Regt who had scored the most wins throughout the 2 days including the preliminaries.

With the assembled Regts fronted by their Officers and WOs and Sgts Messes sectioned within Hangar 2 at Elmpt Station, the roof was ready to be lifted off before the first fighters of the evening were piped into the arena. Each Regt unashamedly supported their own fighter, rising to their feet as they sensed victory for their man.

The punches were thrown in a hail of photographers' flash bulbs as everyone wanted to keep this event saved for posterity and with good reason. As **Brig Nick Pope**, Comd 1 Sig Bde explained:

"The last time we had a Bde boxing match was a month before we headed out to Afghanistan in March 2006 and at the time I said that this was an event that we must repeat. Now the Bde has got 4 units it gave us a chance to bring the Bde together for a 'bonding session' for the first time as a 4 unit organisation.'

The first male bout of the evening was at Bantam Weight between **Pte Brine** of ARRC Sp Bn and **LCpl Bryce** of 22 Sig Regt. This set the tone for the event with **Bryce** fighting like a terrier causing 2 standing counts in round 2 and leaving **Brine** looking at his corner for the towel to be thrown, which duly came. In the Feather Weight contest 18 yr old **Sig Spencer** looked like a boxer moving around and using the ring well against **Sig Thapa** of 22 Sig Regt, who hit the canvas in round 2 but refused to stay down, taking a standing count in round 3 before **Spencer** was declared the winner by the judges.

The next fight was the fight of the evening. **Pte Waring** of ARRC Sp Bn squared up against **Sig Richards** of 7 Sig Regt. **Waring** had to endure a maelstrom of blows and suffered 2 standing counts in round 1 and a further count in round 2 but he refused to give in. By this time both Regts were on their feet shouting themselves hoarse as they gave support to their fighter.

Fired by his supporters, **Waring** rallied and subjected **Richards** to a standing count in round 2. As the bell rang for the end of the final round the noise was deafening from both Regts as they knew that they had witnessed a truly memorable bout that would ultimately bring **Waring** more recognition than **Richards** as he collected the award as 'Best Loser' at the end of the evening.

Brig Pope said of the fight; "The bravery, guts and determination that **Pte Waring** showed, defines what part of this Bde is about, additional to that is that we are also about being 'Forged, honed and ready'. As a Bde we've had a really fantastic year following on from our time in Afghanistan we've re-equipped and restructured the Bde, a year doing public duties and supporting the ARRC on its war fighting exs and we've turned the Bde around, ready to go back out to Afghanistan for part of 2008. This event is really a culmination of all of those activities and the chance to come together for a little bit of enjoyment as well."

The Light Welter Weight bout between **Pte Kirlew** of ARRC Sp Bn and **Cpl Hindson** of 22 Sig Regt kept the mood of the crown high as the ARRC Sp Bn supporters chanted their way through the fight that **Kirlew** won convincingly. The interval was well needed to allow the 4 Regts to get their breath back before the all important last 6 fights.

If the bout between **Waring** and **Richards** was about guts, the Middle Weight competition was about true boxing skill as 2 accomplished fighters were on show in **Sig Rosini** of 7 Sig Regt and **LCpl Stanyer** of 22 Sig Regt. Blood was drawn in round 2 by **Stanyer**, whose punching prowess was never in doubt and persuaded the judges that he should take home the victory. In the Light Heavy Weight contest **Spr Braithwaite** of ARRC Sp Bn and **LCpl Kemp** of 22 Sig Regt brawled their way through a bloody fight with **Braithwaite** suffering standing counts in rounds 1 and 2, but this was much to the taste of the crowd, who sensed a knock out, but were ultimately disappointed as he managed to stand his ground as **Kemp** took the spoils.

The drama was still to come as **Pte Matavutuka** and **LCpl Dubickas** of 7 Sig Regt in the Heavy Weight competition had barely heard the bell for the start of round 1 when **Matavutuka** trying to avoid a blow from **Dubickas** fell badly injuring his knee so severely that he was taken to hospital in what was the last fight of his career,.

The Super Heavy Weight bout featured **Cpl O'Neil** of ARRC Sp Bn and **Sig Sullivan** of 22 Sig Regt. Two big men who were not going to give an inch, although **Sullivan** forced standing counts in rounds 2 and 3 to take the win, while the Cruiser Weight match up between **LCpl Boyd** of ARRC Sp Bn and **Sig Urquhart** of 7 Sig Regt resulted in ARRC Sp Bn's second victory of the evening. It was too little too late and even though ARRC Sp Bn snatched the last fight of the evening in the Welter Weight category between **Pte Girvan** and **Cpl Thorburn** of 22 Sig Regt the overall victory went to 22 Sig Regt with ARRC Sp Bn in second place followed by 7 Sig Regt and 16 Sig Regt.

Brig Pope closed the evening, his last time as Bde Comd at such an event by saying:
"It's been an honour and a privilege to command what I consider to be a first class and unique organisation and after 30 months in command I wish the Brigade, God speed and good luck in the future."

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Mr Peter Cuckow
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Maj(Retd) Ian Greig
Tel: 01258 482082

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood

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General Secretary and Treasurer: Lt Col (Retd) CP Conlon
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

Branch News. **Capt Graham Gaw** has taken over from **Jacqui Smith** as Secretary of the Edinburgh Branch. **Graham** can be contacted on: 01313-105211. The Secretary of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry Trust is **Capt Carl Jelfs**, PSAO of 5 (QOOH) Sig Sqn (V). His contact is: 31SigRegt-55SigSqnPSAO@tanet.mod.uk. **Pat** and **Roy Andrews**, Chairman and Secretary of the Malta/Libya/Egypt Club, have moved to 6 Newland Close, Newland Ave, Gt Driffield, E Yorks Y025 6TU.

RHQ News. Congratulations to **Lt Col Carl Conlon** (General Secretary) who joined the bus pass brigade in December.

Royal Hospital Chelsea. Four former members of the Corps have recently been admitted as In Pensioners at the Royal Hospital; **Les Perrier**, **Tom Hazel**, **James Mitchell** and **Alex Payne**. We hope they have a long and enjoyable stay.

Corps Memorial. The Corps Memorial at the National Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffs will be officially unveiled and dedicated at 1200hrs on 20 May 2008. In order to help with the arrangements, anyone planning to attend is asked to give their name to Assn HQ. Please be in position by 1130hrs. Please be warned that the area around the memorial is grassed and, whilst fairly flat, it is not considered wheelchair friendly. Seating and cover will be very limited, so a folding chair/shooting stick plus brolly could be useful. The RSA had a target of £13,000 towards the total cost (around £26K) and this has now been exceeded thanks to the generosity of members and branches. Our sincere gratitude goes to all members who kindly sent in a contribution – we are confident that the finished item will be something special. Being over 11 feet in total height, it should be easy to find.

Annual Reunion. The RSA reunion will be held at Blandford Camp over the weekend 28/29 June 2008. Full details, including order forms for car passes and meals should be available for downloading from the RSA website in February. Those without Internet may ask for a copy from Assn HQ. Caravans and tents are most welcome.

Remembrance Day Parade. A long way off I know, but if you want to march with the Corps contingent at the Cenotaph Parade at Whitehall in November, get your details to me now. I am allotted a limited number of tickets and the list is quickly filling up. Please note that these tickets are only for Life Members of the RSA. Our photo shows RSA members assembling on Horse Guards Parade last Remembrance Day.

New Life Members.

Rank/name	*Service*	*Branch/unit*
Cpl Andrew Simpson	1999-date	16 Sig Sqn
Cpl Roland Crook	1942-46	
Sgt Phil Davies	1970-84	
LCpl Chas Shaw	1966-76	
Sig James Fenwick	1960-63	Tayside & Fife Branch
Sig Keith Ansell	1952-54	Bedford Branch
Sgt Alan Wright	1971-94	Darlington Branch
WO1 Graham Campbell	1966-90	
Capt Mick Angove	1982-date	14 Sig Regt(EW)
Cpl Brian Hackett	1956-59	
Cpl Philip Hopwell	1976-93	
LCpl Rosemary Coombes	1964-66	
Cpl Herbert Sieminski	1971-79	
LCpl Glen Miller	1973-79	
Capt Graham Gaw	2000-date	Edinburgh Branch
Sig Chris Dickinson	1976-83	
Sig Daniel Tidball	1996-01	
Sgt David Reid	1980-95	
LCpl Craig Stothard	1991-00	
Capt Les Scott	1997-date	
WO1 Tom Martin	1955-77	
Sig Jim Walker	1961-69	
Sgt Sam Estcourt	1996-date	Bristol Branch
Sig Bob Bishop	1956-58	
Sgt John Wheatley	1956-69	
Cpl Kenny Purdie	1991-08	
Sgt Gordon Smith	1984-07	
Sig Fred Peel	1954-56	
SSgt Ross Harmer	1986-date	11 Sig Regt
SSgt John Webber	1996-date	11 Sig Regt
SSgt Mark Chivers	1984-08	
Sig Sven Gardner	1988-93	
Sig Jane Clarke	1972-76	Glasgow Branch
SSgt Fionna Lamb	1980-96	Glasgow Branch
Maj David Harvey	1980-02	Glasgow Branch
Cpl Michael McFarland	1985-04	Darlington Branch
Cpl Peter Stowe	1951-53	
LCpl Stephen Harris	1984-96	
Sig George Bell	1969-77	
LCpl John Lewis	1989-96	
Lt John Chapman	1976-94	
Sig Ian Rigby	1981-96	
Sig Tony Hawkins	1971-73	
Cpl Tracey Lancaster	1997-07	
SSgt James Holmes	1987-07	Preston & Blackburn Br
SSgt Graham Gibson	1987-date	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Joseph Dublin	1975-83	
Sig Roy Roberts	1960-64	
Cpl Charlie Forsyth	1984-dat	102 Log Bde Sig Sqn
Sgt Richard Gigg	1974-88	
Cpl David Rowe	1957-59	Southampton Branch
LCpl Michael Goddard	1999-08	10 Sig Regt
LCpl Clifford Chambers	1946-49	
Sig David Peard	1957-59	Cornwall Branch
Sig Colin Jackson	1954-56	
Sig Roy Habbin	1945-46	
Sgt John Barker	1976-89	
Cpl Justin Copland	1998-date	11 Sig Regt
SSgt Steven Davies	1987-date	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Natalie Jackson	1996-date	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Lee Redpath	1996-date	11 Sig Regt
Sgt Mike Webb	1984-08	
Sgt Dave Wood	1972-96	
Sig David Lambert	1973-78	
Sig Bernard Saar	1946-49	East Kent Branch
Sgt Bob Pitt	1954-65	Beverley Ex-Boys Assn
Sgt Ian McManus	1959-71	
Sgt Peter Holder	1969-92	
WO1 Wilf Wilford	1985-date	52 Inf Bde Sig Sqn(258)
Cpl Taff Lenny	1985-98	
Sig Jack Ward	1962-70	
Sig Marie Rowe	1996-99	

DONATIONS

R Waldron	£20.00
Salisbury Branch RSA	£75.00
Rev Peter Riley	£25.00
Bill Davison	£10.00
In memory of **Sir John Anderson**	
cheques totalling	£419.50
Miss Mary Abbott	£25.00
Mr L H Ladbrooke	£10.00
Reading Branch RSA	£60.00
Certa Cito Lodge	£10.00
Roy Roberts	£20.00
Arthur Lennon	£10.00
Peter Mills in memory of **Stanley A J Hardy**	£75.00
Cornwall Branch RSA	£500.00
Dennis Jones	£10.00
24 hour charity cycle ride	
by Battleaxe Tp, 1 Sqn, 11 Sig Regt	£511.91
Bill Skelly	£20.00
Mrs Joan Greenstreet	£50.00
Eastbourne Branch RSA	£50.00

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Chairman **Noel Moss**
Secretary **Mary Pagan**

On a memorable and sunny day in September we visited the Sussex home of Rudyard Kipling. The house seems to retain the presence of the great man himself, the rooms as he knew them, his study as he left it, the beautiful gardens and his immaculate motor car. **Neville Lyons** organised the visit with his usual aplomb and attention to detail,

Our Autumn luncheon held at the Camberley Heath Golf Club was a great success, We were happy to welcome as our guests, **Peter** and **Sheila Cuckow**. This was a well timed occasion for **Peter** to present Honour Membership to 2 most deserving members of our committee, our Deputy Chairman **Mike Wilson** and Treasurer **Peter Sharpe**. Many friends joined us and it was a memorable day.

Our first act of remembrance was the annual service at the Canadian Cemetery at Brookwood, attended by the High Commissioner for Canada and conducted by their Army chaplain. The congregation included our Chairman, **Noel Moss** and **Jim** and **Grace Blake**. Our standard was paraded by **Fred Bridges**, supported as always by **Jean** his wife, **Jane Knight** laid our wreath. On Remembrance Sunday a number of our members attended the Royal Garrison Church, where **Mike Wilson** laid our wreath and **Fred Bridges** paraded the standard.

The Following week the Band of the Gurkhas presented their annual concert in Fleet, where they were garrisoned for many years and are always made most welcome by the local residents. This event, though not in our scheduled programme, is well attended and following the concert, we retired to the nearby restaurant to enjoy an excellent Gurkhali Supper.

The branch Christmas Party took the form of a 'skittle evening' organised by our Secretary, **Mary Pagan** at a country pub. She was ably assisted by **Chris Endean** and **Jean Wilson**. The 'alley' was beautifully decorated and an excellent buffet served in the interval. The competitors were divided into 4 teams but it did not appear to be of great significance who were winners or the runners up, the importance being to have taken part.

Our Christmas lunch was again held at the Bat & Ball, an attractive little pub hidden away in the valley of the Bourne on the

outskirts of Farnham. **Mary Pagan** has to be congratulated for organising yet another enjoyable occasion, only achieved by hard work and dedication to duty! A raffle was held and the £90 proceeds donated to the ABF for their current operations fund.

CORNWALL BRANCH

Chairman **Dave Gwinnell**
Secretary **Tom Davies**

A few members of the Cornwall Branch attended the Garden of Remembrance at Truro Cathedral on Sunday 4th November.

Terry Winsor, Mrs Gwinnell, Standard Bearer Sig Ian Butler, Mrs Carol Davies, Tom Davies, Mrs Winsor, and Mike Brummell

Sig Ian Butler came to the branch 4 years ago as a young cadet with the DCLI, carrying the standard at members' funerals, and parades. He is now a serving member of the Corps with 11 Sig Regt at Blandford.

We would like to thank his CO for permitting him to take part at this Remembrance Weekend.

EAST LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Maj (Rtd) Paul Burton**
Secretary **Alan Turner**

At our October meeting with over 40 people present, our President, **Lt Col Jackie Allan** gave us a detailed report of her time in Iraq, having returned from her 9 month tour of duty earlier this year. **Jackie** had been based at the US Embassy in Baghdad with frequent visits to the southern provinces of Iraq. With a series of slides and photographs she showed us a completely different side of Iraq to that regularly shown on the TV news.

We were all saddened when **Frances**, wife of our Vice Chairman, **Barry Greenwood** died recently and a large number of members attended her funeral at Pitsea on 2 November. **Frances** had helped prepare the buffet meals for the AGMs and November meetings for many years and as a tribute to this, **Barry** paid for the November buffet in her memory.

On 11 November, the main group of our members headed to Newbury Park for the Remembrance Day parade while some attended the Wanstead ceremony and a few more headed to The Cenotaph. The Newbury Park and Wanstead attendees then headed back to the Ilford TAC, where we had been invited by 36 Sig Regt to partake of the traditional curry lunch which was washed down with a drink (or two) from the bar.

The following Saturday we had our Disco and Fish & Chip Supper Dance, which was attended by over 70 members and friends. The evening went very well with DJ **Tony Rymill** keeping people dancing most of the evening and all too soon the time approached for Standard Bearer **Dave Coles** to perform our closing ceremony, which consists of the Last Post, National Anthem and march off to "Begone Dull Care".

At a time of falling membership figures, we were encouraged to welcome 3 new members to our November meeting, **Don Jones**, **Spencer Willson** and **Tony Fahey**.

We are now compiling our full schedule of events for 2008 with the first function being the Formal Dinner Dance scheduled for 1 March 2008 which is always a favourite with our members.

Details of this and other events are posted on our web site at http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa/eastlondon/index.htm

EDINBURGH BRANCH

The RSA Edinburgh continues to grow from strength to strength, meeting on the second Thursday of each month at 61 Sig Sqn's TA Centre. On 11 November 2007, we took part in the Remembrance Service at Stenhouse St Aidan's Parish near the site of the old TA Centre on Chesser Avenue. After the service we retired to the TA Centre for a curry and a blether with the current members of the TA.

Some of the members went down to the cemetery at Craigleith to lay the RSA Edinburgh wreath at the grave of **SSgt John Brown**, a member of 61 Sqn Sqn who passed away whilst on exercise with the TA in 1984. **SSgt Brown** is remembered by the Sqn who present the John Brown Trophy for Best Soldier every year at the Soldiers' Christmas Dinner.

Members of the RSA Edinburgh Branch next to John's grave

EXMOUTH BRANCH

HONOUR FOR EXMOUTH RESIDENT AND MOTHER OF TWO

Christine Doe has successfully competed for the honour of becoming Devon County standard bearer for The Women's Section of The Royal British Legion (RBL).

The former Cpl, who served with The Royal Corps of Signals for 11 years and a life member of The Royal Signals Association Exmouth Branch, had to compete at a competition held on 21st October at the RBL, Honiton. Emerging as a clear winner over the other ladies competing, **Christine** was quick to pay tribute to the training and experience gained while serving as a member of the Royal Signals: a Corps with a reputation for high standards of discipline and turn out.

There is another member of the family who is due for some credit; **Christine's** husband **Ashley** who is currently a WO2 RQMS also with the Royal Signals. **Christine** says that without the close support and encouragement of **Ashley**, together with the help she receives from her parents with child minding, it would not be possible for her to enjoy her participation with the Royal Signals Association and the RBL. **Christine** who works full time as a classroom assistant at the Withycombe Raleigh C of E primary school is hoping to take the Standard to school and parade for the pupils there in her uniform.

George Walker, the Chairman of the Exmouth Branch of the RSA, said in congratulating **Christine** upon her achievement: "She has represented the Exmouth branch of the RSA as standard bearer with distinction on a number of occasions in the past, having been placed 2nd, 3rd and on one occasion 1st over all, in the annual competition for standard bearers held by The Royal Signals at their reunion day at Blandford, Dorset. Although we shall not have first call on **Christine's** services in the future, we are delighted that the RBL has bestowed this honour upon Christine. She is a credit to the Corps and will do a first class job for the County".

With Remembrance Day closely following the competition, **Christine** was going to be kept rather busy in her new role with a number of parades and events taking place. You may have seen her at The Festival of Remembrance at the Great Hall Exeter University on 8th November, The Remembrance Day Parade in Exmouth on 11th November and at The RBLWS County Conference at The New Hall, Tiverton on 17th November.

LINCOLN BRANCH

Chairman **Mr Fred Patman**
Secretary **Maj (Retd) Derek Wood MBE**

The Branch continues to meet each month at our new meeting place the Stone Arms, Skellingthorpe where the landlord serves us very well. We have a luncheon with the ladies every second month. We had **WO2(FofS) Barry Street** come to the meeting from RAF Digby To try and renew our ties with serving Corps we hope this is the start of a new trend. **Barry** and his partner were made most welcome.

I would like our main story to be a little different if there is room for it. **John Hudson** a branch member was instrumental in the finding of a lost First World War Memorial. The attached story tells the tale.

The Lost First World War Memorial

It was during the time when a friend and I were researching the two VC holders who were born in Lincoln – **Leonard Keyworth** and **James Upton** who had been awarded the highest decoration a soldier could obtain, serving in France during the First World War. **James Upton** survived the war but unfortunately **Leonard Keyworth** was killed only 6 months after receiving his award from **King George V** at Buckingham Palace.

The local newspaper (The Lincolnshire Echo) carried the story regarding the research into these gallant men and a householder from a local village, Cherry Willingham, which is just outside Lincoln, made contact informing us of a stone in his garden which he had dug up. He had no idea what it was but it had several names on it, one being **Keyworth VC**.

When examining the stone it was obvious that it was a war memorial dedicated to 16 men. We were shocked at the discovery and very concerned that it should have ended up buried in a garden. Once again the local paper ran the story and a lady came forward and identified it as having been erected in the Silver Street Methodist Church in Lincoln. She produced a photograph of it and also informed us that one of the men was her father.

The Methodist Church referred to had ceased to be a church in the early 1940s and had been used for storage for many years, before being demolished in the 1960s. How the memorial came to be buried in the garden of a house in a village is a mystery which probably will never be solved.

The gentleman who found it couldn't help at all as to why it was in his garden. He was leaving the area in a matter weeks and gave the stone to us. It was our intention that it should once more be put on public display. Unfortunately my friend became very ill and died some months later; he had been Mayor and City Sheriff of our City.

The stone was stored for some time and I commenced my hunt for a permanent home for the memorial. With the help of a friend, I approached 3 churches in the area of Monks Road, Lincoln. The vicar of All Saints Church, **Rev. David Edgar**, was very receptive to the idea and like me, he felt that it should once again adorn the wall of a church. The parochial church council made all the necessary approaches to the relevant authority and permission was granted for it to be erected in the church.

I made approaches to the Ex-Service associations in Lincoln and without hesitation financed the restoration. The memorial was restored by a local stone mason Draper Memorials, Newport, Lincoln.

The War Memorial in place in All Saints Church

The service of re dedication took place on Sunday 25th November 2007 during morning service. Ex Service organisations were represented with 8 standards on parade, including the Branch Standard of the Royal Signals Association. The city was represented by the deputy Mayor, **Cllr Ron Hills** who unveiled the memorial. The oration was given by the Chairman of the Lincolnshire and Royal Anglian Old Comrades Association, **Mr Cyril Key** and a bugler from RAF Waddington sounded Last Post and Reveille.

John Hudson and Bill Doyle, the Branch Standard Bearer in front of the Plaque

Of the 16 names on the memorial, 14 had been identified (10 serving with the Lincolnshire Regt). A number of relatives came forward and were in attendance at the re dedication service.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Chairman **Bobby Taylor**
Secretary **Chris Dennis**

1st DECEMBER 2007 – RSA LIVERPOOL CHRISTMAS DINNER

The RSA Liverpool Branch were delighted to extend a warmest welcome to branch members, friends and guests for their Annual Christmas Dinner. We were also especially pleased to see **Colin Svenson** and his good lady **Anne** who had both been away in Wales for convalescence. Recently, they had both pulled through a visit to hospital, following a spell of ill health.

The event this year was held on Saturday 1 December at the Sgts Mess, Aintree Barracks, Liverpool. Yet again we had another entertainment packed programme, which started when we gathered in the Sgts Mess to enjoy pre-dinner drinks and light refreshments. At 2000hrs we were ushered downstairs to the Drill Hall for a most enjoyable Christmas Dinner.

At one point, a small knob of burning candle wax landed on the table in front of 2 guests causing one of them to spring into immediate action by extinguishing the flame with expert proficiency. We couldn't have been in safer hands as the guest, **Dave Whitehead** is a retired Station Officer from the Merseyside Fire Service. This episode passed without further incident and was unnoticed by the majority of diners.

One member of the Branch, **Aussie Graves**, who is the Chairman of the Liverpool Burma Star Association had secretly arranged for **Steve Brisk** to be presented with a "Friend of the Burma Star" badge. This award is for the help and support **Steve** has shown toward the Burma Star Association and is worn with pleasure and pride by all recipients. The badge was presented by the Branch Chairman, **Bobby Taylor**. **Steve** later commented that it was an honour and he felt privileged to have been bestowed with such a reward.

During the 'Toasts', there was a particular extended absent friends toast to **Bill 'Knobby' Clark** who had been admitted to Broadgreen Hospital. **Bill** had suffered from a fall last year and had been in and out of hospital during the year. We wish **Bill** and his family well and hope for a speedy recovery.

It was then back up to the Sgts Mess; for the eagerly awaited raffle draw. Prizes had been donated by guests and members of the branch. We were then entertained by live music kindly provided by 'The Narks' who amused us with their vocal and guitar talents well into the small hours. **Reg Hazledean** even tickled our eardrums with a well rehearsed rendition of a couple of old favourites.

Our thanks go to **Maj A McFarlane** for allowing the Branch to use the barracks and also to all those people who worked behind the scenes and volunteered their help and support towards achieving a most enjoyable evening. Another good time was had by all.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

Comrade **Jim (Scouse) Walker** – We regret to announce the death of **LCpl Jim Walker**, a long time Branch member and ex-regular soldier, who died on 12 November 2007. **"Scouse" Walker**, as he was affectionately known at 40 (U) Sig Regt, served with the Regt for almost 20 years and was a Branch member for nearly 40 years. Before that he served with the Regular Army (RASC) from 1954 to 1959.

On 5 November, our Chairman **Jim Reilly** joined Belfast's Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Cllrs at Belfast City Hall where, in addition to representatives of the Royal British Legion, the security forces and civilian services, **Jim** laid a cross on behalf of the Branch.

On Saturday 10 November, Branch Standard Bearer **Billy Dixon** represented the Branch at the RBL Festival of Remembrance in The Waterfront Hall in Belfast.

On Remembrance Sunday, Branch members led by Chairman **Jim Reilly** and preceded by Branch Standard Bearer, **Billy Dixon**, paraded with 40 Sig Regt (V) to St Mark's Parish Church, Dundela, where the Chairman laid a wreath. After a march past at the camp, where the salute was taken by the CO, **Lt Col FER Whichelo**, a cross was laid at the memorial in camp to a past Chairman, **Tom Maguire**. At the conclusion the Regt provided a meal for all present.

We extend our continuing good wishes to Branch Archivist, **Edgar McCall** who despite a major illness for much of last year, maintains a good rate of recovery. **Edgar** managed to attend our October meeting with help from our Asst Welfare Member **John Lucas**.

Speaking on behalf of the Branch's new committee members at least, we feel it appropriate to record our appreciation here to our very industrious deputy secretary **Carole Cameron**. Apart from lots of helpful advice to us all, amongst her many other chores **Carole** has managed to find an interesting speaker or venue to visit for most of the meetings throughout the year. Topics have included: Afghanistan, NI – Its part in WW2, Palace Barracks Memorial Garden, Hearts & Minds in Basra, The Battle of Monte Cassino and The Indian Mutiny 1857. Well done, **Carole**!

At the time of writing, a landmark birthday is just ahead and must be put on record. **Maj (Retd) Noel Johnson**, President of NI Branch will celebrate his 80th birthday on 19 December 2007. Typical of his dedication, **Noel** has it on the same day as our Branch meeting! **Noel** joined the RSA in 1956 and has served in every office, often more than once! We all wish **Noel** many happy returns and lots more service in the RSA!

As always, we issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, Regular or TA, to join us at Clonaver TAC, Belfast on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

READING BRANCH

Chairman **Mrs Pauline Tennant**
Secretary **Lt Col (Retd) Hugh Nealon**

Reading Branch were busy over the Remembrance period. This included a large Branch attendance at Windsor, where we joined 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn, followed in the evening when we joined the Royal British Legion Parade of Standards at the Salvation Army citadel. Our last formal gathering of 2007 was the quarterly Branch Meeting at Caversham Heath Golf Club, where we were well looked after by the bar and catering staff. Later in November, there was an informal pub lunch and the year was rounded off by our annual Christmas Supper. This is always a happy occasion, with good food and excellent company. However one person was conspicuous by his absence at all these events.

In the last edition of *The Wire* readers may recall we were hopeful that **Alan Foot** would come through his hospital treatment and resume his duties with the Branch. Sad to say **Alan** died shortly after his operation. His obituary will appears later in this edition, but it can only be a brief summary of **Alan's** contribution to the Corps and the Association. There was standing room only at the funeral, which reflected his interests in many spheres of life, and the vast circle of friends and colleagues **Alan** had built up over his lifetime. **Maj Gen Bill Macfarlane**, past President of Reading Branch, gave a eulogy which paid tribute to a lifetime of service to the Corps and the community. Branch and British Legion Standards were carried, and Last Post was sounded by a trumpeter from the Corps Band. We are grateful to all Association members who travelled from far and wide, to support **Alan's** family. Reading Branch has a fairly full programme of events planned for 2008 and details can be found on the Reading Branch website, together with further tributes to **Alan Foot**: http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa/reading/index.htm

SWINDON BRANCH

Chairman **Rod Ashman**
Secretary **Peter Howells**

On the18th November, the Swindon Branch went down the M4 heading for London. Our intention was to spend a day at the Tower of London. The journey down went without a hitch until we got to Parliament Square where we got caught up in a demonstration – it took us over an hour to get through. Eventually we arrived at the Tower.

We all had a good day and learned quite a bit of history but it was soon time to leave after making sure we still had our heads on! When we got back to the bus park and got the parking fee, we all thought we had bought the bus park! Oh well, you never know what the future holds.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	Served Years	Died
Adams - Maj JEL Adams	1933/73	17/11/2007
Banks - Sgt DEW Banks	1944/56	09/12/2007
Bentley - Sgt DW Bentley	1967/91	07/12/2007
Bignell - Sgt RJP Bignell	1946/75	11/12/2007
Cattermull - Col DG Cattermull	1944/81	18/11/2007
Cerutti - Sgt J Cerutti	1939/46	30/08/2007
Clark - Sig L Clark	1941/46	24/08/2007
Clifford - Sig PH Clifford	1943/47	05/11/2007
Coates - Lt NE Coates	1943/49	18/09/2007
Cracknell - Sgt WSM Cracknell	1974/86	18/12/2007
Driskell - Lt Col BAR Driskell	1952/85	04/10/2007
Dye - Cpl E G Dye	1939/48	11/12/2007
Grimmett - Cpl B Grimmett	1941/46	27/10/2007
Harding - SSgt A Harding	????/65	21/11/2007
Leah - Sgt S Leah	1960/??	29/10/2007
Lewis - Maj CF Lewis	1948/86	16/11/2007
Loch - Ssgt W Loch	1980/07	10/11/2007
Malone - Maj F Malone	1935/69	17/12/2007
Manning - Capt CE Manning	1964/91	31/10/2007
Mathews - Capt MG Mathews	1936/46	??/10/2007
Rigg - Sgt RL Rigg	1946/48	30/11/2007
Roberts - ? SGB Roberts	1939/45	23/11/2007
Saul - Maj FB Saul	1944/81	10/10/2007
Sexton - Maj M Sexton	1967/88	24/12/2007
Street - Sgt JC Street	1942/47	07/10/2007
Tester - Cpl PGD Tester	1941/47	28/10/2007
Thomas - Maj NT Thomas ERD	1938/47	??/11/2007
Thomassen - LCpl S Thomassen	1989/96	??/07/2007
Thorburn - ?? G Thorburn	1954/77	04/12/2007
Walker - LCpl J Walker	1961/81	12/11/2007
Waugh - WO2 A P Waugh	1958/73	18/11/2007
Wigmore - Lt JAJ Wigmore	1946/52	04/12/2007
Wilks - Sig AW Wilks	1935/46	10/12/2007

OBITUARIES

FOOT – Maj Alan Edwin Foot died on 22 October 2007.

Alan Foot was born in 1925 and died 22 October 2007 aged 82. A wartime soldier, enlisting in the Royal Signals in 1943, he trained initially as an OWL and then as an OWK before joining No 20 "Golden Arrow" Wireless Section, attached to SHAEF as a high-speed Wireless Operator. He landed on Omaha Beach in July 1944 and the Section commenced operating to Bletchley Park first from Normandy, then from Versailles and finally from Reims at the capitulation in May 1945. At the end of the war, his Section reverted first to HQ 21 Army Group in Brussels and then 2 LofC Sig Regt at Herford, Germany. In 1946 his Tp was detached to Nuremberg, where the War Crimes Trials were being held, to transmit Press News to the Ministry of Information in London. In January 1946 he was detached to No 20 Golden Arrow Troop in Berlin as Tp Sgt.

After demob in October 1947 he took employment with the Thames Conservancy Board and continued with them as an Incorporated Public Health Engineer until his retirement in 1983. However in October 1950, he was granted a TA Commission to serve with the Army Cadet Force and in the following 14 years served with the Cadets in Middlesex, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. By the time he resigned his commission in December 1964, he had achieved the rank of Maj; a rank he was permitted to retain as he was gazetted with the honorary rank of Maj. On 5 January 1965 he enlisted as a Sig with 63 Sig Regt (TA). He re-qualified as a Radio Operator and was quickly promoted to SSgt at which rank he served with 960 Sig Tp (V) and, on promotion to WO2, he moved to 94 (BY) Sig Sqn (V) as SSM. He retired, again, in January 1980 after serving 15 years with the TA.

In parallel with both his full time professional career and his military career, **Alan** maintained an extremely active "other" life. In 1965 he became the Secretary of the Oxford District Centre of Public Health Engineers and during the following 22 years remained on the committee of that body serving variously as Secretary for 6 years, Vice Chairman for 3 years, Chairman for 2 years and Treasurer for 11 years. He was an enthusiastic steam railway working volunteer. In 1979 he joined the Mid-Hants Railways and over the years until his retirement again, in the early 90s, qualified as Signalman, Guard and Shunter, Booking Clerk, and Station Master – a post he held at Alton for 3 years and finally as Assistant Superintendent of Operations. In 1981 **Alan** was invited to volunteer to help set up a new Emergency Operations Centre and in particular a new Comcen, in Berkshire's new Shire Hall. This task was so well done that he was appointed County Signalmaster.

He also had a distinguished career in the Royal Signals Association (RSA). After joining in 1967, he did much of the spadework required which resulted in 1971, in the inauguration of

the Reading Branch. He was Secretary of the branch for 21 years and held many other posts including that of Chairman, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Dinner Secretary. In 1976 he founded the Brighton Branch and in 1977 was awarded Honour Membership of the RSA.

In 1994, The Royal Signals Institution awarded **Alan** the "Master of Signals Award" for "outstanding service to the Corps, the Army Cadet Force, the Territorial Army and the Royal Signals Association".

Alan, who was predeceased by his wife **Della**, is survived by his two daughters, **Karen** and **Sue** to whom we extend our deepest sympathies.

SEXTON – Maj Mike Sexton died 24 December 2007.

Mike Sexton was born on 12 May 1934 in Norwich. On leaving school, **Mike** joined Boddies Dairy Engineers in St Giles, Norwich as an apprentice. He was called up for military service on 2 June 1952 and did his National Service with the Royal Army Ordinance Corps at 32 C Vehicle Depot COD Chilwell as a Technical Clerk specializing in heavy plant.

In 1954 with the rank of Cpl, he transferred to 251 Field Park Sqn Royal Engineers, where he qualified as a Plant Engineer.

In 1967 **Mike** transferred yet again, this time to the Royal Corps of Signals (TA), where he received his commission in 1968.

In 1974, **Mike** was appointed 2IC 54 Sig Sqn in Cambridge and he retired in 1988 as 2IC of 36 Sig Regt in the rank of Maj. **Mike** held many posts within both the Royal Signals Association and the Royal Engineers Association.

In civilian life, after leaving Boddies, **Mike** worked for Jewson's Builders Merchants, before leaving and starting up and running two DIY shops in Norwich (Sexton's Hardware).

After selling the shops, **Mike** went on to work as Manager and Managing Director of various builders merchants, including Frank Aldridge, William Ashby of Wrenningham, Marlow's of Bury St Edmunds, Harcros of Leicester and Lacey and Lincoln of Norwich.

Mike was married to **Rita**, who died tragically in a vehicle accident in 1955. He leaves 2 sons **Mark** and **Adrian**, daughter-in-laws **Caroline** and **Jane** and 5 grandchildren, **Jack** (14), **Charlie** (12), **Maisie** (11), **Elie** (9) and **Ethan** (7).

WALKER – Jim "Scouse" Walker died 12 November 2007.

It is with regret that we announce the death of former **LCpl Jim Walker** who died on 12 November 2007 at his home in Liverpool. **Sammy McMurray**, a member of the NI Branch and close friend of **Jim**, attended the funeral on 19 November 2007.

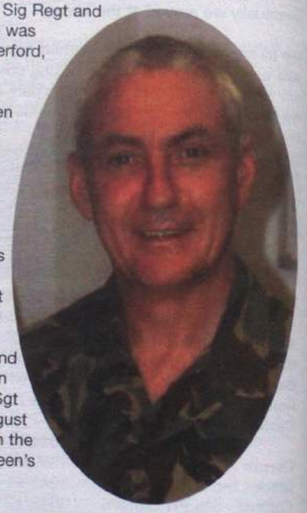
Jim Walker served with the Regular Army (RASC) from 1954 to 1959. He later joined 81 Sig Regt (AER) in Liverpool. **Jim** served in Royal Signals from 1961 to 1981 and remained a member of the RSA for life. **"Big Scouse"** as we all came to know **Jim**, made his first appearance at 66 Sig Regt, when 81 Sqn joined us at Ballykinler Trg Camp in 1964. This was to be the start of **Jim's** association with 66 and 40 Sig Regts, which was to last over 40 years. **Jim** was employed in the QM Stores and was a popular figure. He went to annual camps with the Regt in NI and England.

"Big Scouse" was a prolific letter writer; his output was to say the least, voluminous. **Jim** would casually remark to many people, "I'll drop you a line" then somehow find their address even though they'd forgotten the conversation. Soon the first letter would arrive, 6 pages of A4 handwritten on both sides. They became a fixture in his address book and would receive loads of mail thereafter.

Jim "Scouse" Walker was a larger than life character; he became an adopted son of the Regt and will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him.

LOCH – SSgt Willie Loch died 10 November 2007.

Staff Sergeant Willie Loch joined the Royal Corps of Signals in September 1980 and has been a loyal member ever since. Having attended trg at 11 Sig Regt and trade trg at 8 Sig Regt, he was posted to 7 Sig Regt in Herford, Germany in August 1981.



In March 1984, having been promoted to LCpl, he was detached to the Falkland Islands on a 4 month tour and the on completion of this, **Willie Loch** was posted to 249 Sig Sqn AMF(L) where he served as an HF Det Comd. On promotion to Cpl in August 1987, he was posted to 30 Sig Regt and during this tour he served in Cyprus and Namibia. He was posted on promotion as a Rear Link Sgt to Minden, Germany in August 1990, where he served with the 1st and 2nd Bns of the Queen's Regt.

In March 1992, he was posted to Romeo Tp, 233 Sig Sqn in Northern Ireland and while serving there he received a GOC's Commendation. In April 1994, he was posted to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as an instructor in the Signals Wing. On promotion to SSgt in August 1996 he was posted to 56 Sig Sqn (V) as the Senior Permanent Staff Instructor (SPSI), where he served until completion of his 22 year's regular service. During the period January - March 2002, **SSgt Loch** served with 97 Sig Sqn on Op PALENTINE in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia as PSI ODA. By the end of his career, he held the following medals: UN Medal Cyprus, UNTAG Namibia, GSM (with Clasp), LSGC, NATO Medal with clasp for Former Yugoslavia and the Queen's Golden Jubilee

In August 2002, having left the Regular Army, he was appointed as the NRPS SQMS at 41 Sig Sqn based in Coulsdon. This was the appointment he held up until to his death.

A keen golfer, he regularly represented the Regt, especially against matches with the Worshipful Company of Innholders livery company team and helped start up an annual Regt v Association competition. **SSgt Loch** was married for 30 years to **Maddie** and has 3 wonderful children **Debbie, William** and **Emma** plus grandson **Daryl**. **SSgt Loch** was a highly respected professional soldier and a dedicated husband, father and grandfather who will be sorely missed by all.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

FALKLANDS PILGRIMAGE - *by Ron Smith*

I was extremely fortunate and privileged to have been awarded a place on the 25th Anniversary Pilgrimage back to the Falkland Islands and thus found myself along with 249 other pilgrims, accommodated overnight at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo. Most of us were soldiers, sailors and airmen who had served on Op CORPORATE back in 1982, though there were a few widows, orphans and other bereaved who had lost loved ones in the short but bloody conflict to wrest the Islands from the Argentine invaders.

The evening of Sunday 4 November 2007 we had a reception at which **Baroness Thatcher** was the guest of honour who mingled with the pilgrims over drinks and a buffet. This was an opportunity for me to meet the other 2 ex-Royal Signals pilgrims, **Jim Keeping**, who served with the SATCOM detachment from 30 Sig Regt and **Mark 'Fritz' Davies**, who like myself served in 5 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

The following morning the party was despatched in a well-planned system, which saw each coach filled with luggage and passengers having had their documents checked and a roll call, each under the guidance of a nominated IC. After the drive to Gatwick our charter flight was boarded for the first leg, a 13hr flight to Rio de Janeiro. After a quick re-fuelling stop at 0200hrs local, which dispelled my preconceptions of the Brazilian capital, a further 5hr hop saw us safely into Mount Pleasant Airport (MPA).

Having been bid adieu by the cabin staff, we were greeted at the foot of the stairs by no less than the Comd British Forces South Atlantic Islands and following immigration procedures, we were carried by coach to the Falkland Islands Defence Force drill hall on the outskirts of Port Stanley.

From there, each of us was coliected by our host family though a small number had to 'slum it' in the blocks at Hillside Camp and Lookout Lodge. Several receptions and functions were arranged in our honour during our stay, each being funded by Falkland Islands individuals or organisations. Additionally over 3 evenings each pilgrim was a guest at a reception hosted by His Excellency the Governor of the Falkland Islands, **Alan Huckle**, at Government House. While there, veterans were able to sign the underside of the snooker table, a tradition which **Governor Huckle** asserts, was established to save having to sweep underneath the table!

The first full day of the week saw over 100 4-wheel drive vehicles, provided and driven by their volunteer owners, leave Stanley on the 250 mile 'Round Robin' tour, taking in Teal Inlet, San Carlos, Goose Green, Fitzroy and back to Stanley. A break at San Carlos was made to attend a Service of Remembrance at Blue Beach Cemetery.

Along with **Jim** and **Mark**, I paid tribute to **Maj Mike Forge** and **SSgt John 'Joe' Baker**, both 5 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, killed in action at Mount Pleasant on 6th June 1982, and buried at Blue Beach Cemetery. We also paid our respects to Corps members attached to 22 SAS Regt and 264 (SAS) Sig Sqn, whose names are engraved on the memorial plaques there.

Capt Chris Quinn and **Sgt Michelle Atkinson** of HQ BFSAI/ JCUFI also attended the moving ceremony representing the Corps and kindly agreed to assist me in my quest to visit the memorials at the Pleasant Peak site, which lies within the bounds of the Mount Pleasant Complex. So it was that 2 days later, after services at the several memorials at Fitzroy Cove and Fitzroy settlement (HQ 5 Inf Bde's location in June 1982), **Michelle Atkinson** collected me and drove back to MPC, where we picked up **Chris Quinn**.

A short drive to the north brought us to the foot of Pleasant Peak and a stiff climb, that set my old knees complaining, found us at the imposing memorial cross on the summit. Having got my breath back and placed my tributes, there was time for photos and signing of the 'Visitors' Book', thoughtfully placed in the ammo box that contains polish and dusters for keeping the brass on the memorial clean.

Ron Smith at the memorial on Pleasant Peak

Once back at MPC, USM **WO2 C T Vickers** and **Capt (TOT) C Gill,** 2IC of JCUFI made me extremely welcome and I was invited to partake in 'Cake Friday'. An invitation was extended by the USM to the 3 Corps veterans to attend the annual JCUFI Remembrance Service on Pleasant Peak on Remembrance Sunday morning, parade at 0800hrs! Once again **Michelle Atkinson** came to the rescue, arranging transport to collect us from our various 'digs' in Stanley at an unearthly hour which delivered us with minutes to spare at the '205' memorial, the brisk wind masking our breathlessness.

With no padre able to officiate, **USM Vickers** lived up to his name, and delivered the prayers, whilst **Capt Gill** led the short service. We were honoured when **Jim Keeping** was asked to lay the wreath on behalf of JCUFI. My 13-ounce lightweight blazer is OK in the summer, but not on a windy mountainside and I was shivering so much that the service was conducted to the sound of 'musical medals'. At the service's conclusion, we made our way rapidly back to Stanley, arriving just in time to join the full parade for the eleven o'clock service.

The week was filled with opportunities to visit various significant sites, and all the pilgrims eagerly grasped these. However, thanks to serving members of the Corps who I was delighted to meet, I paid my respects at the places important to me. On behalf of **Jim**, **Mark** and myself, I wish to thank all those we met and who assisted us. I am proud to see the calibre of the Corps today and deeply honoured by the fact that even 25 years later, the words "we will remember them" are not spoken emptily.

CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Jan R Ozog** [mailto:OZOGKRAKOW@aol.com]

Dear Sir,

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks for the contribution by the Royal Signals Association for their donation towards my electric wheelchair. I was a virtual prisoner in my own home, unless I was accompanied by someone strong enough to push my manual chair uphill. I am now able to go anywhere I choose to go unaccompanied. Again, many thanks for giving me my freedom.

Jan Ozog holding his Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

Also, my thanks go to the Malaysian government for their presentation of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal (photo enclosed). It meant so much to me and my colleagues in the SW Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association.

Yours…

From: **Maj (Retd) Lewis Golden OBE JP FCA**
Little Leith Gate
Angel Street Petworth
West Sussex GU28 OBG

Dear Sir,

As the Adjutant of 1st Airborne Divisional Signals in 1944 I write to correct some slight but significant errors in the report of 16 Air Assault Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (216) in your December 2007 issue:

"The Caythorpe 'location was not picked at random but was where the 1st and 6th AB Div Sigs were located prior to Op MARKET GARDEN"

6th AB Div Sigs were not at Caythorpe and had no role in the operation.

"The planning phase of Op MARKET GARDEN went on for months..."

No, only for a few days. MARKET GARDEN was the 16th operation planned for 1st Airborne Division since Dday. The 15th was COMET, and that operation was considered only after the 14th, INFATUATE, was abandoned early in September. COMET had the same objective as MARKET GARDEN but involved a much smaller force, just 1st Airborne Division instead of the three airborne divisions (one British and two American) employed in MARKET GARDEN. COMET was cancelled on 10 September and planning for MARKET GARDEN started, just a week before we took off.
"As ever Maj Gen DeaneDrummond CB DSO MC* was present throughout the proceedings and even at the age of 91, he is aweinspiring and a fantastic inspiration..."

He will reach the age of 91 in June 2008.

Yours faithfully...

From: **Maureen** (Balihai64@aol.com)

Subject: Photograph Christmas 1947

Dear Sir

I have found a photograph belonging to my late father **John Upfield** which is of one of his colleagues taken at Christmas 1947, I believe in Germany. I do not have any idea who the person is but as it has survived 60 years, I thought it may be of interest to your readers. Maybe someone will be able to put a name to the face!

Yours...

From: **Mrs Carol Wilkinson** (caw@parrswood.manchester.sch.uk)
20 Jayton Avenue
East Didsbury
Manchester M20 5QD
0161 434 2792

Dear Sir,

I was wondering whether you could help me through your Magazine.

My father **Signalman Edward Collins** (2600613) served in WW2 from April 1942 until 1947. He joined in March 1942 and mustered as a Dispatch Rider in April that year. After 2½ years in the south of England, he left for India in January 1945 and remustered as a Clerk in July 1945. He was then attached to the British Military Mission in China for 6 months before returning to India.

I am trying to fill out and gain an insight into his career. Can any of your readers help me do this?

Do any of your readers remember him? Can any of them give me some insight into his time as a dispatch rider or do they have any pictures?
Any incidents or memories would be gratefully received. You can email me with the information if you want or contact me by post at the above address.

I would really appreciate any help I can get to fill out and put incidents/memories to help add to his career record, so I can get a fuller insight into my Dad's army life.

Many thanks for your help

Yours...

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WIRE

SUBMITTING CONTRIBUTIONS

Wherever possible, submit your contributions in electronic form, saved in Microsoft Word either as an Email attachment, on a floppy disk or a CD. If you cannot send it to us electronically, we are able to work off hard copy but this is the least preferred method of submission.

If possible, we would prefer your notes to be in 12 point Arial, left aligned with single spacing but this is not critical. The editorial staff will check all submissions on receipt and make any format changes necessary.

It is most important that there is a covering letter or e mail with a name, address and phone number to enable us to make contact in case of any queries on such things as spelling of names, dates or other facts. If your submission comprises a number of separate articles or photographs, please ensure that they are linked by serial number to the first submission.

At the beginning of a unit submission, the name of the CO/OC and RSM/SSM should be printed. The Editor interprets this as an indication that the material has been submitted with the knowledge of the CO or OC concerned. Apart from that, we include the name of incumbent CO/OC and RSM/SSM at the top of each article and you should be aware that we rely on the unit to keep us up to date on these key appointments. Make sure that all disks, CDs and photos are identified with some form of unit title.

Photos are not usually returned, but if you wish them back, please indicate this clearly and provide a return address. There is one exception. If your photo has been selected for the front or back cover, we retain the originals for the Archives.

Contributions should be emailed to us at wire@royalsignals.mod.uk. Please send the text as a Word attachment and the photos as separate jpegs, preferably 1 Mb or higher. Do not embed photographs or use PowerPoint.

DEADLINES

The dates for submission are published on the Contents page of each *Wire*. Note that these are the final dates for submissions to arrive at The Wire office. You need to allow sufficient time for handling and delivery by that date.

If you have a particularly important event that that you wish to report on (e.g. a Royal Visit, an important exercise or sporting fixture) and it occurs very close to or after the deadline date, then contact the Editor well beforehand to discuss it. We will do our best to accommodate you but this will depend on how many other units have the same problem and are also asking for an exemption to the deadline. If there are many, editorial discretion will be applied to prioritise the events.

Contributions arriving after the deadline will not be carried forward to the next issue automatically. The Editor will usually send an Email or letter to the contact address (see above) informing the unit contact. If the unit wishes the item to be carried forward to the next edition, then it must be resubmitted and updated with any necessary additions or amendments.

STYLE AND CONTENT

The Wire has an established style, which has evolved over the years. Those tasked with writing articles or co-ordinating unit inputs should to read some recent back copies for guidance on style and format to use. For example, we do not publish nicknames unless it is obvious that the nickname is in fact the used name. Obviously constructed 'nicknames' are usually in-jokes which no-one outside the unit will understand and they will not be printed.

The focus should be on issues that will have a broad appeal. Stories on local issues and in-jokes are better suited to Unit/Branch newsletters, rather than *The Wire*. Even stories on broader issues can fall short if they merely recount what happened in a purely sequential way. Try to capture the atmosphere, by including how people were feeling, what was learned, or something that a reader can easily identify with. A bit of dialogue is sometimes quite effective in doing this.

The story must be interesting to read. Focus on quality, rather than quantity. The Editor is always happy to advise on writing style and form. Wherever possible, give the task of writing Wire notes to someone who can write well.

LENGTH OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Although we do not wish to constrain contributors too much, especially when they have a good story, there has to be some limit in the size of contributions. The following should be taken as a general guide for a maximum figure:

Major units: Around 8 – 10 A4 pages in single spaced Arial 12 point, plus 5 – 10 photos. After editing and transferring to the publishing software, this will be roughly 2 - 4½ pages in *The Wire* plus photos.

Minor units: Around 4 – 8 x A4 pages in single spaced Arial 12 point, plus 5 – 10 photos. After editing and transferring to the publishing software, this will be roughly 1 – 3 pages in *The Wire* plus photos.

PHOTOS

Photos play an important role in *The Wire*. As well as bringing a story to life, they can give impact to a page in a way that invites people to read it. The old saying: 'A picture is worth a thousand words' is as true today as it ever was. We could add another: 'A page without a picture seldom gets read'.

As a rule, action shots are more interesting than groups of people, i.e. a good shot of players in action on a football pitch is more appealing than a group photo of the team. Having said

A Bad Example
No faces are visible so it could be anybody falling off their skis. The photo is also slightly out of focus.

that, there should be room for a victorious team with a trophy. Photos should be related to and supported by the text. All photos should be accompanied by a caption which explains the contents clearly and unambiguously. It is helpful if a photograph is linked to a paragraph or section of the accompanying text. It is also helpful if the desired location for a photograph is indicated in the text.

All photos must have clear, sharp focus and should show clearly the people or things you are trying to illustrate. A photo will usually be reduced in size prior to printing, so you need to visualise if it will still work when it is smaller. Photos of large groups of people are best avoided because individual faces become less recognisable when the picture is reduced.
Photos should be sent in digital form as separate high resolution jpeg files, preferably 1Mb or better. They can be emailed or sent on a CD. They will not fit on a normal floppy disk. Even printed good quality photos are rarely satisfactory. Do not embed photos in your text.

Be aware that the gateways which provide external access to the internet and hence to *The Wire* will not usually accept more than 5Mb, so break up your pictures into separate messages and request confirmation of receipt.

A Good Example
Sharp focus with detail and recognizable faces at an important occasion for this unit

Another Good Example
Sharp focus and good colour of an action sports shot

EDITING AND CO-ORDINATION OF UNIT NOTES

Frequently a unit's notes are a combination of many pieces of work written by a number of different people. It is highly desirable that they are edited and co-ordinated (and possibly pruned) before submission to us. It also helps the Editor if different elements of the submission are prioritised.
Reader feedback has told us that a summary of a Regiment or Squadron activities and deployments is most welcome as the first section in the notes. This can then be followed by a series of individual articles or reports expanding on the same or similar topics.

ATTRIBUTION

Please include the names of authors of major reports and pieces, and we will acknowledge them. If you consider that any photos submitted are good enough for the front or back cover, please let us know the photographer's name. If a photograph has been taken by a professional military or civilian cameraman, then it is usual to attribute it accordingly.

PROTECTIVELY MARKED MATERIAL

Take care that the submission does not contain protectively marked information, maps or pictures or include personal details and locations which might be a risk to unit or personnel security.

COPYRIGHT

All material published in *The Wire* becomes Crown Copyright. If you wish to include material in your contributions that has been published elsewhere, we require proof that you have permission to do so.

AND FINALLY...

The Editorial Staff are always willing to help you. If in doubt, please seek their advice sooner rather than later. If you believe you have an important submission which should be given some priority, then contact the Editor and discuss it with him. There may be occasions when your submission has not been published. The most common reason for this is that your submission was received after the deadline and other items took priority. Check with *The Wire* Office to find out why. Please remember that *The Wire* is limited in size and inevitably there will always have to be cuts and the Editor's word is final!

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Civilian Exchange
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Dorset
DT11 8RH

Email: thewire@royalsignals.mod.uk

ADVERTISEMENTS

OP TELIC 1 MILITARY MEMENTO

Marking its involvement in Op Telic 1, 2 Sig Regt has commissioned a series of 6 watercolour studies by military artist **Kevin Lyles** and used them to create a single limited edition commemorative print featuring the Regt's locations and movements during the war.

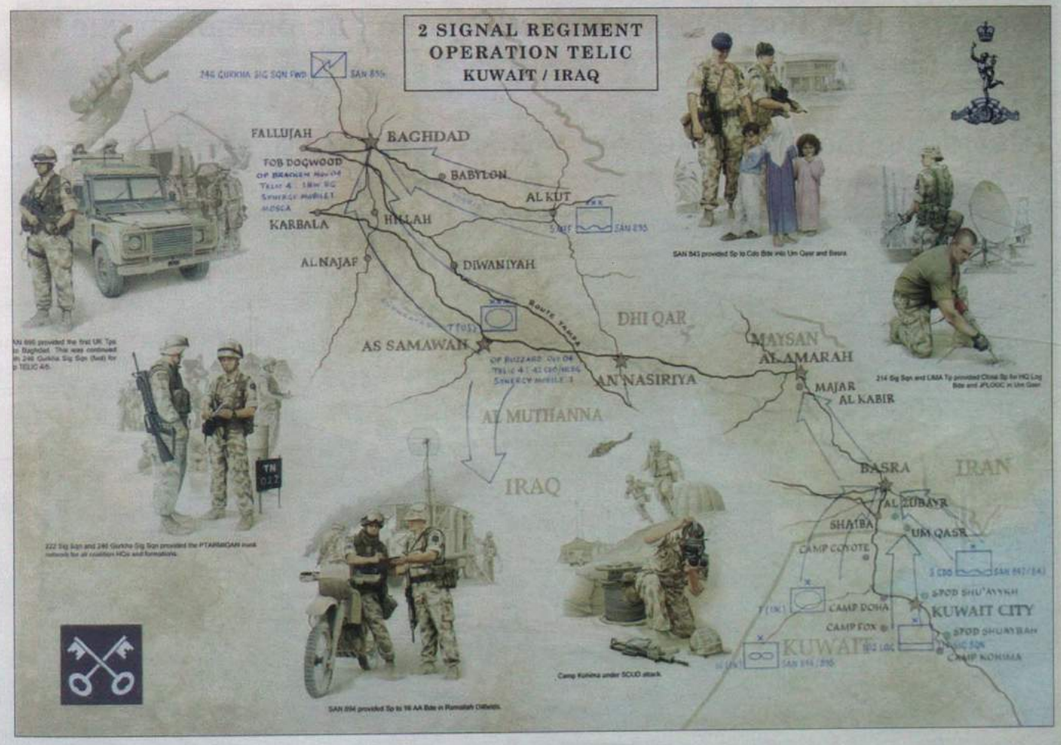
The 6 individual paintings depict:
Royal Signals Driver Linemen of HQ Sqn with a TALON satellite installation reacting to a Scud alert at Camp Kohima in Kuwait at the outset of the operation;
Installation Technicians of 214 Sig Sqn installing and guarding a satellite det in Um Qasr Port;
Area Systems operators with 219 Sig Sqn providing Ptarmigan (Airportable) comms to Paras of 16 Air Assault Bde in the Ramallah oilfields;
Radio Operators supporting Marines of 3 Cdo Bde setting up in Basrah Palace;
Gurkha Sigs of 246 Queen's Gurkha Sig Sqn supporting the US Marines during their advance on the northern route to Babylon and members of 246 Queen's Gurkha Sig Sqn (Fwd), a composite unit of Regulars, Gurkhas and TA, providing a SNATCH patrol in Baghdad on their return to Iraq in 2004 for Op TELIC 4/5.

Any soldier who has served with 2 Sig Regt during Op TELIC, or anyone else interested in the purchase of a print is entitled to a discounted price for a copy of the limited edition Op TELIC print.

Those wishing to order a copy of the print should send a cheque for £5 (which includes P&P) made payable to Central Bank 2 Signal Regiment to **Sgt Vince Key**, Unit Welfare SNCO, 2 Sig Regt, Imphal Barracks, York YO10 4HD or call mil: 94777 2366 for further details.

Additional information relating to the print may be sought by contacting **Maj Paul Anderson**, OC Sp Sqn, 2 Sig Regt, mil: 94777 2518.

Military artist **Kevin Lyles** welcomes commissions from units and can be contacted on 01442 828695 or email kevinlyles@freezone.co.uk



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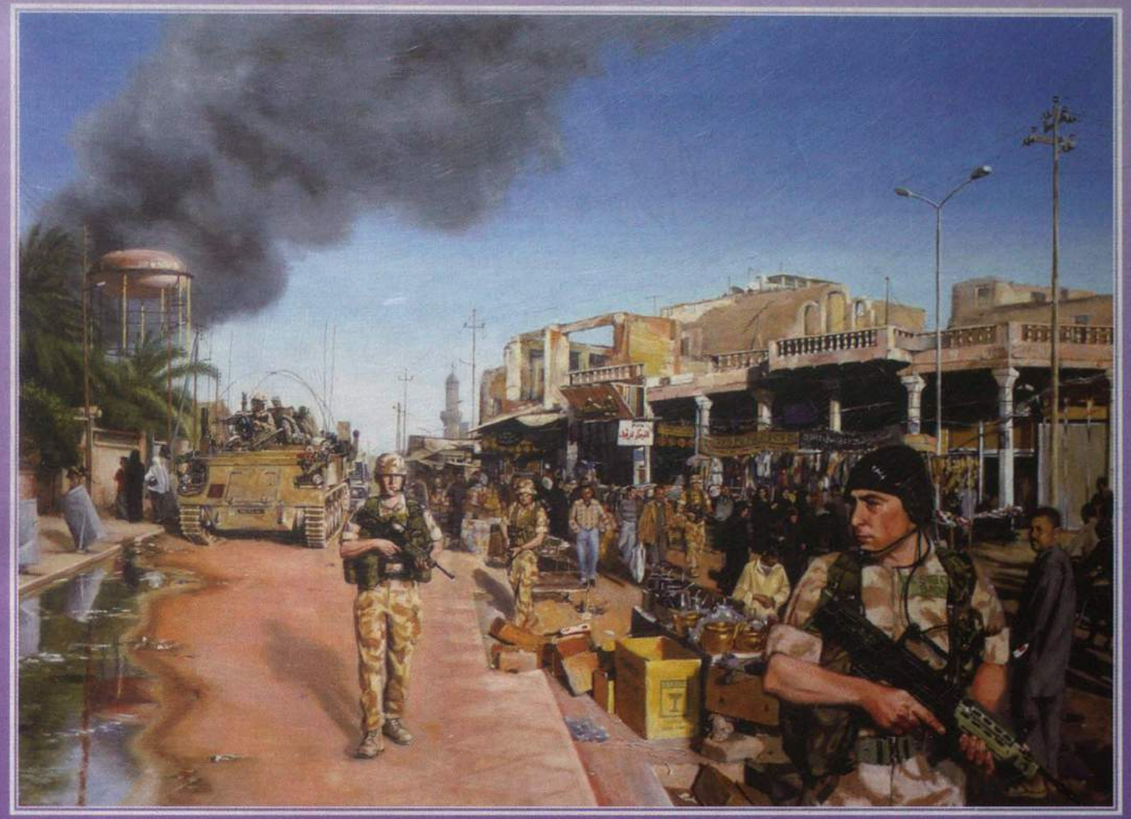


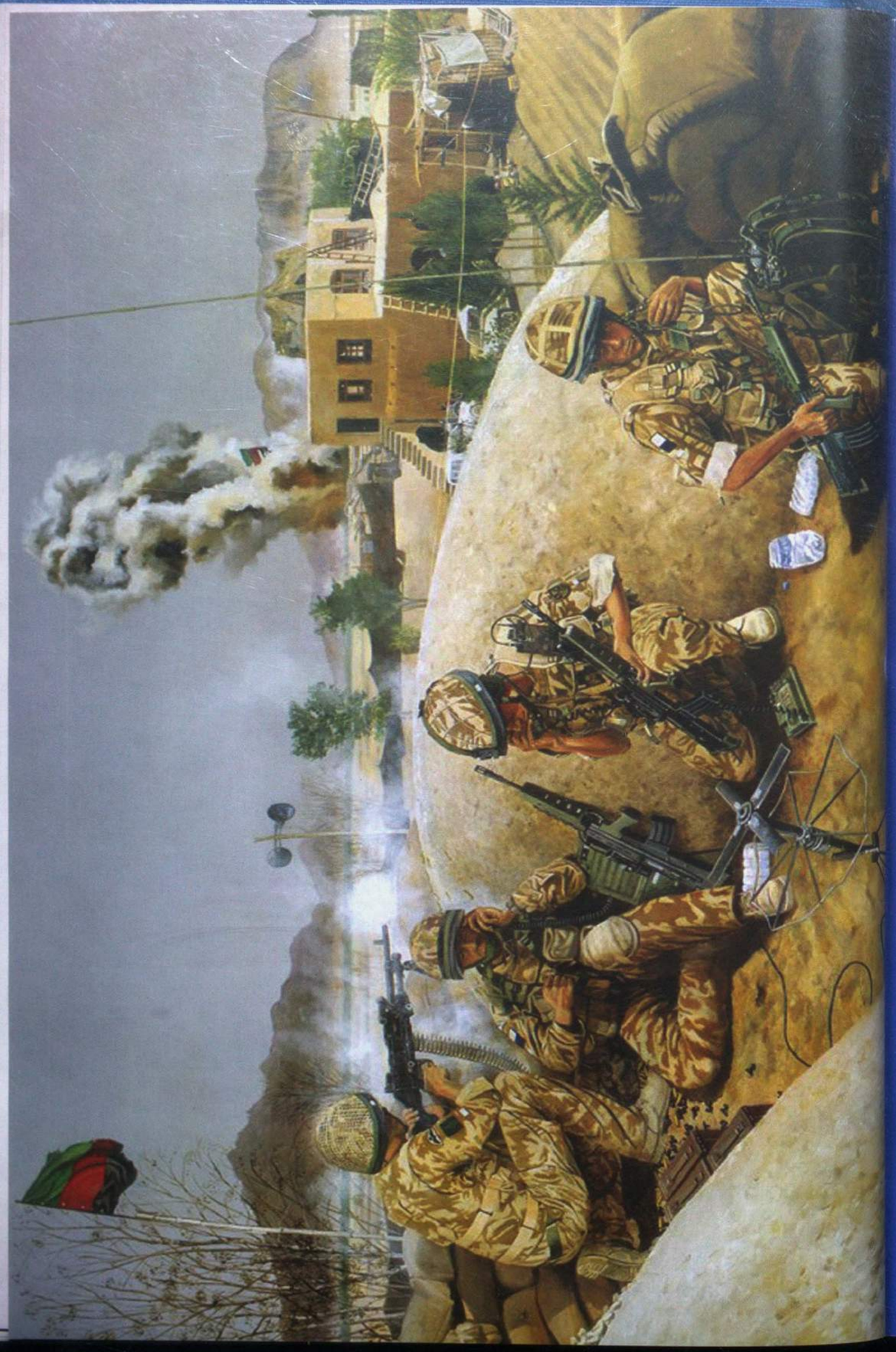
An extensive collection of Corps prints are available from the Museum shop. Please telephone 01258 482 248 for details and orders. Some of these can be seen on the Museum website at www.royalsignalsmuseum.com. More will be added this year.

The Royal Signals Museum is a Registered Charity (No 1070420).
Profits from items sold in our shop are put back into the Museum, helping to maintain & improve it for this and future generations.

THE wire

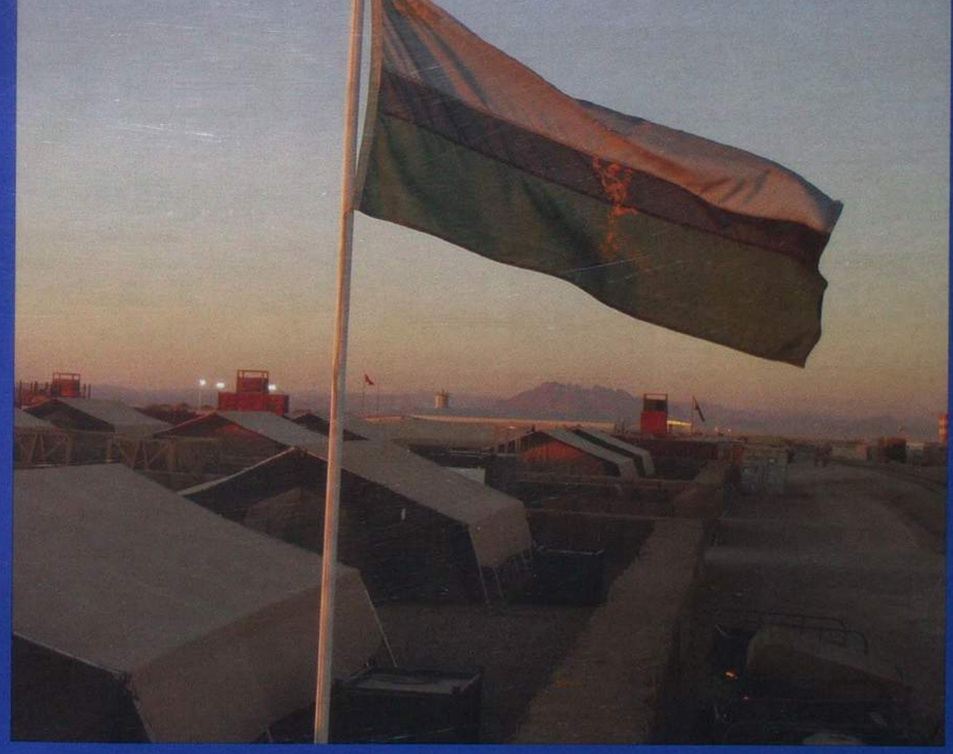
April 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals



THE Wire

April 2008



The Royal Corps of Signals

THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Past generations have raised many memorials to comrades who died in conflict but sadly the present generation has done little to acknowledge the debt owed not only to those who made the ultimate sacrifice, but also to those served and were fortunate enough to come home.

Located in the heart of the country, the National Memorial Arboretum comprises 150 acres of trees and memorials devoted to the concept of Remembrance. Set within the National Forest of Staffordshire, near Lichfield, it was established in 1997, on former gravel and sand pits gifted from Lafarge Aggregates. It already contains 130 memorials of national significance.

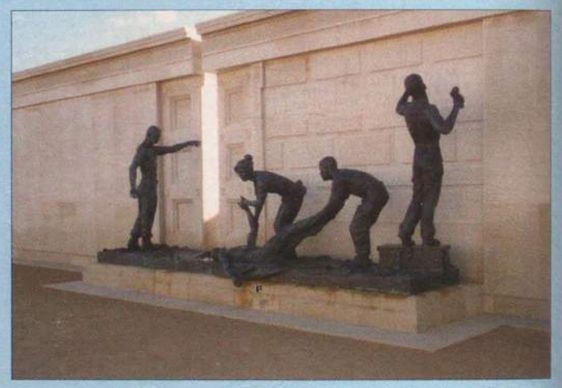
The Arboretum is the home of the new Armed Forces Memorial which was opened in October 2007. It is a striking and emotive memorial and is quickly assuming national significance. It gives recognition and thanks for those who have died whilst on duty or as a result of terrorist action since the Second World War and acknowledges the enduring sacrifice of those who mourn their loss.

This stunning memorial contains the names of 16,000 Service men and women killed on duty or by terrorist action since the end of the WW2, engraved in stone around its walls. Designed by **Liam O'Connor**, the Memorial is a magnificent piece of architecture in its own right. It embraces a peaceful setting with space for families and friends to remember their loved ones. The sculptural elements are by **Ian Rank-Broadley**.

The Memorial was dedicated on Friday 12 October 2007 in a service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and attended by Her Majesty the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.

The Armed Forces Memorial is now open so that relatives of those commemorated, and members of the public, can view the Memorial. Each year it will be the centre of Remembrance services at the Arboretum. It has been designed so that the sun will shine on the central wreath sculpture at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

The UKNDA Detachment Donnington on a rare trip not only into the sunlight but also to the Armed Forces Memorial



The window which allows the sun to shine on the central wreath

Since March 1997 over 60,000 trees have been planted and new memorials are being designed and installed within the Arboretum.

On 20 May 2008, The Royal Corps of Signals will unveil a permanent memorial at the site. It will take the form of a 'Jimmy' mounted on a plinth; the whole monument will be about 12 feet high.

The site of the new Royal Signals Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum – watch this space!

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Established in 1920

The Wire

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EDITORIAL

On 1st April 2008, the TA will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its formation. It is fitting therefore that among the contributions for this edition of *The Wire*, there are eleven from TA units.

Among a lot of good reporting of unit events in the TA, I would commend the article by **Maj Anthony Lamb** of 31 Sig Regt on Page 36 on his experiences with the Department of Border Security in Iraq. I would also mention the report on Page 45 by the Padre of 38 Sig Regt, **Padre Sean Robertshaw**, on his tour with the UK Med Group in Iraq.

This edition contains many reports on Ex MERCURY GLACIER and the joys of winter sports on and off the snow. This is balanced by many good reports of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan which add considerably to our knowledge and understanding of the role of our Corps in these theatres.

After the extensive coverage *The Wire* gave to Ex MERCURY CHALLENGE last year, it gives me great personal pleasure to publish the citation for **Sgt 'Windy' Gale MBE** on Page 94. Those of you who read the reports in *The Wire* covering the progress of *Adventure* through the course of her circumnavigation of the world, will know that **Sgt Gale's** contribution to the success of the exercise was fundamental and agree that he thoroughly deserved the formal recognition he has received.

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FRONT COVER
The flag of 237 Signal Squadron flying in Afghanistan

BACK COVER
Exercise Training Troop of Command Support Division outside The Imperial War Museum

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

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE TO MARK WITHDRAWAL FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVENIA

An official Commemorative Service to mark the withdrawal of UK Forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina will take place at the Armed Forces Memorial, Staffordshire, on Thursday 22 May 2008 and 1000 tickets are available to attend the event.

The Service will give thanks to those who served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marking the outstanding contribution made by UK Forces in bringing stability, security and peace to the country.

Tickets are available for the Commemorative Service for veterans of the conflict and the families and friends of those who lost their lives. An application form can be downloaded from www.veteransukinfo or by calling the free ticket line on 0800 169 2277 and each application will receive 2 tickets.

The Armed Forces Memorial is located within the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), Alrewas, near Lichfield, Staffordshire. The NMA covers 60 hectares of woodland and hosts memorials from a range of organisations both military and civilian, charities, local and overseas groups.

The closing date for ticket applications is Tuesday 22 April 2008 and the MOD aims to contact all successful applicants by 2 May 2008.

MOVEMENTS

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
JANUARY 2008	
Capt CB Milne	22 Sig Regt
Capt NJ Wood	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
Lt RD Harris	202 Sig Sqn, 3 (UK) Div
FEBRUARY 2008	
A/Lt Col MG Webb	Shape Staff (BAE)
Capt KF Allt	RSS
Capt NL Berry	35 Sig Regt (V)
Capt JE Ellis	HQ SOinC(A)
Capt JF Godfrey	RSS
Capt SC Keilty	37 Sig Regt (V)
Capt TA Kelly	MS Offrs Combat Sp
Capt AJ Lawson	7 Sig Regt
Capt GG Moody	DLO
Capt NJA Reynolds	90 SU-TCW-1SQN
WO2 Lokbahadur Gurung	30 Sig Regt
WO2 Omprashad Pun	DCCIS
WO2 KP Overton	2 Sig Regt
WO2 Tesharjang Gurung	DLO
MARCH 2008	
Capt AJ Davis	4 Armd Bde & Sig Sqn
Capt BK Jeffery	HQ SOinC(A)
Capt RJ Thompson	101 Log Bde & Sig Sqn
Capt CK Whittley	16 AA Bde
Lt CJP Anderson	RSS
WO1 RD Burrows	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
APRIL 2008	
A/Lt Col Maj GL Richards	RSS
Maj EF Clee	MOD DIS - DISP
Maj JA Honeyman	AIR Warfare Centre (AE)
Capt MJ Cowie	HQ SOinC (A)
Capt SA Dickson	DLO
Capt CN Hughes	Astor Sqn (AE)
Capt IR Flannery	34 (N) Sig Regt
Capt RA Lowe	OCE-MND (SE)
Capt JG Phillips	30 Sig Regt
WO1 B Palmer	22 Sig Regt

RETIREMENTS

Name and Rank	*Date*
McKenna - Maj MJ McKenna	Nov 2007

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

BLANDFORD GARRISON SUPPORT UNIT

CO **Lt Col RC Young**
GSM **WO1(GSM) P Storey**

HINDU TEMPLE OPENS

Blandford Camp saw a special occasion in its history and that of Queen's Gurkha Signals when a Hindu temple was formally opened on 22 January.

Officers, Soldiers and Families of The Queen's Gurkha Signals, the Commander Queen's Gurkha Signals, **Lt Col Chris Ford** and the Mayor of Blandford, **Cllr Steve Hitchings** gathered to take part in a very important ceremony when the Blandford Temple was opened by **Air Marshal Stephen Dalton**, Commander in Chief Personnel RAF. The Temple was consecrated by the Queen's Gurkha Religious Leader, The Pandit, **Mr Jagdish Paudel**.

Air Marshall Dalton talking to Capt Narayan Bhadari before the opening

During the opening **AM Dalton** received a welcoming garland of flowers from 10 year old **Rachana Pun**, daughter of the Gurkha SSM, **WO2(SSM) Om Pun**. The Air Marshal, along with all who attended, were given a Hindu Blessing with an incense spot being placed on their forehead and given offerings of fruit.

Rachana Pun welcomes Air Marshall Dalton with a garland of flowers

The Gurkha community within Blandford Camp is predominantly from Queen's Gurkha Signals, although there is a small contingent from other Bde of Gurkha units providing chefs, clerks etc. There is currently a Permanent Staff of 30 Gurkha Officers and Soldiers with up to 60 Gurkha soldier students at any one time on courses. Currently there are 39 Gurkha families based at Blandford Camp. This is the 4th Hindu temple opened for use by soldiers and families of the Queen's Gurkha Signals. The others are at York, Bramcote and Stafford.

It was recognised that the numbers based permanently and on temporary duty at Blandford camp were significant enough to warrant the construction of a Hindu temple to allow for worship. Although it has been an aspiration for many years to provide a permanent temple it was not until 2007 that a space became available in the camp centre that could be used to build upon.

The Temple is an important part of Hindu daily worship and is very much the Gurkha spiritual home. It is the focal point for the community often on a day by day basis above that of worship. There are up to 15 religious festivals to be observed during a year.

The Air Marshall with some of the Blandford Gurkha families

It was particularly appropriate that the Mayor of Blandford , **Cllr Hitchens** was able to attend to mark the strong links forged between the town of Blandford Forum and the Queen's Gurkha Signals. Blandford Forum granted the freedom of the town to the Queen's Gurkha Signals in 2005.

When asked what this meant to the Gurkha Community, **Capt Narayan Bhadari**, the Senior Gurkha Officer Blandford, said: "The opening of this Blandford Temple is really welcomed by the Gurkha community on Blandford Camp. To us it is much more than just a religious centre; it is the centre of our culture and will be used regularly by families in addition to the religious services and celebrations of festivals."

WO2(SSM) Om Pun had a family involvement in the opening and said: "The Temple will mean much to our Gurkha community. I was particularly proud that my daughter **Rachana Pun** was chosen to present the welcome garland to **AM Dalton** on opening the Temple."

SSgt Raj Gurung is looking forward to the future now they have a temple and said: "We are very pleased to have our own temple, where we will be able to celebrate our next big festival Chatedashain in March, celebrating the victory of good over evil. Until now we have had to use a variety of venues."

QM DEPARTMENT.

QM (G)	**Lt Col Drain**
QM (T)	**Maj Deegan**
RQMS (G)	**WO2(RQMS) Middleton**
RQMS (T)	**WO2(RQMS) Fardy**

The winter months have been as busy as ever for the QM's dept, not least for leaving functions! The dept has bade farewell to **Maj John Mackay**, the QM(T) after 37 years service, and **CSgt Mike Vincent** the SQMS(A) after a not dissimilar time in green.

We have hit the ground running after the festive period and with 'Pay As You Dine' (PAYD) just around the corner, the QM is ensuring the whole dept is working hard and on message. **WO2(RQMS) Shaun Fardy** has volunteered to ensure quality products are available with his speciality in the pie tasting arena.

In December 2007 the Under Secretary of State for Defence, **Mr Derek Twigg MP**, visited the Garrison and **WO2(RQMS) Gaz Middleton** accompanied the GSM and the CO in guiding **Mr Twigg** and his entourage around the various examples of sub-standard accn on camp and the major refurbishment programme that is underway. The state of the infrastructure around Blandford Garrison is well documented; we hope this is the start of a re-generation programme that will make Blandford an attractive place for married and single soldiers alike.

Mr Derek Twigg MP visits one of the Blandford Camp Married Quarters

Sgt Neill Crawshaw has managed to fit some work in around his various courses and will be the only man able to umpire a cricket match whilst coaching rugby above the snow line. We are still trying to figure out how he managed to (and why) he attended a Cricket umpires course, a Rugby referees course and a winter warfare course all since 1 January! **SSgt(SQMS) John Hoskins** has branched out into project management and removals as he is

heading up the move of the All Ranks bar to the main Semaphore Arms complex – yes that's right folks, the George III has moved across the road. Now if we can just get all the signs changed by June there will not be lots of confused people in blazers during the RSA weekend!

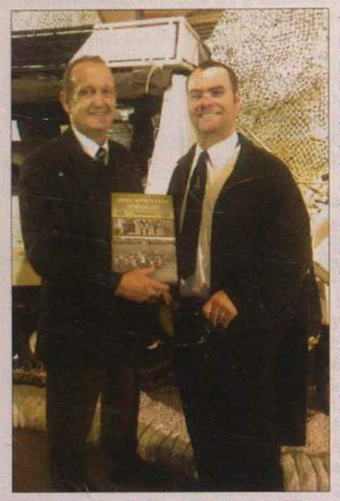
With the imminent departure of both RQMSs on commissioning, there are 2 vacancies in Blandford for committed WOs with a penchant for long hours and a healthy dislike of sports afternoons – please apply to your local RCMO. (How can you tell that the RQ wrote the notes this month?)

ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM

- by Col (Retd) Cliff Walters

This is the last time you will hear from me as your Museum Director because I retire on 28 March 2008. But I couldn't depart without a 'final fling'.

EX ATSGT DYLAN ARNOLD (90C) VISITS THE MUSEUM.



The Museum Director, Col Cliff Walters with Dylan Arnold in the Museum

The Museum has brought me many pleasures but none more so than just before Christmas when I started chatting to a Museum visitor who I soon realised I knew from the past. His name was ex-Harrogate Apprentice **Dylan Arnold** and he was in Intake 90C, when I was the Commandant. Everyone at Harrogate on 11 April 1992 will remember **AT Sgt Arnold** well because while he was on leave he had a horrific climbing accident from which he had no right to recover. He fell from high cliffs into the sea where he lay submerged. Eventually he was recovered by his comrades but the chances of survival were not good. After months of intensive care, most of it in a coma with severe brain damage, he was repatriated to Hereford Hospital. Everyone who knows him will know that he is a fighter and on the occasions when I visited him I could see that progress, albeit slow, was being made, so much so that his friends and colleagues clubbed together to provide him with a computer. When I was posted from Harrogate in 1995 I lost contact with him – hence my joy at meeting him again some 12 years later. It was my great pleasure to be able to walk with him around the museum and talk about his early days at Harrogate. He has asked me to say that he would be pleased to hear from any of his old friends at 1 Bailey Brook Road, Hereford.

YOUR MUSEUM NEEDS YOU

The Museum is staffed at weekends by Museum Volunteers. Since last year a number of our stalwarts have retired, retired, retired and we are getting a bit thin on the ground. If anyone within striking distance of Blandford is prepared to give a helping hand we would be delighted to hear from you, even if it is only one day in the year!! This includes the serving Corps. The work is enjoyable and you will be given appropriate training. The reward is that you will be invited to the, not to be missed, Volunteers Dinner at the Crown Hotel, Blandford in November. Go on, give us a bell.

MUSEUM NEWS

The best news is that under DTR, the Museum may well be remaining in Blandford. This is not yet final but we are hopeful. We continue to go from strength to strength and for another year our visitor numbers have increased. We have a number of exciting display projects in train, including an update of the Airborne Display, Current Operations, Centenary of the TA (TA100) and Women at War. The latter is an interactive display with some eye-catching exhibits going back to the FANYs of 1907 for which we had a £50K Heritage Lottery Grant. We have again circulated our Newsletter, The Shutter Telegraph, to 11,000 friends of the Museum. We thank you all for your support and hope you will purchase lottery tickets.

THE DIRECTOR SIGNS OFF

I will be departing on 28 March after over 8 years as Museum Director. I have seen the Museum develop from being a 'Corps hobby' into a thriving business which is now at the forefront of visitor attractions in Dorset. To achieve this has taken considerable support from permanent staff, a multitude of volunteers, Garrison staff, Friends of the Museum, the Retired Corps and the Serving Corps. I would like to thank everyone involved and I offer my best wishes to those who take it forward from here.

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS
COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

CI	**Lt Col AR Knott MBE**
SIO	Vacant
DSM	**WO2(SSM) Chris Jones**

- by Tony Moogan

By the time this article goes to print, we will have welcomed at last, our new Chief Instructor (CI). He is on leave at the moment but will start work with us on 10 March 08. We're unsure how long we will keep him because historically in this Div, we are a little careless with our CIs and keep losing them after a year or so! We will see. The downside of **Col Knott's** appointment of course is that **Maj Lloyd Golley** relinquishes his position of Acting CI and (sotto voce) the POHR – ouch! However now he will only need one wheelbarrow to carry his wallet around, instead of two. Every cloud……..eh folks!

We are very pleased to congratulate our **SSM(G) WO2 Omprasad Pun** who has been selected for commissioning and is now scorching a path through his Tp Comds course – we wish him and his family well in their new career.

Sadly we say farewell to our Senior Instructional Officer (SIO) **Kevin Mather** who takes up his new post as Chief SIO (CSIO) in HQ DCCIS on 3 March vice **Mick Thornton**. We await the appointment of **Kevin's** successor.

We say farewell also to **Robin Cooper** our Senior Lecturer (SL) whose post is being transferred from the Div to Trg Resources and so he will not be replaced. We wish them well.

COMMAND TRAINING GROUP (CTG)

OC **Maj Lloyd Golley**

COMMAND INSTRUCTOR WING (CIW)

BONE OF CONTENTION RUGBY MATCH *- by 2Lt JJ Sillito*

The Inter-Mess rugby is not traditionally a closely contested event, with the Sgts Mess mainly consisting of young thrusting Yeomen, Foremen and "seasoned" SNCOs of 11 Sig Regt! This potent mix competes against the Officers Mess which consists of a few, slightly older officers, a couple of captains and the world famous rugby institution that is the Tp Comds course!

However, this year **Maj Golley** decided that the Officers Mess would not go down without a fight and gently persuaded the male members of TC 69 to partake in the contest. The officers' game plan was to play American Football style, with frequent rolling substitutions injecting 5 min bursts of energy into the match. In practice, the officers' game relied on **2Lts Thompson** and **Sayner**, both Army Academy players, with **2Lts Howie**, **Willmore** and **Bodger** actually knowing the shape of a rugby ball. Well maybe not **2Lt Bodger**.

The rest of the team relied on running at their opponents as fast as possible, hoping to move the ball in the general direction required. This tactic actually worked quite well and the scores were level at 0 – 0 going into half time; the officers even taking the lead just before the break….almost!

Unfortunately, the Sgts rather unsportingly scored twice after the restart while the Officers struggled to reply in the icy conditions. The game finished 10 – 0 to the junior of the Messes. However with a cricket score being conceded last year, this was a vast improvement, allowing the officers to walk, heads held high, into the Sgts Mess for one or two post match refreshments and a curry supper, which was enjoyed heartily by all.

EXERCISE FIRST GLANCE

The first opportunity for our Tp Comd's course to test our CNR skills in a tactical situation was presented to us in the form of a 3 day ex in the local area of Dorset. The weather certainly tested our resolve but I am pleased to report that should 7 Armd Bde ever need a robust and resilient CNR network, established and maintained solely by "subbies" then TC 69 would fit the bill, with a little help from Ex Trg Tp.

After a demonstration the previous day of how to cam up a det, our Course deployed a Bde HQ and 4 x BG HQs into the field and assumed the roles of Ops Officer, YofS and Det Comds. Not bad for 3 months of Signals trg!

BEACH PARTY

After the rigours of ex, Electronic Warfare week and the Introduction to Ptarmigan, the course needed to decompress. A beach party was organised in February, with the location being inside the actual mess. A few bags of sand and a paddling pool later, the Mess was transformed into a tropical paradise complete with sex on the beach and coconuts. Just for good measure, inflatable gladiators were thrown in as per SOPs.

All went swimmingly until the next morning when we had to work out what to do, now the mess carpet was covered in a large amount of sand and water, and all we had to clean it up were 2 brushes. Bad times!

EXERCISE TRAINING TROOP

During the past few months Ex Trg Tp pers have seen an influx of posting orders; only the lucky ones escape. Congratulations to **LCpl Col Gavin** who is posted on promotion to 628 Sig Tp. **Sigs Emma Parker** and **Neil Hawkings** are also posted on promotion, and will be reunited with their favourite Yeoman, **WO1 (YofS) Hutchinson** at 22 Sig Regt. **Sig 'George' Escott** is posted to 1 Mech Bde also on promotion and **Sig Dan Slessor** is posted to 7 Armd Bde. **Capt Walton** has now departed and has handed the Tp over to **Capt Maben**.

There is some good news for the remaining few; the Tp has seen a total of 5 pers posted in! **SSgt Edd Chwieseni** has taken on the role of the Tp Eqpt Manager, whose work load is phenomenal. **Sgt Rachael Allen** has been posted in as the new Systems Sgt. **Sigs Clayton** and **Simpson** have recently arrived and are already trying to keep up with the weekly work flow.

Around the busy schedule of Command exs and Phase 2 courses, the Tp has managed to have some down time. **Cpl Smith** organised the annual AT in North Devon. This was a chance for **Cpl Smith** to show off his top surfing skills, but this was not the case. **SSgt Ian Green** participated in all arduous events but managed to get run over by a Citroen C3 resulting in a broken foot. Finally, **SSgt Jim Thisby** managed to get the minibus locked in a car park and had to do some late night off-roading.

The Tp also travelled to London to visit the Imperial War Museum which was the location for our Tp photograph. However, it gives the misconception that our Tp is fully manned and this is certainly not the case. The Tp was then free to visit the sights of London.

It was a miracle that everyone returned safely, as the female coach driver was not the most confident. She was annoyed with **SSgt(YofS) Dan Smith** and **SSgt Jim Thisby** as they had seemed to have enjoyed the sights of London a bit too much!

The majority of the Tp is also looking forward to the forthcoming year of deploying on back to back exs. The "Support Office Team" **Cpl 'Shep' Shepherd** and **LCpl Kirsten Gunn** will continue to 'support' the exs from the comfort of their office.

BLANDFORD GARRISON CHARITY CALENDAR 2008

After the great success of the 2007 Ex Trg Tp Charity Calendar, it was inevitable that the Tp had to organise another. This year the calendar was to include various depts from all round the Garrison. These included: The Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team – The White Helmets, The Band of the Royal Signals, the LAD, the Physiotherapy Department, the Dental Centre, SORLS and the Gymnasium Staff. There were some interesting photographs taken, some not for the faint hearted.
Sgt Adi Hosking and **Alan Dean** had the privilege of taking all the photographs; some were more fun to take than others. The girls in the Dental Centre made a positive impression and assisted in the promotion of the calendar.

This was a fun project to manage and everyone was keen to get involved, the calendar seemed popular throughout the Garrison. Many thanks to all departments involved and to the PRI who assisted with the initial financing of this project. A total of £130 was raised for the Army Benevolent Fund; which was presented to D Trg, **Col GJT Rafferty**, who is an Army Benevolent Fund representative.

Col Rafferty receives the cheque from LCpl Kirsten Gunn

NEWS FROM FORMATIONS

1st SIGNAL BRIGADE

Comd	**Brig CJ Thackray**
DComd	**Gp Capt SA Richardson**
COS	**Maj SPM Nesmith**
DCOS	**Maj A Jenkins**

Up to date with events at HQ 11 Sig Bde? Did you know that the HQ has supported the 3 Regular Regts prepare, deploy and recover over 1,000 pers on ops in the last 12 months; Ops TELIC, HERRICK, VERITAS, GRIMES, OCULUS, KEELING and VERMOUTH? Did you know that 6 deployed from within the HQ to provide the framework Joint Force CIS staff on Op HERRICK from February 2007 until February 2008? No? Well, you were probably also not aware that we have worked hard to provide the very best level of ICS and EW sp in preparation for deployment on contingent ops; by its very nature this has required deployments to Kenya, Cyprus and Indonesia. Not surprisingly, the pace of life in the HQ is fast, with many of those left to hold the fort over the last year double and triple hatted (which nicely disguises the thinning hair of **Capt Jon Evans** and **Flt Lt Ian Hollings**). And of course there is no let up forecast for 2008 with Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS and JOINT VENTURE incorporating the majority of the Bde deploying in the autumn, including the HQ as the key Joint Force CIS staff.

11 Sig Bde Orienteering Team

Notwithstanding the level of work within the HQ, we have still managed to maintain a healthy contribution to sporting events. **Cpl Si Emmett** put in a fine performance at the Great North Run in October. **WO2 Andy Wilkinson**, somehow managed to take 3 weeks off work and tour the world playing representative cricket. The HQ Orienteering Team, comprising **Maj Sharon Nesmith**, **Maj (Retd) Rollo Rumford**, **Maj Yam Rana** and **Capt Taff Owens** valiantly flew the Bde flag at a local league event in December. **Flt Lt Ian Hollings** represented the Bde at the RAF Skiing Championships in January and now that the sailing season is looming, **Capt Taff Owens** is busy arranging the Corps Dinghy Regatta and entering as many events as possible; after all "a bad day on the water is better than a good day in the office!"

Although it was sad to say farewell to their predecessors, we were delighted to welcome the new Comd, **Brig Thackray**, and the new Deputy Comd, **Gp Capt Richardson**, and to welcome home **Capt Hodge Arthurs** returning from Op HERRICK. Congratulations to the COS, **Maj Sharon Nesmith** who will be leaving on promotion to the MOD (easy life!) in April, handing over to **Maj Ian Blower** from 244 Sig Sqn, 21 Sig Regt (AS).

Finally, very many congratulations to **Cpl 'Bernie' Cox** and her husband **Steve**, on the birth of their daughter, **Sienna**.

HEADQUARTERS 2 (NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE

VISIT TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WAR HEADQUARTERS, CORSHAM

Deep under HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde at Corsham is a secret world rarely seen by the staff who occupy the surface buildings. The site was built originally in 1938 as an underground wartime ammo depot housing a railway station, engine shed, power station and 11 ammo stores each the size of a football pitch. This was a large site (125 acres) which stored some 300,000 tons of high explosives during WW11. This wartime development also included an underground aircraft factory which employed several thousand workers.

Lamson Tube System

A more recent and secretive part of this underground site, however, is the Central Government War Headquarters (CGWH) which was declassified in 2004. This was a site designated in 1961 as the seat of government in the event of a nuclear attack on the UK. The site covers some 35 acres and was designed to support around 4000 staff in a self contained world behind large steel doors. The site contains ops rooms, briefing rooms, telephone exchanges, medical centre, cookhouse, stores and dormitories. Everything required for the survival of the people who would work here was pre-stored and maintained by a small staff.

HQ 2 (NC) Sig Bde Staff were recently invited on a tour of the CGWH. They were able to sit at the huge mahogany 40 position manual exchange (possibly the largest remaining manual exchange) complete with its 1960s directories and visit several rooms full of Strowger telephone exchanges in mint condition (older readers may get excited).

The kitchens are complete with period ovens and utensils.

Offices have brand new typewriters, early photocopiers and are linked by the Lamson Tube System. The canteen comes complete with a 1960s espresso coffee machine, still shinny and unused.

The library holds census information, reference books, maps, data on tides and weather information from the period. The tour

Manual Telephone Exchange

continued with the Prime Minister's briefing room, the Central Ops Room and the Medical/ Dental Centre complete with beds, screens and post war hot water bottles. The scale of this facility is awesome especially as we saw less than half the site in the 3 hour visit. This is a small underground town dating from the 1960s which has never been occupied and sits frozen in time, complete with its original packaging, food, bedding and fuel. It is hard to imagine what life would have been like for the occupants of this town in the event of a nuclear attack. Perhaps rather better than life for those left above! This is an important historical site which needs to be preserved.

The Bde Comd sitting in the Supervisor's position

Our thanks to CO JSUC and his mine staff who made the visit possible.

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

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

CO	**Lt Col CSK Paterson**
RMS	**WO1(RSM) G McGachy**

1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt is the place to be. You can see that from the articles below. Whether it's op trawls, mil trg, fund raising, AT or sports, there are opportunities to do everything here in Herford. The lead up to Christmas was busy as normal and we are looking forward to a well deserved break.

The New Year is looking equally thrilling. More Nordic Skiing, 436 Driver Courses, BCIP 5 uplift, Army Alpine Championships, Corps Cross Country and more. And of course, there will be lots of SSgts eagerly awaiting the results of the A2 board.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj AHT Garrett**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) RD Heynes**

BFBS BIG PUSH - *by Sgt Mark Milton*

For the last 4 weeks, the BFBS Radio Presenters had been challenging BFG to compete pushing a Mitsubishi Warrior over a distance of 50m in the fastest time. The Sqn scrambled together a team consisting of **Sgt Jase Woosman**, **Sgt Si Hemming**, **Sgt Steff Gibbs**, **LCpl Danny Wall**, **Sig Emma Dempsey** and Team Captain **Sgt Mark Milton**. We had to beat the time set by 1 AAC, of 13.50 seconds. On our first push we managed to get a respectable 14.20 seconds. The SSM, **WO2(SSM) Russ Heynes** surprised everyone by putting his hand in his pocket paying for the team to have a second go. This time we beat the record by over 1.5 seconds with a time of 12.99 seconds, winning the 'BIG PUSH'. The prize money of €1000 will be used for a families' day in Febuary.

SUPPORT TROOP

OC	**Lt S Wallace**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt J Woosnam**

Sp Tp has had a busy time of late with new arrivals, people posted in and new born babies "alles uber der platz". The Tp welcomes **Sgt Paul Vernon** and his wife **Jo**, **LCpl Matt Cudmore** and **Sig Jock Gunn**. Congratulations go to **WO2(SSM) Russ Heynes** and his wife **Tanya** on the birth of their son **Robert**, **SSgt (SQMS) Rory O'Neill** and wife **Jen** on the birth of their daughter **Eireann**, **Cpl Kelly** and **Sig Garry Brown** on the birth of son **Ryan**, to **Cpl Andy Pearson** and wife **Jaqueline** on the birth of their son **Oliver**, and finally **Sgt Dave Durrans** and wife **Jo** on the birth of their daughter **Keira**.

A sad farewell goes to **Capt Lindsay Griffiths** moving on to 16 Sig Regt as the Adjt. Farewell also to **Sig Hibbs Hibbert** on to 14 Sig Regt. Congratulations also go to **Sigs Gary Brown**, **Abs Narrara** and **Adam Steel** on their selection for promotion to LCpl.

It's been a busy couple of months in the Tp, somehow we have managed to give 2 soldiers the time to train for the Inter-Sqn Boxing Competition; **Sigs James Bryce** and **Taff Webb**. Congratulations to both on winning their weight categories. The Tp also managed to do without both the OC, **Lt Susie Wallis** and Tp SSgt, **Paul Robertson**, both representing the regt in the Corps and Div Skiing Championship. Hopefully they will do as well in the Army Championships in February.

EAGLE TROOP

OC	**Lt A Macintyre**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt J McDonnell**

After a busy period for the Tp that included RSIT and a little thing called the Christmas Fayre, the Christmas holidays was a well needed break for everybody. The Sqn Christmas Function was organised by **Sgt 'Baz' Davies** who did a sterling job setting up the venue 'Shutzenhof'. The night went off without a hitch, with highlights being the band and the raffle.

We have some new arrivals to the Tp: **Cpl Randy Quow** coming from Ex Trg Tp at Blandford, welcome **Randy**. Also straight from the factory are **Sigs Dave Kealey**, **Clarky Clark**, **Mark Scales** and **Andy Plummer**. We also have some departures, including our illustrious 'leader' **Lt Asa MacIntyre**. After a few years and a good few exs, it was time to move on and the Tp wish him all the best and congratulate him on his promotion to Capt and his posting to the Army Foundation College in Harrogate. Another departure is **LCpl Bronwyn Collins**, who leaves us on promotion to Cpl for 7 Armd Bde. Last and probably not least is **Sig 'Mac' McDonald** who after a good 3 years leaves us for 216 Sig Sqn on promotion to LCpl.

We have others in the Tp who have been promoted and have been lucky enough to stay. The Tp would like to say congratulations to newly promoted **LCpls 'Robbo' Robertson, Tim Nasilasila** and **Dave Penn**. Also newly promoted is **Cpl Ski Latusek**. Congratulations to all.

HERFORD STATION CHRISTMAS FAYRE 2007

In December, 201 Sig Sqn presented the Herford Station Christmas Fayre. Stands came from different organisations within the local area including art displays from the Station's own Lister School and an animal farm display from the local Tier Park with some of the more manageable favourites on display. Also represented were the local Scout group, and other public charity groups.

Of course, no Christmas event would be complete without its very own Santa Claus, on this occasion it was our very own **Sig 'Matty' Hemming** who was to do the honours of scaring - possibly entertaining - the visiting children and presenting them with small gifts with the assistance of his 2 little elves, **Sigs Jase Bird** and **Andrea Brown**.

The usual raffles and prize giving were organised, with prizes and gifts donated by various local businesses and establishments. The ever present Herforder beer trailer was of course a great success and continued to keep us all entertained and refreshed. All in all it was a rewarding day for all those involved in the build, organisation and running of the event, providing a worthwhile connection between the Station and the local community. It was an opportunity for the local townsfolk as well as our soldiers and families to meet and relax following a very busy year for the unit.

HAWK TROOP

OC	**2Lt S O'Connell**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt S McNally**

As always, we have had an incredibly hectic run up to the Christmas period with exs, Combined Inspection Week and, of course, all the parties! As part of the Combined Inspection Week, RSIT came to visit. The troops worked extremely hard and actually made the inspectors leave with smiles on their faces.

Moving on to sunnier climes, we lose **Cpl John J McCone** on promotion to Blandford, **Cpl John Jones** to 1 (UK) Civ Div, **LCpl Ski Latusek** to Eagle Tp on promotion and finally **Sig Andrea Brown** to 22 Sig Regt. We also welcome a few new faces: **2Lt Sarah O'Connell** as our new Tp OC, **Cpl Jase Duckworth** and **Sigs Ian Connolly** and **Martin McColl**.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Oliver**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) D Churchward**

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XI - *by Lt Gareth Davies*

Early on the morning of 24 November 07, we departed in anticipation of the competition ahead. We finally arrived in Kaprun after a 10 hr journey and got settled in before going into the local town in the evening to take in some culture.

On our first morning, we decided to take care of all the admin and we drove into Neustift to book the accn for the Army Championships. It was **Cfn Quinn's** turn to drive the minibus but from the speed we were travelling, we could have all walked to Neustift faster! He did redeem himself however once we arrived, by demonstrating his fluent German.

On the Monday we all had to be outside for 0730hrs to meet our instructors, who were the Dutch Ripstar Team. As **Cpl 'Tommy' Thornton** said emotionally "I believe they are the coolest people I have ever met". We were all split down into groups and were taken up the slopes to practise. Unfortunately the weather was not the best for the first 2 days and visibility was low but on the Wednesday we went up the glacier and the weather and visibility were fantastic, leading to some great trg even though the glacier was full of every boarders' nightmares - button and T bar lifts!

The Friday was the last day of trg we received from the Ripstar Team and there was not one person on the slope who had not improved by 100%. Now that our expert coaches had left, **Sgt Smith** managed to injure himself showing off to **Cpl Iddon**, ironically on the flattest part of the slope, and ended up walking around like John Wayne for the weekend, much to the delight of **Cpl Phil Mulligan**. The weekend was a welcome chance to relax and prepare, ready for the race week.

Week 2 was race week, which involved slalom and for the first time, a freestyle competition – however this was only for the intermediate and above riders. Our team came 2nd overall; which is an excellent achievement as we did not have much time to train prior to the championships. Big congratulations to **Cpl Phil Mulligan** who came 1st overall in the Corps. **LCpl Turvey** came 1st in the female Freestyle event and was unlucky to just miss out on winning the Slalom.

The Regtl team had 2 people selected for the Army Championships, **Lt 'Gaz' Davis** and **Cpl Phil Mulligan** which then led to **Phil** being selected for the Army team. It was a great experience, enjoyed by all. 7 Sig Regt watch out because next year the title will be ours!

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Pearce**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) PM Watson**

MALTA INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE MARATHON NOV 07 *- by Sig Haagensen*

The Malta International Challenge Marathon, a 42km endurance event held in Malta for the past 17 years is split into 3 stages. Competitors are required to run 3 races over 3 days.

Under **Lt 'Champs' Champion** of Comms Tp 212 Sig Sqn, a team of experienced runners (and **Sig 'Maggy' Magee**) were assembled, drawn from both 212 and 201 pers. **Sig Haagensen** and **Sig Magee** where originally tasked as admin party but found themselves at the starting line of a 42km endurance marathon – we still don't know how!

On 21 November the team left for Malta in high spirits, even if a little apprehensive. The next day the team went for a shake-out run and stretching exs to prepare for the event. We awoke early on Day 1 of the event to ensure we were fully prepared for our first race. Stage 1 was an 11km race on roads and rocky tracks which were tricky under foot. It was a hard leg that caught us all a bit by surprise. Along with the tough terrain the course seemed to take us to the top of a mountain and then back down again. The leg started at 1300hrs with most competitors back by 1415hrs.

Stage 2 was a 6km race which consisted of a hill climb for around 3km and followed by 3km down hill to finish. The race started at 1200hrs and with the mid day sun the heat was a testing factor. This race was considerably easier and was used as a sprint to make up time from the previous day.

The final stage was a 25km road race which included a 1km uphill stretch at the halfway point and concluded with a 5km hill climb of which that last 1km was steeper than our beloved 'cardiac hill' back in Herford. This race was extremely demanding and tested all runners to their limits. The race started at 0700hrs at St Paul's Bay and finished at Freedom Square Valletta. All runners had completed the course by 0945hrs. With the marathon out of the way, all of our team had finished with exceptional times and were looking forward to a well earned rest. In the evening the grand prize giving was held, attended by all competitors. **Lt Champion** was awarded with a trophy for 4th Female. Special mention goes to **Sig 'Louie' Denton** who was 1st out of the Regtl team. Albeit much stiffer, the team returned to Herford with a little bit of silverware and having thoroughly enjoyed their experience of the Malta International Challenge Marathon.

EXERCISE SUPREME TIGER - *by Capt Russ Moody*

Capt Russ Moody on the 10 Km Biathlon

Due to last minute complications with the Corps Nordic Skiing Camp, the Regtl Nordic Team found itself participating in the REME Camp held in Nordsetter in Norway. With me in the team were **Sgt Alisdair Skene**, **LCpl Stu Sievwright**, **LCpl John Smith**, **LCpl George Opong** and **Cfn Felix Chombe**.

Although some of us had some experience, it was the first time on snow for **LCpl Opong** and **Cfn Chombe**. Thankfully, the instruction was first class and we would especially like to thank **WO1(ASM) Gaz Durrant** for his easy going instructional style.

The first 2 weeks was mostly taken up learning to Classic, a style much like running on snow. The team progressed well, although there were some days when the intricate nuances involved in grip wax selection let us down! At the end of the second week there was a 5km Classic race for beginners, and a 7.5km Classic race for intermediates. Everybody performed excellently and special congratulations go to **Sgt Ally Skene** for winning the novice category.

The final week was spent learning to skate. This is a much quicker style than Classic and in my opinion, much more fun. By this time, we were comfortable with the local area, and we were skiing anywhere in the region of 20km per day. On the few occasions that you were truly tired, **Capt Dave Hammond** reminded us that it was better than being in Herford! The week concluded with another race. Once again, there was a 5km skate race for novices, a 7.5km biathlon and a 7.5km skate. The team really cleared up, with **LCpl Stu Sievwright** placing 3rd in the 7.5km skate and **Sgt Ally Skene** and **LCpl 'Smudger' Smith** placing 1st and 2nd in the 5km skate.

I would like to thank **Lt Col Ian Duncan**, Chairman of REME Nordic Skiing and **WO2(AQMS) Don Donaldson**, the Chief Instructor, for taking us on the camp. Our aim now is to compete at the Div Championships and aim to beat as many of the REME teams as possible at the REME Championships in March.

HQ SQUADRON

OC	**Maj R Manning**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Brodie**

WINTER SKID CAR TRAINING - *by Sgt Chris Eckett*

During the months of November and December 2007 the driver trg sect carried out skid prevention trg as part off the unit's Driver Awareness Week and winter driving campaign. This important trg consisted of Skid Theory, followed by practical trg using a skid frame attached to a Land Rover TUM GS.

The courses were run by **Sgt Chris Eckett** and **Cpl Paul Hole** RLC. The aim of the skid prevention courses was to teach students not only the theory on what a skid (loss of control) is and its causes but also to teach how to recognise when a skid is happening and how to regain control of the veh.

The course was attended by soldiers from across the Regt who all had lots of fun on the practical phase but more importantly learned some valuable lessons. One of the most important lessons learned by **LCpl Walker** was not to let go of the steering wheel as you need this to regain control of the veh. The courses received a thumbs up from all who attended and although there was an element of fun in the course, all students could see the seriousness purpose of the course and learned a lot of valuable skills that will see them drive more safely in future.

The driver trg section is already planning the next courses that will run through the whole of 2008 so that these valuable skills will not be lost and so that new arrivals to the unit can carry out this valuable trg. Special thanks has to be given to the Staff Master Driver, **WO2 Lee Weedle** for acquiring the skid frame that made the courses possible and to **WO1(RSM) G McGachy** for allowing us to use his parade square which now looks like the starting grid at Brands Hatch.

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col JJ Cole OBE**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) JA March**

As 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn returns from a successful tour in Afghanistan, the Regt's focus remains operational with potential deployments to Kosovo and the impending commitment to Iraq for 12 months.

The pace of life in York continues unabated with an SOinC(A) visit, a series of inspections, preparations for op deployment and ex.

SIGNAL OFFICER IN CHIEF (ARMY) VISIT AND LS&GC MEDAL PRESENTATIONS

On 19 February, SOinC(A) visited the unit and kindly presented 3 LS&GC medals to **SSgt C Hoggard**, **Sgt I Slocombe** and **Cpl S Hindson**. This was followed in fine style by the usual high quality curry, accompanied rather unusually with champagne.

Notwithstanding the unforgiving North Yorkshire weather, the visit proved very successful and the Regt would like to thank **Brig Flint ADC** for making the long journey to visit us.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Anderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) I Conlan**

The tempo continues at a pace since the last edition of *The Wire* with the Sqn supporting the Regt both in camp and supporting the field Sqns as they carry out PDT and prepare for ops. All ranks of the Sqn would like to say welcome/farewell to the following:

Postings In	Postings Out
Capt Buckley (MTO)	**Lt Col Whytock (Ops Offr)**
WO1 (YofS) Faramus	**Capt Kelly (MTO)**
Cpl Upendra Gurung 280	**Cpl Hawley**
Cpl Turner	**Cpl Studholme**
LCpl Dodgson	**LCpl Chisholm**
LCpl Dryburgh	**LCpl Hadfield**
LCpl Green	**LCpl Jordan**
LCpl Greenwood	**LCpl Kelly**
LCpl McGuire	**Sig Caswell**
LCpl Palmer	**Sig Kendall**
LCpl Best	**Sig Pollard**

Sig Carr
Pte Palmer

The Sqn would like to congratulate **Lt Col Steve Whytock** on his promotion and wish him good luck at MOD. In addition, all Sqn members would like to congratulate both **Maj Simon Taylor** and his wife **Bobby** and **LCpl Jordan** on the recent additions to their families.

EXERCISE SNOW JACK 2007 - *by Cfn Jones*

A dark o'clock start on 24 November 07 would not normally create the feeling that Christmas had come early, but outside the accn and eventually waking up to a sunny but cold York, it dawned on us. We were to spend 4 whole weeks in Austria snowboarding. With baggage and passports in hand (which were checked several times before we even set off), everyone loaded up into the mini bus, which would take us on an excruciating 24 hr journey to Austria.

Cfn 'Mikey' Carter kindly 'volunteered' to do the UK leg down to Dover. We all arrived in one piece and even caught an early ferry. The ferry journey was pretty harmless, except for one member of the group, **Cpl Pat Chambers** who got exceptionally sea sick. We endeavoured to make him feel worse but he was bad enough. In Calais it was time to put the pedal to the metal, as we were about to pound miles of tarmac over the next 20 hrs to our destination. We finally arrived in Kaprun and stayed in Club Kitzsteinhorn, a Youth Hostel with all the other snowboarding teams in the Royal Signals, as we were attending their Corps Camp. There were 3 levels of snowboarders; novice, intermediate and expert. Regardless of ability, everyone was under instruction. The instructors were from Ripstar in Holland and the level of instruction was exceptional, everyone learnt how to snowboard or learned something new. We were all taught at our respective levels. It was near the end of the week when during the intermediate's freestyle lesson **Lt Catrin Jones** decided to cartwheel off one of the boxes and break her wrist.

After the first week of instruction we put our new skills to use and competed in various competitions. These were, Dual Slalom, Freestyle and the Giant Dual Slalom. These courses were all set out at Army standard and for the inexperienced were fairly daunting. Everyone completed the races in one piece, except for one: **Sig Mandy Kidd**. Poor **Mandy** had to be taken down the mountain by a skidoo after piling in quite badly. The freestyle competition was for the intermediate and experts only and as would be expected saw some really good tricks and even better falls. One that comes to mind saw **Capt Martin Algate** knee slide across the box, much to the team's satisfaction.

Cpl 'Big Pat' Chambers with 'gravity' on his side

The team came 3rd overall, which was quite good, as 50% of the team were novices and had never snowboarded before. **Capt Martin Algate** got the best trick award, which I don't think has ever been done before with so much grace and elegance and **Cpl Pat Chambers** REME got picked for the Royal Signals snowboarding team, which we all found quite comical.

After a much needed night's rest, we departed for an hour's drive to a little town called Neustift, which is where the Army Snowboarding Championships are held every year. We arrived at the accn just after lunch and settled in fairly quickly. It was in a very convenient place. It was a 5 min walk from where the captains' briefing was held each evening and even better, it was a 5 min walk from the pubs – well planned OC LAD. The next 2 weeks were a real test of our new abilities, as the week ahead were qualifiers and competitions, which were now at a much higher standard. The standard of all the riders at the Army Championships was very high and it was obvious this was going to be a difficult, arduous and very competitive 2 weeks. This made it very enjoyable as we really had to push ourselves harder and perform better than we have ever performed before, making us much better riders. If we were not qualifying or racing then we would be riding all over the glacier practising our technique but with the bad weather on some days, cups of tea and hot chocolate were very welcome. 2 Sig Regt did well, walking away with a few prizes **Cfn Ashley Jones** came 3rd in the Dual Slalom, 3rd in the Bordercross and 3rd overall novice.

2 Sig Regt Snowboarding Team 2007

So it was an impressive 2 weeks in Neustift and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Everyone performed well and proved themselves in the 4 weeks we were there. The Regt is now looking forward to the REME Corps camp in March and competing at the same level.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj M Graham**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

HEADQUARTERS SENIOR BRITISH MILITARY ADVISOR
- by LCpl Kamal Limbu.

After having spent 7 months in Iraq, I have found myself on the other side of the world as an Operator at HQ Senior British Military Advisor (SBMA) in Tampa, Florida. It is a small 8 man Sig Det supporting a number of staff, whose job it is to liaise with US Central Command and the 64 coalition nations in the HQ. The work is different to what I have experienced previously. We work a shift system of 3 days, 3 nights and 3 rest. Our general daily tasks include preparation of daily read files, managing accounts, establishing VTCs and message handling amongst other things. The nature of the work is very different to that which we do in the Regt. I had never imagined that I would have to work in Florida. There is clear hope that there is more to work than the garages.

Although they keep us busy in work, we have had a number of opportunities to get away. Most people stay in the USA for R&R. So far I have managed to get to New York and Las Vegas and I have also managed to get to some of the theme parks in Orlando. At SeaWorld, we cleverly managed to avoid getting splashed by sitting at the top of the arena, while the people at the bottom got completely soaked. The Americans certainly have a lot of time for their mil and in most places we can get in free or for a reduced rate.

The HQ is a very close knit environment and as such we have had a number of social activities together. We have been go-karting for an afternoon, which saw a lot of bumping, road rage and, ironically, an RLC driver causing a pile up. Despite intense competition, the race eventually finished with Royal Signals taking all 3 podium places. As we have also had a number of members of 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, we have also hosted a number of Gurkha curries, which have been thoroughly enjoyed by all and shown the RN and RAF what they are missing out on. It has been interesting being in America as a Gurkha. It really is a free country. I was amazed to see people riding bikes without helmets on and using mobile phones whilst driving. It seems that you can do what ever you want as long as you don't commit a crime or jeopardise someone's life. Many people seem surprised when they find out that I am in the British Army yet am not British. Unable to conceal my gurkhali accent, most Americans thought that I was from Mexico, which I found amusing, but not as amusing as many Americans who thought the British were Australian!

The HQ SBMA staff being forced to endure the Florida sunshine

I have always had a dream to visit the USA and consider myself lucky to be able contribute to on going operations whilst being in the 'land of the free.' I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Florida and will definitely miss the lifestyle. I hope that many others will be able to work here and enjoy the experiences that I have.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Mould**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

Since returning from POTL, the acronyms have been non-stop: ECI, TELIC, OPTAG, CLASP, LASP, IBDP, APWT, IBSR, MATTs, SERE, SLE.....it's been a whirl. In common language, the Sqn is busy preparing itself for the tasks of 2008/09, which include an op deployment to Iraq and preparation for Cormorant tasks and overseas exs.

The top priorities have been shaking the troops out of their 'civvie' mindset after POTL and Christmas leave and refreshing them with its Cormorant eqpt. Firing on all cylinders, the troops returned from Christmas leave and dived head-long into MATTs and essential trade courses for the deployment. On top of this, the reputation of 2 Sig Regt as a sporting Regt has to be maintained and a number of Sqn pers have been representing the Regt and the Corps at Rugby, Football and Cross Country on a regular basis. As preparations hot up for the Triangular Boxing Tournament, we also see a number of our boys and girls on occasions between trg sessions - and they can also sometimes be seen as the mist rises from the River Ouse, coming in from their morning runs. It is a fine balance between work and play but one we are determined to maintain as we continue on our path of PDT, ex and trg.

FALCON TROOP

It's been a busy few months for Falcon Tp with the majority of the Tp away on pre-deployment courses or preparing for the Sqn's first Cormorant ex since reconstituting from last year's Op HERRICK tour. Farewells are due to **Cpl Stevie Marshall**, posted on promotion to Blandford, **LCpl Scotty Mawer**, who leaves the Army having secured a job with Thales, and welcome to **Cpls Forster** and **Loughran**. Congratulations to **LCpl Heyden** on securing his promotion to Cpl and the Tp would like to extend its best wishes to **Sig Ford** and **Sarah** on the forthcoming birth of their first child. Good luck to them both. Ex KEY TEST has been an excellent forum in which to test the Tp's Cormorant knowledge. Taking the lead in the post-IBDP phase, Falcon Tp did very well to achieve the aims of the ex, while the professionalism of the det crews was commendable throughout. For many new members of the Tp, this was their first look at Cormorant in an ex scenario and I am sure that the experience gained will prove vital for Ex KEY FLIGHT in April and with a view to the forthcoming tour of Op TELIC this summer. Even the experienced Cormorant crews have benefited from the ex as it has been the first time that many of them have used the eqpt in nearly 18 months. Aside from exs and pre-deployment courses, life in the Tp continues at the usual hectic pace. Aside from AT at Easter and in November, many of us are looking forward to the forthcoming tour. Once again, a busy year for the Falcon!

EAGLE TROOP

The Tp entered into yet another busy season on returning from a well earned Christmas leave, straight into Pre-Deployment Trg. The New Year kicked-off with a week of intensive trg for MATTs, and a few rather wet (and rather emotional for certain individuals) days on the Strensall Ranges. With that complete, we now look forward to conducting IBSR ranges prior to deploying to Barry Budden for a live firing camp in March.

At the end of January, the Tp took part in the first Sqn level ex using Cormorant for over 18 months. Part of the Tp will be deploying on Op GRIMES in May 2008, where they will be responsible for the provision of ICS using Cormorant. The Tp dusted off their old manuals and got stuck into "re-learning" and "learning" (which was the reality for most) the comms system. The ex was well received and built confidence for our approaching deployment. We look forward to the next ex in early April. Some of the Regt's Subalterns visited the Army Foundation College at Harrogate, hosted by ex-RSM, **Capt Andy Dick**. The visit was an excellent opportunity for the officers to learn about the trg that Junior Soldiers undertake and also the requirement from instructors at the establishment.

Some old faces have left the Tp recently: **Sgt Shane Blakey** has been commandeered into the Ivory Tower that is Regtl Ops, and **Cpls Kev Wilson** and **Ian Wallace** have left us for the delights that await them at Blandford; we wish them all the best of luck. New faces into the Tp include **Cpls Jobber**, **Kirby** and **Field** and **Sigs Gowling** and **Hobday**.

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER 2007 – AUSTRIA
- by LCpl Nimmo and LCpl Durham

"Do you fancy 4 weeks skiing in Austria?" Those were the words of the Provost Sgt, **Sgt Bruce Findlay**, co-organizer of the trip for the 2 Sig Regt team. He didn't need to ask me twice. Having the opportunity to go off skiing, rock climbing, scuba diving must be considered one of the perks of the job. Unfortunately to date I hadn't yet had the chance, so I wasn't about to pass this one up. I can say from the off I'm very glad I went.

The preparations began a few weeks before departure with a team meeting, this was the time for some of the less experienced skiers to ask any burning questions they had about the resort we were staying in, the accn and the kit we would need etc. It was suggested that TK Max was ideal to pick up suitable clothing at a reasonable price and after arrival in Austria it became apparent most of the Corps had the same icea, a few of the lads having matching kit which raised a few smiles. **LCpl Ross Cameron** however, deciding to go for his own particular style, a very stylish Helly Hansen ladies' jacket.

The day before departure, we loaded up the vehs and did a final kit check. This was also the time when we were shown how to fit snow chains. Any final pre-departure details were discussed and then I think it was early to bed for most that night, ready for the long journey ahead. The next morning we met and set off early, just in time to wave off the rest of the Regt who were jogging past us on CO's PT. It was a long journey but we arrived safe and sound and were delighted to see there had been a heavy snow fall, perfect conditions come Monday when we hit the slopes.

The first morning was spent skiing within your teams, getting the old ski legs warmed-up with the afternoon being a ski off. This is where the instructors watch each individual coming down the slopes and select them for the relevant ability group they should be in. Individuals would have the opportunity to move between groups depending on progress throughout the camp. We had varied skiing abilities within the team, ranging from instructor and the top group, all the way down to novice. I personally hadn't skied before so spent the first morning being taught the basics. The first week was very enjoyable, growing in confidence by the day – sometimes a little too confident. The weather was a let down at times on certain days but all in all it was a good week's skiing with a lot of progress made. Already everyone was promising that they would be back next year so I guess that can only be a good sign. We capped the first week's skiing off with a few beers in the bar before our descent to the bottom of the mountain.

After an eventful weekend it was back to business on the slopes. Due to my progress in the first week I moved up ability groups on the Monday morning. I remember feeling chuffed as I had my eye on the best novice accolade come race week. I was enjoying the experience more and more with each passing day, however my skiing days, at least for the remainder of this camp were about to come to a very sudden end. Before that though the team had a visit from the CO, **Lt Col JJ Cole OBE** and **WO1 FofS(IS) Thorne**. The visiting party spent a couple of days skiing and catching up with all the team before capping off the visit with a very tasty Chinese meal in the centre of Zell Am See. The latter part of the week saw us practise racing though the gates for the first time. After my first attempt, struggling to stay in the course, even at a controlled speed, I remember thinking how easy the professionals make it look on TV. With a lot of hard work and effort the following week though I was sure I would pick it up, however I wasn't to get the chance. At the end of another good week's skiing, the barman almost pulling the first beers, I had an awkward fall. Next stop A&E. It was discovered I had dislocated my thumb at two joints, with a couple of fractures thrown in for good measure. Obviously this meant I wouldn't be skiing again for the remainder of the camp and I was genuinely gutted. Knowing it was all over for me, when I was enjoying myself so much, was a hard pill to swallow. As far as what went on the slopes on Week 3, I will have to hand you over to **LCpl Durham** who will take up where I ~~left~~ fell off.

After sending **LCpl 'Tommy' Nimmo** on his way with a few farewell drinks, it was back to skiing bright and early Monday morning. After breakfast we hit the slopes and practised coming down the slalom and giant slalom course over and over again. I personally was lucky to get down a few gates before ending up face down in the snow but the youngest member of team, **Sig 'Zac' Campbell**, was actually quite good. It was pretty much the same for the rest of Week 3; I seemed to get worse instead of better but didn't let that bother me. That night it was the camp annual 4 legged race (don't ask). I was tied in between **LCpl Ross Cameron** and **Sig Campbell** for the night and it just consisted of racing from bar to bar drinking horrible concoctions of alcohol. Needless to say everyone had a bad head the next day.

Week 4, Race Week, came and even the best skiers were a little nervous. We were all given our bib numbers for our initial start. I was bib 69; I still think they were just trying to embarrass me. I remember being at the start gate waiting to go and feeling really scared; I'd never even made it all the way down before. I got to the bottom in one piece and felt great; I was so excited I just wanted to do it again and again. After 4 days of racing everyone wanted to know where they had finished but it was all a big secret until prize giving on the Thursday night. Even though **WO2 Ian Conlan** missed a gate and got disqualified on one race, the team did well overall bringing back 2nd place for youngest male and 2nd place for giant slalom junior and veteran. The team is looking forward to gracing the slopes again this year where we hope to improve on our overall 4th place finish. Many thanks to the team and race organisers and if you have not skied before I thoroughly recommend it.

WO2 (SSM) Conlan thinks it is cold

HEADQUARTERS REGIONAL COMMAND (SOUTH) SIGNAL SQUADRON – OP HERRICK

OC	**Maj BG White**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

After a relatively short tour on Op HERRICK, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn is preparing to return to York ready for another busy year. Having taken over from a sister Sqn at York we are now halfway through our handover to a Multinational Sig Sqn of Canadian, British and Dutch pers. So it is a very busy period for us on Ops and for those still in York supporting our other op tasks. A good measure of the Queen's Gurkha Signals soldiers is that many of the Sgts' replacements are by Canadian WOs, our Cpls by SNCOs and it seems there are 3 people arriving for every Gurkha leaving – and still the new Sqn think they are busy!

Sqn Ops Forward has changed a lot over the tour with **Capt Nirmal** and then **SSgt (FofS (IS)) Tarry** arriving early to provide continuity during the Relief In Place while the new SQMS arrived early to check the stores and allegedly start sending muffins and other food from the DFAC back to York ready for his return. **WO2 (FofS) Surendra** and **SSgt (YofS) Hanes** soon arrived to complete the team. Over time the IT wrestling 'tag team' of our 2 FofS, (**Surendra** and **Tarry**) proved so efficient that we could release the YofS back to assist the Rear Party. **Sgt Millar** ably leapt into his shoes and was soon keeping a close eye on the Ops team as **Capt Nirmal** was replaced by a Canadian. Comms Tp was overseen throughout by **Lt Tuni Masi** and **SSgt Tirtha**. They relentlessly fought the air movement system to get visits and resups to the deployed System Support Teams (SSTs) while also managing to destroy most of the US gym eqpt through overuse during Op MASSIVE. The SSTs were quite content with their relatively infrequent visits from Sqn hierarchy and all were widely praised by the Task Force HQs they deployed to sp. In camp the Service Desk and other teams kept fixing and moving kit as quickly as the Staff needed it, while also supporting other Sqn activities and tasks.

For the close sp to the HQ, a capability gap was identified – a grumpy QM to keep the Staff Officers in line. **Capt Ganesh** valiantly transformed himself and with **SSgt Man** and then **SSgt Jiwan**, Sp Tp 'managed Senior Officers' expectations'. Sp Tp continued their 24/ 7 guarding and life sp tasks throughout the tour, keeping the HQ running through floods, rocket attacks and power cuts, were professional throughout and frequently singled out for praise by visitors. Comd's Tac were an integral part of Sp Tp and were often deployed out on the ground providing comms to the FP multiple or accompanying Comd RC(S), **Gen Page**. **Cpl Durga** had some interesting experiences in downtown Kandahar but fortunately he never had to prove his op shooting was to the high standard expected of an 'Army 100'. New and often unexpected tasks for the Sqn during the tour are too many to mention in all but the briefest detail. These have ranged from lads deployed in direct sp of the Regional BG, fixing or operating

comms throughout all 4 provinces to providing our very own 'flying piper' on tasks in sp of British Gens across Afghanistan. The SSTs coped with everything from blizzards to ropey Rumanians deleting all their TACSAT fills. Below are a couple of stories from the guys proving the wide and varied employment we have enjoyed throughout the tour.

PIPING IN AFGHANISTAN - *by LCpl Bhadra Bahadur Ale*

As one of the pipers in 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, I have been involved in many piping activities i.e. New Year parties, Dashain festivals, charity shows and the Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2007. The bagpipe has become SOP kit for me now. I have taken it with me on every op. The first piping job I did in Kandahar was after only a few weeks at a memorial service for an American Maj. It was a gloomy evening. It seemed like the weather was also sad to be losing him.

On 31 December 2007 and 1 January 2008, I had 2 appointments, one as a bagpiper and another as a fatigue comd to set up tables and organise a function for the VIPs with 10 senior officers. The party was hosted by **Gen Page** for the Afghan Generals, diplomats and other VIPs in ISAF. The function was held at "Chai House" in KAF. I have no doubt that it was the busiest day of my Army career. It was difficult and at times tedious making the place fit for a party but once all of the work was completed, the guests started to arrive on cue. **Sigs Suman** and **Bidhan** guarded the entrance of the party hall with full CEFO; standard issue for doorman in Kandahar! **Sigs Om** and **Birod** escorted the Afghan drivers to the car park and I welcomed the guests with bagpipe music. Afghan Gens seemed very interested in bagpipe music as I do not think they had ever heard it before. **Gen Page** wrote in his letter to me afterwards, "I will not be surprised if the Afghan Gens ask you to teach bagpipes to the Afghan National Army." **Sigs Rasin**, **Mohan**, **Raju**, **Pranaya**, **Kishan** and **Tilak** had a hectic time washing and cleaning and assisting with the serving. We ran out of clean plates so it was a rush to get some washed up but the HQ RC(S) RSM, **WO1 Wilson** set a good example by helping us to clean the dirty plates.

On 26 January 2008, my next piping job was in Kabul at a Burns Night dinner organised by **Gen Riley**, who some of the Sqn knew from working as SBMA. When I landed in Kabul after an hour long flight from Kandahar, thick snow was waiting for me. **Lt Fisher** picked me from Kabul International Airport and we went to ISAF HQ, Kabul. The Burns Supper was on 27 January 2008 for all the soldiers and officers of the 6 Bn of The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The chief guest was a 4 Star Gen and Comd ISAF, **Gen McNeill**. It was a good example of friendship and camaraderie between the soldiers and officers of the Regt. I played Scotland the Brave, Highland Cathedral and Auld Lang Syne to keep spirits high. **Lt Fisher** told me about Burns Supper and that it is all about universal friendship and fellowship. Ever since the first celebration of Robert Burns birth in January 1801, the institution of the Burns Supper has existed.

Jai Queens Gurkha Signals.

ON OPERATIONS WITH THE RGR – OP BRESHNA
- by LCpl Prakash

Op BRESHNA was a quick strike op into the Chenartu valley about 100km North of Kandahar. The valley had long been used as a safe haven by the Taliban and from there they launched ambushes on vehs travelling along routes to Tarin Kowt.

On 28 November 07, around 80 vehs from 1 RGR and the 1 RGR Sp Coy, the Fire Support Group (FSG), along with myself (providing comms to 10 Pl) departed our base along with attached US forces. The 1 RGR BG had 2 coys to carry out the op; A, C Coys and the FSG. Indirect fire was from the south of Chenartu Valley provided by a nearby Forward Operating Base (FOB). Air sp was provided by A-10 aircraft and a Spectre gunship. Predator and Lynx were also available for surveillances purposes. Although 10 Pl's usual task is to escort the VIPs of HQ RC(South), on this op their task was to screen the enemy to stop them from interfering with BG ops. Our task was further stretched to carrying out fighting patrols, standing patrols, compound clearance, sentry duties for the FSG and conducting VCPs.

During these tasks, IEDs and a .303 rifle were found during house clearance. In the early hours of 1 December 2007, A Coy flew back to KAF after successfully clearing the Taliban from Chenartu Valley. C Coy were flown back to the FSG base.
Further taskings were given to10 Pl to secure the Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) for a C Coy drop off point. In order to provide security to the HLS, we had to conduct VCPs to the north and south of it. At around midday, all the vehs along with the US Special Forces, mortar pl and arty lined up to return back to KAF. My task was to provide comms to 10 Pl but I was mostly involved with other duties, once deployed; for example sentry duties, conducting VCPs and manning an OP. It was good to refresh my skills and learn some new ones and also to gain experience with the Inf. The op was a success for the BG after they had cleared Taliban from the Chinartu Valley and safely returned back to KAF.

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC (Rear)	**Capt C Fogarty**
SSM (Rear)	**SSgt Harikumar Ghale**

Although half of the Sqn are deployed, the tasks keep rolling in! The troops have been kept busy with SLE and Op VERITAS and the usual Rear Party type activities. We now look towards the future and the safe return of the deployed elements of the Sqn and to the next set of taskings. The Sqn is keeping hold of SLE for the immediate future and will have a 6 month respite of Op VERITAS and the UK Node at SGS Oakhanger before taking both tasks back on in August. We also look forward to the new tasks of Joint Force Logistics Component Command (JFLogC) and the Airborne Task Force (ABTF), which will no doubt keep everyone on there toes.

There are some bonuses with these new tasks i.e. an OTX in Belize and one in Cyprus; 'mustn't grumble'!

3rd (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col PEJ Drew**
RSM	**WO1 MR Eastman**

The CO is now deployed on Op TELIC, shortly to be joined by the RSM. Back in Bulford, the Acting CO is **Maj Dom Sharkey** and the Acting RSM is **WO2(RQMS) Price**, adding another hat to his RQMS (A) post.

3 DIVISION SIGNAL REGIMENT ALPINE SKI TEAM – CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2007 - *by Lt Pete King*

The Regt Alpine Ski Team departed to Ex MERCURY GLACIER XI in buoyant mood, hoping to build upon the last year's encouraging performance at the Corps ski camp. The team consisted of a mix of talent and due to op commitments was somewhat diluted from previous years. This did not dampen the spirits however, or the desire to win among those who took part. The team suffered some early injuries to the more senior members and regrettably a flight home in plaster for **Cpl Murray**.

The trg weeks in preparation for racing provided some valuable experience for all team members. **Sig Stark** and **Sig Robinson** excelled within their trg groups, proving worthy of their title of 'potential Corps champions'. Race week arrived more quickly than most had hoped; with some feeling they were more prepared than others. The final team selection would come down

to a matter of 'seeding' which proved to be a 'black art' amongst the competitors. Both the Giant Slalom (GS) and Slalom events proved to be a test of everyone's skill, athleticism and nerve and the final team of **Lt Harris**, **Sgt Allen**, **Sig Stark** and **Sig Robinson** finished a respectable 7th overall. Individual awards went to **Sig Stark** who was Corps Novice GS Champion and **Sig Robinson** who was runner up in the Corps Junior GS.

Well done to the team for a performance that excelled all expectation. Here's to next year!

3 Div HQ & Sig Regt Alpine Ski Team 2007 (Cpl Murray absent through injury)

REGIMENTAL ORIENTEERING
- by WO1(SSM) Greening AGC(SPS)

Well doesn't time fly when you are having fun! The 2006/2007 Orienteering season now seems like a distant memory for many, especially now that we are well into the new season and the challenges ahead. Every Wednesday throughout the season, the PRI minibus was seen chugging along to the next Orienteering event, filled with both keen experienced and total novice orienteers, as well as half-eaten horror-bags! In total 36 different runners represented the 3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt team in the Military League (South) throughout the 2006/2007 season, which saw well over 1300 competitors.

The team managed a very creditable 7th place in the Military League (South) and 3rd in the 5 Div League, narrowly beating our nearest Royal Signals challengers,11 Sig Regt/RSS. Capt Eddie Walsh RE personally achieving an individual 11th place overall. Earlier in the year, on 9 May 2007 at the 4 and 5 Div Team Relays held at Petworth Park, we managed to scrape together 2 reasonable teams, pulling off 2nd and 5th places, with an overall 4th position for the Regt.

A week later it was off to Blackwood for the 5 Div Team Harris Relays and this time the team managed a 3rd place, giving us an overall 3rd place in the 4 and 5 Div Combined Team Relays (this time being narrowly beaten by 11 Sig Regt/RSS). More recently, the new Regtl 2IC has stuck his hand into his very deep PRI pockets and granted the team funding for the purchase of team EMIT cards and more importantly, some new Ultrasport 'Craft Type' Orienteering tops. So hopefully the team now looks the part with all the gear. We are very much looking forward to further successes in both the League and Team championships in the 2007/2008 season.

Notable individual successes this year were:

Selected for Army Squad:

Capt Eddie Walsh RE
SSgt Tim Allsopp RE
Cpl Steph Bogart

Selected for respective Corps Squads:

Maj Rhid Jones
Maj Andy Jackson RE
Capt Eddie Walsh RE
Capt Katie Badham-Thornhill REME
WO1(SSM) Stu Greening AGC(SPS)
SSgt Tim Allsopp RE
Cpl Steph Bogart
Cpl Sam Davison AGC(SPS)

REGIMENTAL CROSS-COUNTRY

The Regt has had some success over the last 3 months coming 3rd in the 4 Div Championships, 5th in the Corps Championships and a fantastic 5th in the Army Championships. We have a winning runner in **SSgt Watkins** RE from 3 (UK) Div HQ GEO Cell and a team that grows in confidence with every race.

In the latest league event, run from the track at Picton Barracks, along the Bulford Ridge the whole Regt ran. The Junior Ranks won the day, beating the SNCOs and Officers hands down (through numbers mainly). The day was excellent, and the home team had the distinct advantage of knowing when Cardiac Hill was looming in the race!

The team has been drawn from: **Sigs Gibbons**, **Vine**, **Burgess** and **Hunston**, **Cfn Osabutey**, **LCpls Fertnig** and **Worthington**, **Cpl Flint**, **Sgt Browning**, **SSgt Watkins**, **WO2 Hill**, **WO2(QMSI) Irving**, **2Lt Wallace**, **Majs Owen** and **Flavell**.

HEADQUARTERS (THE SOMME) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj DTH Wilson** (Deployed on Op TELIC)
Acting OC	**Maj PT Green** RE
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Torrington**

Upheaval continues in HQ Sqn but generally things are moving along rather well despite the shortfalls created by the deployment on Op TELIC. The Regtl Veh Storage Programme is working well and providing clear evidence of the benefits of getting contractor sp to maintain 'out of use' veh fleets.

REGIMENT OPS TEAM - *by Cpl Bosanquet*

Ops Officer	**Maj P Flavell**
Regt YofS	**WO2 Parr**
Regt FofS	**WO1 Fielding**

It has been a busy month at the spearhead of deployment in the Regt. We have had to organise and deploy soldiers to the four corners of the world whilst undergoing pers changes at the same time. We said hello and then farewell to **Sgt Chapman** after his brief 2 month stint. He has returned to 202 Armd Sig Sqn with the joyful task of being the A fleet manager. His replacement, **SSgt Beel**, has stepped into his shoes and is settling in swiftly. We also say goodbye to **WO2(YofS) Midwinter**. She has been sent to The Academy in Sandhurst, where it is said she will spend her time relaxing. **Capt 'Happy' Lloyd** has now left the Army and his replacement, **Capt Wood** has stepped in as Tfc Offr and is enjoying a brief settling in period before deploying on ops. Finally with **Capt Duff** and **WO1 Murray** deploying on tour soon, we welcome **WO1 Fielding** and **WO2 Parr** into the team for the next few months. As you can see it has been quite hectic these last couple of months. We are hoping that it will now settle down until the mass return of our work friends.

202 (ARMOURED) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj KA Owen**
SSM	**WO2 S Crooks**

- by LCpl Wesley

In the last 6 months, 202 Sig Sqn has seen a number of new arrivals, including a new OC, **Maj Owen**, a new 2IC, **Capt Lewis**, a new SSM, **WO2 Crooks**, and 2 new Tp Comds, **2Lts Chris Swann** and **Grant Wallace**. Welcome to each and every one of them.

Sig Eldridge was promoted to LCpl, **LCpls Daniel**, **Bosanquet**, **Warwick**, **Brant** and **Brown** to Cpls, and **Cpl Allen** also promoted to Sgt. Congratulations!

Once again the Sqn ran an armd driving course in October, so that we could benefit from driving in the cold. After a few broken vehs, everyone managed to get through the test with **Sig Vine** showing his potential and willingness to become an armd instructor himself but only after passing on his second go. I am sure everyone's highlight of 2007 was the Regtl Battle Camp in November, which took place in Castlemartin. Although only a week long, I think everyone would agree that we managed to cover a lot. Skills practised ranged from bayonet drills to top cover shoots, which involved firing at various targets while being smashed about in a Snatch and in **Sig Richardson's** case learning not to grab the muzzle of his weapon afterward or it sears your hand!

December, as usual, was a quiet period as the Sqn wound down for Christmas. Due to op commitments, the remainder of the 2 field Sqns merged into one. A new Tp has also been formed to maintain the Regtl vehs in 'light care and preservation', called the Regtl Veh Storage Programme Tp (RVSP for short). Most of the armr has also been mothballed into RVSP Tp but as the only armr trained people are in 202, we are still servicing and maintaining our vehs; they are just a bit further away now! Eventually we all went on Christmas leave, which was nice returning on 7 January with one thing on peoples minds – work, or was it "have I got anymore leave left?" It has been a quiet month thus far. Now as everyone is settling back into the daily routine and things get back to normal we can only wonder what 2008 will bring.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj H Bosley** (Deployed on Op TELIC)
SSM	**WO2 Yendell** (Kuwait)

BAGHDAD SIGNAL SQUADRON – OP TELIC 11

206 Sig Sqn deployed to Baghdad, Iraq on 11 January 2008 for handover/takeover with 211 Sig Sqn of 1(UK)Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt.

It did not take long before we had settled in, almost too easily, to what has become our new daily routine.

Not 2 weeks had passed before we were ready to make our mark as the newly deployed Sig Sqn in the British Support Unit (BSU), when the Commcen (Maude House) were set the challenge of organising the monthly charity event, in aid of the cause 'Help for Heroes'. With sp from the Helpdesk, we had a memorable evening of arm wrestling and the first opportunity to see our fancy dress which lifted the morale and spirits of the whole of the BSU Bar.

Kat and Emma performing

Sgt Jonah Jones – very happy to be in Baghdad – Honest!

Each dept has taken on their new roles with confidence and pride, happy that the handover/takeover has passed so we now look forward to a positive and productive tour.

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col RJ Quinlan**
RSM	**WO1 D Rayson**

VIEW FROM RHQ - *Capt A Senneck*

The start of another year and it looks set to be another busy one which will see the Regt establish itself further on all fronts within the Corps. There will be many fresh faces coming into RHQ during 2008, not least the CO, Regt 2IC, Ops Officer and Adjt who will all be moving to pastures new at some point during the year. Back in the now, the Regt has already hosted 2 high profile visits; the new SOinC(A) visited Corsham where the Regt's many capabilities were demonstrated on a wet and windy January afternoon. Similarly wet and wintry was the Province climatic reception received by Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig DA Hargreaves** for his trip, visiting elements of the Regt who are based over the water in Northern Ireland.

On the sporting front the Regt has had even more success; we have recently become the Corps Squash and Badminton team champions and 4 members of the Regt represented the Corps at the Army Championships – excellent news for those involved and for the Regt.

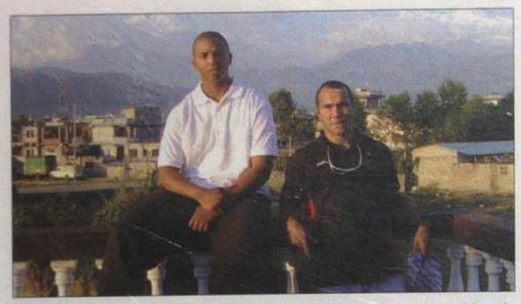
Looking further a field there is much to look forward to; the CO's Cup will soon be back underway with the March and Shoot, the Signallers' Cadre Course is looming large and the battlefield tour to Gallipolli will soon be upon us. As ever, there is much occurring in the Regt on the op front and closer to home.

All 5 Sqns have been as active as ever and I hope you enjoy reading the offerings you will find below from home and abroad.

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Pardew**
SSM	**SSgt M Stowell**

Once again Christmas leave came and went far too quickly for the Sqn. The New Year started quite literally with a bang with all available pers undertaking their APWT and grouping in preparation for the forthcoming op surge tasks to Afghanistan and Iraq. Just for good measure the Regt hosted the SOinC(A) and deployed a team to sp the 16 AA Bde MRX, all in the same week! 241 Sig Sqn remains poised to meet its standing commitments. Any late notice jollies from the Comms Planning Office (CPO) are also welcomed.



Sig Dwaine Martin and LCpl Seta Raikoso hard at work in Nepal

HOTEL TROOP

OC	**Lt J Perring**
SSgt	**SSgt M Carr**

Firstly the Tp wishes to bid a well earned adieu to **Sig 'Lloyd' Cromar**, **Sig 'Jimmy' Tearle**, who is posted on promotion, and **Sig 'Ging' Evans** who are all moving to pastures new in sunnier climes. Thankfully we welcome back **Cpl 'Jacko' Jackson**, **LCpl 'Pete' Hall** and **LCpl 'Andy' Philpott** who true to form managed to avoid any IDF and also allegedly any work at all in their 6 month deployment to Iraq. They were replaced by **LCpl 'Ady' Mills**, **LCpl 'Badger' Branchette** and **LCpl 'Jay' Emmanuel** who are already performing in the manner that is expected of Inst Techs on tour. This month we have undertaken the biggest multiple surge deployment to Afghanistan in the Tp's history and under the illustrious leadership of **SSgt 'Giz' Carr** who is supported along the way by **Sgt 'Grouchy' Rouchy**, **Cpls 'Ozzy' Osborne**, **'Rob' Passey** and **'Mikey' Kervell**, and **LCpls 'Happy Jack' Gooding**, **'Clas' McClarence**, **'Jenny' Sheridan**, **'Setter' Raikoso**, **'Gaz' Lauder**, **'Dan' Quai**, **'Crackers' Cracknell** and **'Hoggy' Hodson**. We wish them all a safe trip and hope that they manage to at least get some dust on their boots and pull the odd drum of fibre along the way to the PXs as they have deployed with a shopping list that would make Tesco's struggle to fill. Hotel Tp wishes all the families that are left behind all the best. Our thoughts are with them.

KILO TROOP

OC	**Lt S Gray**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt G Sunderland**

The New Year has kicked off with gusto. So much for this being our wind down from ops! January has seen us supporting a 16 (AA) Bde ex on Salisbury Plain, taking over the NARO Team from Lima Tp and lending manpower to Hotel Tp who have deployed on Op HERRICK. The Tp would like to welcome **Lt Gray** and **Sigs Merredith** and **Roads**. We have to say a fond farewell to **LCpl Reeve** on posting to Cyprus. The whole Tp would also like to give our best wishes for a safe deployment on Op HERRICK to **Cpl Kervell**, **LCpl Quai** and the members of Hotel Tp. Well wishes also go to **LCpl Duggan** following an operation on his knee on 27 December, which has had him hobbling around over the festive season. The AFA need you refereeing again as soon as possible.

16 (AIR ASSAULT) BRIGADE MRX

Sgt Sunderland has headed up a team consisting of **Cpl Williams**, **LCpl Duggan**, **LCpl Lewis**, **LCpl St-Pierre**, **Sig Crawford** and **Sig Webb**. With the Christmas pudding still settling in their bellies, the team headed off to West Down Camp to start the comms build in sp of 16(AA) Bde. After some initial delays getting into various buildings, they rapidly laid in the backbone fibre for the Ex HQ. Once the IS network was completed and the various ISDN lines were installed, they moved onto other locations around the ex area and as this is being written they are working at Hullavington. The Tp will also be providing an FRT Team for the duration in the event of any faults.

LIMA TROOP - *LCpl 'Jase' Buley*

OC	**Capt A Manley**
SSgt	**SSgt D Pope**

Looking back over 2007, it was a busy and rewarding time for Lima Tp pers. As usual we were sending our guys off to places and creating wonderful things in terrible countries; we also sent out a few guys to Iraq and Afghanistan. Because of 241 Sig Sqn's UK role, we had a team of ever ready hotshots to deploy in case of nuclear accidents around the country. Also, a few of the Tp pers were picked to go help put new infrastructure in Nepal, which was a hard yet interesting tour. It opened our guys up to issues such as poverty and famine and I believe it changed the way the lads took everything for granted back home (except the guys from Yorkshire as they were already used to it). During down time our guys managed to go on Ex PARA FINN where some of our selected Tp were lucky enough to go to Germany and bomb around paragliding for a week, well they were nearly allowed. We had a day of pretending to be in helicopter crashes in the sea which is supposedly as fun as it sounds, only harder. Our beloved **SSgt Pope** sold us out and went snowboarding for the Corps for a month, only to chimp in and injure himself after being there only a few hours. Although injuring himself too much to snowboard for the rest of the trip, he still came back a winner! Sadly, our Tp has said goodbye to quite a few members recently, like the newly promoted **Cpl Stokes** who has been posted to 216 Sig Sqn; we've also had to let go of **Cpl 'Spotty' Spotswood**, **LCpl 'Reg' Tranter** and **LCpl 'Donny' Donnaldson** who have all decided that they'd give it a go of having a normal life. To replace them we welcome **Sig Pyke**, **Sig Dwaine Martin**, **LCpl Darragh** and **LCpl 'Webby' Webber**, who is recovering from his injury and making good progress – shame about his face. Always looking ahead to the future, we have recently taken over the TELIC rotation and are now waiting to deploy.

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Owen Finnie**
SSM	**WO2 Billy Lilburn**

Brig DA Hargreaves, Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, visited the Sqn on Friday 18 January and all members of the Sqn got a chance to meet him. **Cpl McNeal** notched up his second briefing to a 1 Star in as many weeks, as he had briefed SOinC(A) at Corsham the week before. The Sqn has a busy New Year schedule planning and executing a series of exs to prepare for Op HELVETIC. General sp to HQNI and 38(Irish) Bde continues and close liaison with 40 Sig Regt to support UK Ops is ongoing and includes planning for joint exs. In addition to activities in NI, the Sqn is looking forward to future 10 Sig Regt events, including the visit by our Colonel in Chief, Reformation Day Parade and Battle Camp, all occurring in July.

Cpl McFarlane briefing Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde on rigging in Northern Ireland

ALPHA TROOP - *by Sig Wade*

OC	**Capt Pete Emsen**
SNCO	**SSgt Dale King**

The Royal Signals female football team played against the Gunners on 18 January 2008. A lot of hard trg was carried out to ensure that the Royal Signals team performed to the highest of standards. The team reported to Blandford on Wednesday 16 January and spent the rest of the day trg. The team also trained on Thursday and only then was the team selected to represent the Corps. The trg prior to the match gave everyone a chance to bond and get used to individual playing positions on the field. The match was held on the Friday at Blandford. The Corps team played an excellent first half. They managed to keep possession and the first goal was scored as a result of a corner about 30 mins into the game; the ball being nicely buried in the back of the net. The second half of the game was a nail-biting experience as the Gunners began to play a lot better and about 20 mins into the second half, they scored and levelled the match at 1 – 1. The Corps team tried in vain to score another goal but the final score remained 1 – 1. If any females are interested in playing Corps Football please contact **Capt L Potter** on 9491 43305.

BRAVO TROOP - *by LCpl Rodway*

OC	**Capt Rick Gorman**
SNCO	**Sgt Rob Hickley**

After a year of change for the Sqn, we finished it off with a well-deserved Christmas do. This event took place at Lisburn Station in the Half Crown bar. It was organised by **Sgt Sarah Cattell** who was pleased to see the night go ahead. After all her preparation, she led from the front, enjoying herself as much as the rest of us. The most popular part of the evening was the raffle with everyone on the edge of their seats hoping for the much sought after 'Duvet Days'. The biggest winners of the night were **LCpl Michelle Coss** and **LCpl Claire Rodway** who won OC and SSM for the day. A big thank you goes out to **Sgt Cattell** from all the Civilian and Mil members of the Sqn and their partners. The Tp would like to extend our congratulations to **Cpl Glyn Knight** who returned victorious from the Corps Skiing Championships – an excellent effort, well done! At the beginning of this year the Sqn said goodbye to **LCpl Spankey Vant**. He shall now be known as Mr as he begins his new life on Civvy Street. We all wish him good luck with whatever he decides to do. Recently we hosted a visit from Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig DA Hargreaves**. We showed him a rigging rapid decent, the work of the Information Systems and Installations depts and **Sgt 'Robby' Lowe** gave him a thorough brief on his preparations for the Sgts Mess Burns night.

SUPPORT TROOP - *by Cpl Smyth*

OC	**Sgt Pullen**

As part of the Lisburn Station Comd's Cup, 233 Sig Sqn put together a hockey team to play in NI while simultaneously fielding a side to take part in the CO 10 Sig Regt Comd's Cup Competition in Salisbury. The team consisted of **Capt Pete Emsen**, **SSgt Steve Marshall**, **Sgt Sarah Cattell**, **Sgt Mick Wall**, **Cpl Nicki McNeal**, **Cpl 'Barny' Barnstaple**, **Cpl Cheryl Smyth**, **LCpl Claire Rodway**, **Sig Vicki Wade** with **Sgt Nicki Pullen** as team captain and official team photographer. We had a competitive and enjoyable afternoon with a few tough games, which **Sgt Sarah Cattell** can tell you about showing the scars from her bleeding knees. **Capt Pete Emsen** was as diplomatic as ever, arguing with the referees over a few bad calls. Luckily he never got the red card. **Sgt 'Dangerous' Wall** showed us just how lethal he could be with a hockey stick with his crazy golf like skills. Overall we finished in a well-deserved 4th place with special thanks to **Sig Wade's** spectacular diving ability in goal.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Maloney**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Manley**

OPERATIONS SUPPORT TROOP

OC	**Lt AP Foot**
SSgt	**SSgt(FofS IS) MA Kenning**

Ops Sp Tp wish to offer a warm welcome to the following new faces; in the ICT Sect we have **LCpl Shaw** who comes to us from 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and **Sig Luckman** who joins us direct from his Class 3 course at Blandford. We also welcome **LCpl Allen** in the SCP Sect who joins us from 7 Sig Regt and **Sgt Hessle** who is attached to us from 251 Sig Sqn.Unfortunately we now have to say goodbye to **Cpl Stevenson** and **LCpl Bain** from the ICT Sect who are both posted to 1 (UK) Civ Div.
Congratulations to **Cpl Purvis** from the SCP Sect who is posted to the RSS on promotion to Sgt. The Tp is currently busy supporting a number of projects as well as our routine daily work in sp of HQ Land Comd, the Joint Air Mounting Centre at South Cerney and UK Ops and Exs. We are also busy supporting various sporting and adventurous exs with **LCpl Allen** competing in orienteering competitions and attending the Regtl skiing exped, **LCpl Barr** and **LCpl Evans** competing in the Corps op shooting competition, as well as **Lt Foot**, **Cpl Neill** and **LCpl Neary** representing HQ Land Comd at rugby.

600 SIGNAL TROOP

OC	**Capt David D Petty**
SSgt	**SSgt John Martin**

600 Sig Tp welcomes **PO Bert Cuthbertson**, fresh from a tour of the sunny Falkland Islands and **Cpl Carl Rummary** and **SAC Chelsie Fitzpatrick** on attachment from RAF Brize Norton. Only one of them is a girl, the other one is RAF. They will be working in the 506 Comms Base, and **Sgt Royston** assigned to PCGC, posted in from16 Sig Regt The Tp bids a fond farewell to **Sgt 'Scotty' Scott,** PCGC who completed 22 years in uniform and then started the same job as **Mr Scott** one day later. PCGC also bade farewell to **Mrs Viv Budding** and **Mr Dave Yates**, who will both be missed. Congratulation also go to **Sgt Rob Jones** on his marriage to **Debbie** and **Cpl Jimmy Nye** on his marriage to **Emma**. Also **SSgt 'Hammy' Hamilton**, **Sgt Steve Pountney**, **Sgt Rob Jones** and **LCpl Carl Kidner** for raising over £600 for the Naomi House Hospice in Winchester.The Tp is currently busy supporting a Satcom Mitral trial in Cyprus (wrong time of year to go to Cyprus, I know, blame HQ LAND) and conducting site visits in Brunei, Nepal. This leaves the Tp quiet without **SSgt(FofS) John Ford** moaning about the FofS(IS) roster and his pay band. **Sgt 'Randy' Randerson** and **Tim Treadwell** have got the short straws and are deployed in support of Op HERRICK's RTTS replacement programme.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Jez Toze**
SSM	**WO2 Kev East**

1 TROOP

OC	**Capt Emma Cameron**
SSgt	**SSgt Steve Pengelly**

Firstly the Tp would like to welcome back **Cpl 'Ski' Smiejkowski**, **Cpl Wayne Evans** and **LCpl Mark Collins** from op tours in Iraq. Before Christmas leave, the YOs and JNCOs deployed on Ex WINTER TEARS, a leadership ex run by the SNCOs. All we had been told was a kit list to bring and our first timing – 0545hrs at the Garrison gym, where we all paraded awaiting our first task. It wasn't long before we were told to dig out our swimming kit and a set of uniform and meet at the swimming pool in 10 mins. This is when we met our PTI for the duration of the ex, who explained we were about to take part in a marine endurance swim test. This consisted of wearing our uniform, treading water for 4 mins then doing 8 x 50m lengths, then treading water again and making an improvised buoyancy aid from our uniform. And as if this wasn't enough to tire the best of swimmers, we had to do relay sprints in the water racing against each other. After this 'beasting', our bergens were soon repacked and we moved to the Sqn garages and waited for the next serial. This was the Asslt Course and Trinasium at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. We ran through the Asslt Course a couple of times before having a go on the Trinasium. This was to test our courage, determination and character when under pressure and out of our comfort zone. It was then back to the garages for trade tests and

tp comd's lessons on different battles and then some much loved 'pokey' drill. Then we had a kit check, where everything not on the list was taken off us, including money, mobile phones, watches and all our food! We then deployed into the field for various activities which included the bayonet assIt course. **Sig 'JT' Talbot** was a bit too keen and managed to bayonet his big toe and was casevaced! This was followed by stretcher races and mental tests in 4R, running around with full sandbags and an individual night navex which certainly tested some individuals! All in all we did not get a lot of sleep or food and the ex kept the same fast tempo throughout until we were marched into camp 4 days later for a much wanted Sqn breakfast, followed by some sleep and the Christmas function where the awards for the ex were given out:

Capt Hodges demonstrating 'Good Admin' during the kit check?

Top Soldier
Cpl 'Steaders' Steadman
Grit & Determination
Cpl 'Stu' Walker
'Bad-min'
Sig Matt Bignell (although **Capt Alex Hodges** and **Lt James Snelgrove** came a close third!)

2 TROOP

OC **Capt Alex Hodges**
SSgt **SSgt Mark Bagstaff**

LIGHT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING

Over the last couple of days 2 Tp and 638 (L) Tp conducted trg for the Immediate Response Team (IRT) to be used in a light role. The first day was a demonstration by **LCpl Andi Eddon** on how to load the motorbikes ready for deployment with the kit that is used for the IRT light. It is a step up from the suggestion that 2 people ride the bikes with fully loaded bergens! After the demonstration those members of the Tp with motorbike licences went for a ride around Aldershot to experience what it is like to ride the motorbikes fully laden. The second day was a lot more involved for all members of the Tp, as we drove to Netheravon airfield to carry out Gazelle familiarisation with 666 Sqn (V) AAC. First of all we received a safety brief on the helicopter during which the pilot seemed to refer to "crashing and burning" quite a lot; this turned **Sig 'ASBO' Hadlow's** face pale! After the brief we were shown how to load the kit correctly into the helicopter. Despite **Sig Hadlow's** protests, he was in the first group that went up, shortly followed by a very excited **LCpl Laura Williams** as it was her first time in a helicopter! The pilot took us for a short tour of Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge and we all decided it is far more pleasant from above than actually being on it! Before long we were back on terra firma and overall both Tps had enjoyed a valuable couple of days. Hopefully we will get up in the Gazelles a bit more often.

638 (LONDON) SIGNAL TROOP

OC **Lt J Snelgrove**
SSgt **SSgt A Carter**

638 (L) Sig Tp again proved that they are still the busiest Tp in the Sqn with exs, visits, commitments to UK Ops and Christmas parties. We began a cold and wet December with Ex WINTER TEARS. The ex was aimed at the Sqn's junior ranks proved to test every individual's strengths, weaknesses, stamina and mental ability with Comd Tasks, physical challenges, drill and trade tests. All these events made an extremely enjoyable and action packed week. The Tp would like to congratulate **LCpl Robinson** and **LCpl Harmer** on their promotions and it welcomes new arrival **Sig Burns** from 1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt. The New Year has proved to be as busy as the last with further Incident Response Training (IRT) in barracks and at Netheravon Airfield on Gazelle airframe familiarisation trg. As part of the trg, 666 Sqn AAC very kindly laid on helicopter trips around Salisbury and Stonehenge. The Tp is now preparing for their commitment to Ceremonial Duties and the State Visit of the President of France at Windsor Castle in March.

ECM (FP) SQN

OC **Maj J Fraser**
SSM **WO2 J Saunders**

As the relentless pace of trg, deployments and courses continues it has been a busy year to reflect upon, with continuing commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq and sp for the close-down of Op BANNER to name just some of the Sqn's commitments. With on-going trg and operator maint sp to all deploying units within the Army, the Sqn wishes to thank all the units that have helped us complete these difficult tasks and given us sp and manpower where needed. We can now look forward to the New Year and whatever challenges it brings. With some movement in SHQ, **Capt Adrian Morris** has taken over as the Sqn 2IC and **WO2(YofS) Cez Wren** has taken over the post of Sqn YofS.

ALPHA TROOP

OC
SSgt **SSgt Bri Mclean**

The New Year brings with it a host of new arrivals to Alpha Tp (too many to name!) who are all on the first ECM course of the year! Exam results pending, they will all get there tour dates soon and can start getting ready to deploy to the sharp end! However one who can be mentioned is **LCpl Christian**, who has been put straight onto yet another cadre course after just one week in the unit! As well as new additions, we are also losing some valued Tp members. **LCpl Pryce** and **Cpl Knox** are posted to EOD units, **LCpl Machin** is off to 216 Sig Sqn and **LCpl Lancett** is starting his Class 1 in February.

BRAVO TROOP

OC **Capt Dorrington**
SSgt **SSgt Gaz West**

With our illustrious Tp SSgt finally deciding to come to work, after a whirl-wind tour of Afghanistan (long enough to get the medal though!) the Tp welcomes **SSgt Gaz West**, wife **Claire** and kids, **Samuel** and **Rebecca**, not forgetting **Dave** the dog into the fold. Also in the in-tray are **Sgt Keith Knox**, wife **Gill** and kids **Ewan** and **Cameron**, **Sgts DJ Seymour** and **Jim Wear** and finally **Cpl 'Tug' Wilson**, a warm welcome to you all – be sure you see the clothing store for issue of desert combats. Other than this the Tp rolls on, as always, with a myriad of courses, deployments, trg and of course, the all-important leave requests to keep everyone busy. Now that everyone has recovered from Christmas excess (perhaps with the exception of one polar bear) and the silly season is finally over, we can settle down to some good hard work keeping up the skills and practising our instruction techniques to all and sundry – whether they are requested or not.

AFGHANISTAN TROOP

SO3 **Capt R Thompson**
YofS **WO2(YofS) B Lindley**
FofS **WO2(FofS) D Gunn**

KANDAHAR DETACHMENT

Det Comd **Sgt S Kelly**

It has been another busy period fitting new vehs of all varieties and often burning the midnight oil to ensure all is completed on time. Of course it doesn't help when the gaps in the vehs are small and you may not be – **Sgt Sean Kelly** springs to mind. Strangely enough **Cpl 'Belsen' Wood** has no problems here! We would like to thank **Cpl Ash Holmes** for his cover during the R&R period, although he found his way to the gym and massage parlour easier than he found his way to work. Christmas day was greeted by coffee and muffins (cheers boss!) followed by the oxymoronic fun-run which saw **Cpl Wood** lead the way up front whilst **Cpl Kez Hopkinson** decided to be ever the gentleman and escorted the SO3 somewhat further down the field. The dinner was served to the troops by **Capt Rachel Thompson** and **WO2(YofS) Bob Lindley** – the only thing missing was the Yeoman's pinny!

BASTION DETACHMENT

Det Comd **Sgt B Park**

With some comings and goings at the beginning of December, first we have to say a sad farewell to the outgoing Det Comd, **Sgt Ronnie McDonald** and a warm welcome to **Sgt Baz Park** for taking up the mantle. We should also welcome **Sgt McGreggor**, who did not even have time to pack his bags before he was out and about spreading the good word. We would like to thank **Cpl Angie Graham** for her flying visit and say a fond farewell to **Cpl Al Jordan** who departs for Kabul; how can we tell HCR ranks now? As usual being responsible for Helmand there has been plenty of opportunity to get some flying time (when possible) and ground time (more likely) out and about visiting all the FOBs, PBs, DCs and any other abbreviations that they throw at us. Most notably on the Helmand world tour are **LCpl Matt Kelly** and **Cpl Ronnie De-Bique** who are competing for the most frequent flyer miles, quickly being caught up by **Sgt McGreggor**. It is also nice to get a visit from the boss but she must remember the Timmy Horton's next time.

KABUL DETACHMENT

Det Comd **Sgt P Farrar**

We start by saying farewell to **Sig Stu Dalzell** who is off to the warmer climes of Bastion and welcome in his stead **Cpl Al Jordan**. We would also like to than **Sgt McGreggor** for taking time out in his busy schedule to do some R&R covering. Of course the snow helped everyone get into a Christmassy mood and the day was full of gun-fire (fortunately the drink – unfortunately non-alcoholic), Carols (which is nice of her) and to finish a sledge race round the block. Looking forward to the New Year and what it brings and of course for the weather to start getting a teensy bit warmer.

NORTHERN IRELAND CROSS-COUNTRY - *LCpl Will Tuffin*

It has been a successful year for the Regtl NI cross-country team, which is made up of members from ECM (FP) Sqn, 233 Sig Sqn and 40 Sig Regt (V). With some great performances across the board, the team has had noticeable success at minor unit level competition winning the NI Championship, League and Relay cups to add to the trophy cabinet. The final race of the season took place on 9 January at Ballykinler trg area, giving the team the perfect opportunity to run off any access weight put on over the festive period, much to the delight of Sqn PTI, **LCpl Jim Machin**. The race was run over a course of 8.5km over the trg area and included 3km along the beach – which was nice! Strong individual performances from **Lt Col Whichelo** and **Sgt Baz Harvey**, finishing 2nd and 3rd, shortly followed by **LCpl Will Tuffin** in 5th place helped secure the day and added to the combined performances of all team members over the season the League was won with relative ease. Missed on the day was the team 2IC, **LCpl Ash Rodway**, who with strong performances throughout the season, never finishing out of the top 5, could not attend due to preparing for his forthcoming PTI course, on which we wish him every success. Finally all team members would like to thank **Lt Col Whichelo** for all the work he has done as the cross-country chairman in what has been a rather successful season.

THE LIFE OF A NEW ARRIVAL - *LCpl Jambo Brown*

I arrived into ECM (FP) Sqn fresh faced and not knowing what to expect. I was amazed at how busy the Sqn was, with people coming back from tour, people deploying on tour, ITD's, wpns trg, and briefings to units in Germany and the mainland. I was immediately thrown into this, with ECM (FP) trg for my inevitable tours to Iraq and Afghanistan. Soon after arriving, I found myself on a flight back to the mainland to represent the Sqn in an Inter-Regtl rugby competition which was very physical, as the other teams were strong and we had no practice to play as a team. Despite that, we bonded well and finished the competition with good team spirit. Just as my legs were recovering, I was asked to step up to the plate and join in with the 10 mile steeple chase race. Our team consisted of 6 people but as we were representing 10 Sig Regt we needed 8 to run and 6 to place. Due to manning this meant we all had to finish. We met at the start route at Tidworth Garrison and by this point I was worried about what I had volunteered for. We were taken through the route by the QMSI, who named some of the obstacles we would have to face, water pools, fallen trees, short steep hills all with 10kg on our backs. We bit the bullet and went for it and were the first Corps team to finish, with all our times coming in under 1 hr 30 min, which is pretty good going. After treating ourselves to a Guinness at Wetherspoons, we headed back to the airport to tell the Sqn our tales of woe. This brought us up to the run up to Christmas and I came back to the Sqn in the New Year after completing my OPTAG trg and am currently on the ECM Operator/Maintainer course. This is an intense 3 week course, learning a huge amount about the eqpt and how to fix it. I now feel part of the Sqn and the Regt and I'm looking forward to deploying to Camp Bastion in only a few weeks.

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col J Langley**
RSM **WO1 L McGrail**

BOXING - *by Sig Johnston*

The intense early morning and late night trg was apparent for both the fighters and spectators as the Harrogate Cup Competition culminated in a spectacular evening of boxing.
It was Thursday 6 December and many fighters were to have their third fight that week for the finals. As many fighters entered the ring already bruised from the previous rounds, the trg really paid off for **Sig Naresh** and **Sig Ajib** who walked through the entire competition unmatched to claim the Bantam and Feather Weight titles respectively, not to mention easy points for 3 Sqn. Mind you it isn't easy finding other fighters in the Army who weigh the same as 10 year old boys. 3 Sqn bagged more points when **Sig Masterson** and **Sig Macgregor**, both of 3 Sqn, stepped in the ring to compete and guarantee to win the Light Weight trophy. **Sig Beckett** collected the

Welter Weight trophy, **Sig Blackwood** and **Sig Yafai** won the Middle Weight bouts all for 3 Sqn.

1 Sqn won only one fight in the final, with **Sig McInnes** claiming the Light Welter Weight trophy. 2 Sqn had 2 wins under their belt with the Light Heavy Weight going to **Sig Mercer** and Heavy Weight going to **Sig Lawrie**. Best boxer was awarded to **Sig McInnes** of 1 Sqn and the most gallant boxer was awarded to the runner up of the Heavy Weight bout, **Sig Johnston** of 3 Sqn.

The Harrogate Cup boxing trophy and the Harrogate Cup were both won by 3 Sqn displaying yet again that techs can be great sportsman as well as being geeks.

The boxers were able to fight because of the dedication of the coaches **Cpl Pallis**, **Cpl Finister**, **Cpl Swanson** who trained 1 Sqn. **Cpl Naylor and Cpl Dinsdale** were working with 2 Sqn and **Cpl Mousley**, **Cpl Shipley** and **Cpl Redpath** coached 3 Sqn. A charity boxing event was held in Wigan for The Army Benevolent Fund. 11 Sig Regt fought Wigan ABC and the Army fought the North West and Scotland. Sadly, 11 Sig Regt walked away with no wins against the clearly more experienced civilian boxers. The Army on the other hand won all of their fights.

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Morrice**
SSM	**WO2 M Bell**

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER - *by Sig Watson*

On Saturday 15 December, 11 Sig Regt set off on what was a long drive to Zell am Zee in Austria in a minibus restricted to 65mph. The journey took around 22 hrs via the Euro Tunnel. The team we took included Phase 2 trainees and permanent staff.On arrival, we booked into Club Kitzsteinhorn Hostel in Zell am Zee, and got a glimpse of what was to come, with snowy white mountains and clear blue skies. Surprisingly it wasn't as cold as we expected. We all got scoff down us, squared our kit away and got some rest ready for the next day, our first day on the slopes.

On the Monday we were issued our kit and hopped on the minibus. After catching the cable cars to the top of the mountain, we were split into ability groups and went off to conduct trg lessons and practise our skills. We stayed in these groups for the majority of the trip unless you were showing potential or lack thereof. By the end of the week, we had all learnt a lot, adapted quite well and were beginning to find our ski legs. At the end of the day on Friday everyone enjoyed a nice hot mug of glüwein. By Week 4 we had all reached a competent level for racing and the learning curve started to slow down. It was race week and most people were excited and some apprehensive. The racing was a great experience and gave me an insight into a sport which I would previously have watched and admired from the comfort of my living room. I never thought I'd get the opportunity to participate at this level. The trg we received from the mil instructors was excellent and relaxed enough so that we could learn and improve, as well as enjoy it. I'm now looking forward to next year's competition and hope that my future unit enters a team so that I can defend my title of Ex MERCURY GLACIER Wooden Spoon Winner 2007.

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Jennings**
SSM	**WO2 G Padfield**

CHARITY WORK - *by Sig Allen*

In my short time at Blandford the amount of charity work that's been done is staggering. **Sig Vrioni-Himonas** of Lightning Tp, 3 Sqn took it upon himself to go around the camp selling wrist bands for 'Help for Heroes'! In just over a week he raised £200 and pretty much made the wrist band part of our uniform. Other successful events were bag packing at a local supermarket. This event raised well over £1000, as well as promoting the Royal Corp of Signals in Poole.

Ex TOPHAM HAT continues with great support from 11 Sig Regt with a small team of 3 Cpls and 4 Sigs from 3 Sqn deploying on the Swanage Railway near Swanage. After a lot of hard work and some sausage and chips, we'd managed to shore up a sizeable drainage ditch with some very heavy concrete sleepers. We'll be back on the railway again on the 23/24 of February with around 50 or 60 Sigs from the Regt to carry out a range of 'engineering' projects.

CHRISTMAS DINNER - *by Sig Wheatley*

We started rehearsing with **Cpl 'Redders' Redpath** for the Christmas carol service a few weeks prior to the event in the form of a morning sing song in the cold. Eventually it came to the night and the entire Regt gathered in the Gym for some chosen words and typical jokes from **Padre Hancock** – the outstanding Regtl chaplain. The hymns started with the Sqns and permanent staff competing against each other in a sing off, followed by a birthday celebration for the CO, **Lt Col JAG Langley**.

During the last week of work before Christmas leave, we all congregated in the cookhouse for the traditional Christmas dinner where all senior permanent staff 'waited on' for all Phase 2 and Phase 3 soldiers. A few cans and some flying food here and there accompanied a great meal which was later followed by a quick shower and change in order to head off to the Ibiza Bar for some dodgy entertainment. The night was brought to an end with the classic song of 'YMCA', in which everyone participated. Overall it was a great festive night – a perfect ending to another successful year.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

A fond farewell to **Cpl Lee Redpath** who leaves us for 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt and a welcome to **SSgt Flo Watts** who joins us from 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, taking over the role as Ulster Tp SSgt, replacing **SSgt Steve Davies** who has been moved to the Project SSgt slot in SHQ.

Also congratulations go out to **SSgt Mark Anderson** and **Jessica** on the arrival of their daughter **Poppy** and not forgetting our 2IC, **Capt Dave Palmer** and his wife **Lisa** on the arrival of their daughter **Libby**.

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

CO	**Lt Col TJ Carmichael**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) DR Taylor**

14 SIGNAL TROOP, OP TELIC

OC	**Capt A Stanger**

CHRISTMAS IN THE COB - *by LCpl Walsh*

All was quiet and there was no alarm but there was a bustling outside the Corimecs in the street. You could hear everyone waking up and walking past to the ablutions and saying "Merry Christmas" to each other as they passed. Walking outside you could see everyone getting ready for the 'Turkey Trot', which was the 5km run for the charity, 'Help for Heroes'. Loads of people were in fancy dress clothes, which ranged from a full Santa suit or a Christmas tree, to a bloke who used duct tape to tie an ornamental Christmas tree to his head. The start point was packed with over 500 people, all hyped up and ready to do the run. Some were there for fast times and others were there just to have a laugh and raise a bit of money for charity.

The run started and people in skimpy shorts and vests disappeared into the distance leaving a trail of dust over the fancy dress runners! There was a team of REME lads pushing a Range Rover LR3 round the whole course, cheering people on as they went past and getting cheered on by those running past. Once we got to the end, we posed for a Tp photo and then headed back to get some brunch. Sat in the scoff house you could hear that everyone was in high spirits, laughing and joking and wearing Christmas hats everywhere they went! The next thing to be looking forward to would be Christmas Dinner and it was a late one, so everyone had starved themselves for the day to make the most of it! Our Christmas boxes contained a variety of objects, from Russian teabags to a red reflective light strap and a karabiner with a compass on it! Then to top off the day, we all sat around and watched 'Borat' the movie – fun times on tour!

NEW YEAR IN THE DESERT - *by LCpl Dann*

On 26 December 07, **Sgt Richardson**, **LCpl Kirby** and I deployed out on Op CERTAIN SHIELD 7 with the RDG BG. Despite being out over the Christmas and New Year period, with temperatures dropping to below freezing during the night, we tried to make our time spent out in the desert amongst the camel spiders as festive as possible.

The Op was based in various Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Whilst stationary, we were able to sample the local cuisine from a small café serving kebabs and soft drinks at an extremely reasonable price. The presence of the BG in the area made a definite impact on the locals and a mini game of football between British and Iraqi Armed Forces added to the general goodwill throughout. All journeys were carried out in Bulldogs and every stop needed checks around the convoy. We were required to take part in these as well as providing top cover when necessary.

After a couple of days, we soon settled into the routine of shell-scrape digging and sandbag filling so there was not much rest for anyone in the early stages of entering FOB locations. Stagging on set during the night could only be described as painfully cold, so hot brews were a necessity to say the least. Night discipline was strictly enforced and some of the guys in the BG got their heads down before midnight on 31 December. However, New Year's Eve did not go unrecognised by the LEWT thanks to **LCpl Kirby** and his purchase of cigars from one of the souvenir shops in the COB prior to deployment. We didn't quite celebrate in style but a cigar each just before midnight managed to see us into the New Year nicely.

On New Year's Day, I learnt that it is the Fijian tradition to throw water over people, whether it be a cup or bucket full to symbolise the ending of one year and the start of a new. Of course a cold shower at 0600hrs is not what you want and our efforts to hide as soon as we opened our eyes failed miserably after we let our guard slip during breakfast.

The atmosphere within the FOBs was one of good spirits. Of course no one wants to spend Christmas and New Year out on the ground but the morale amongst the guys was kept at it's highest, even when the cold nights kicked in and the stag lists became finalised. We all returned safely back to the COB in the early hours of 4 January, leaving just enough time to turn our kit around and complete any outstanding admin task ready to head back out on the next Op.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj SO Cole**
SSM	**WO2 MS Morgan**

237 Sig Sqn are deployed throughout all areas of Helmand province on Op HERRICK 7. They have been deployed since September 07 and the boys have had an outstanding tour to date, providing intimate EW Sp to Inf commanders on a number of deliberate ops as well as the coverage provided at fixed operating bases. Morale is extremely high as the final month of the tour approaches and all are looking forward to getting home to family and friends.

The pace has picked up back at the rear party with Bowman trg, CorpsOSC preparation and the initial planning being carried out as the Sqn will provide the lead for the implementation of the Soothsayer EW eqpt.

Welcome to the new FofS, **WO2 Steve Colbeck** and his wife **Nicky** and to the new 2IC, **Capt Dave Galey** who joins via 245 Sig Sqn and a tour in Kabul.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON (EW) IN HELMAND PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

Electronic Warfare – What's it all about?

An endless vein of humour used by the uninitiated in the Corps and the wider Army when someone announces that they are part of 14 Sig Regt (EW) revolves around 2 common themes. The first is that we are actually listening to all of you, all of the time and the second is the belief that most of what we do is *'sneaky–beaky, couldn't possibly tell you etc '*. Now the first point tends to make some people a little nervous in our presence. The second point is partly true and can make it difficult for us to explain what we're up to on our current deployment in Afghanistan. However, for those who want to know a little more, here is a brief synopsis. Read on!

237 Sig Sqn (EW) are the Task Force Helmand EW Sqn deployed on Op HERRICK 7 in sp of 52 Inf Bde. Our Light and Medium EW Teams (LEWTs and MEWTs) are deployed throughout the AOR supporting the Coy and Sqn Groups. These include elements of 40 Cdo RM, the HCR, KRH, 1RGR, 2 YORKS, the SG and the COLD GDS. The Sqn has been involved in the planning and execution of every key Op of the Op HERRICK 7 deployment, including the dramatic re-taking of Musa Qal'eh. This was a particularly satisfying moment for the Sqn as it was there, on 27 August 2006, that **LCpl John Hetherington** was Killed in Action. As you will all know from the news, ops in Helmand Province are tough. For the Sqn it has dramatically brought home the lesson that all those serving in the Royal

Signals know – we are soldiers first. We must be prepared to fight and live alongside the teeth arms that we support as well as carry out our specialist role. So like any unit preparing for ops in Helmand, Pre-Deployment Trg (PDT) in our Core Trade Skills (in our case EW) was relentless. However, learning the lessons from previous deployments, we began to focus seriously upon basic soldiering skills, first aid, personal fitness and op shooting.

Our soldiering skills were essential during long periods in the field during the harsh Helmand winter. Not only to ensure personal admin but also to keep the Sqn credible in the eyes of the units we supported. We had a head start in these fields and regular readers of *The Wire* will remember the account of our adventures on Ex LION SUN – an ex that paid dividends in theatre. Mobile Operations Groups (MOGs) could last up to 8 weeks. Supplied only by air-drop, cutting kit down to the bare essentials was a skill quickly honed to extremes. For example **Sgt Justin Jenkin's** LEWT regularly deployed with 1 sleeping system between 2, which left more room for eqpt spares.

Putting to one side the recommendation that only 1 in 6 soldiers must be a Team Medic, we decided to up this significantly and by the time the Sqn deployed, over 65% had taken and passed the week long course. This proved to be an investment we got back in spades. For example, the BRF LEWT was involved in a double mine strike in which first aid skills provided by **LCpl Kevin Gunn** and **Sig Ryan Kearney** were invaluable in saving life and limb of fellow soldiers. You just never know when you'll need your skills as **Cpl 'Paddy' McDowell** and his team in Garmsir found out when they were presented with a particularly horrific task of stabilising 8 ANP soldiers (some of them mere boys) injured by a suicide attack, before loading them onto the Chinook bound for Bastion.

Fitness was crucial, and those teams deployed in the mountain Observation Posts above the Kajaki Dam, who had to re-supply themselves completely by foot learned that a soldier's fitness is a far cry from the 'body beautiful' approach of some gym bound characters. Fitness here was an essential tool to get the job done. If you didn't go and get your food and water, you'd be hungry and thirsty. If your arms hurt the first week carrying 50 cal ammo boxes but not the second, then you'd made progress! Meanwhile other LEWTs were tested beyond even **SSM Taff Morgan's** hardest tabs in the PDT. **LCpl John Britton** was part of the LEWT that 'yomped' (it's like tabbing, but harder) with 40 Cdo RM up a 1680m feature in the USV. Whilst individuals like **Cpl 'Slats' Slater** and **Sgt Karl Stubbs** worked with other units elsewhere in Afghanistan and were pushed to extremes, spending the dark Afghan nights very busy and active indeed! Wherever they served, all the Sqn came back leaner and with a greater degree of stamina and endurance. Some, for example **Sgt Martin Addison-Smith** and **YofS(EW) Chris Dunn** will be barely recognisable!

Finally, Operational Shooting was a skill that we practised endlessly but also the one that we have used the least. There have been unavoidable occasions of course and individuals such as **Sig 'Ads' Collins** have relied upon experience gained on **SSgt Gleave's** PDT ranges and used the full spectrum of 50 Cal, GPMG and SA80 with UGL to get themselves and their teams out of a tight spot.

237 Sqn are a very junior Sqn, the average age of all those deployed is only 26 and the LEWT and MEWT Comds are predominantly Cpl or ASgt rank. For example **Cpl 'Paddy' McDowell**, **Cpl Ben Carter**, **Cpl 'Dinger' Bell**, **Cpl Gaz Ward**, **Cpl Fowlkes** and **Cpl Jones** all led dets on ops usually tasked to a SSgt.

Despite this, the Corps can be very proud of how these young men and women operated within the fighting Coy Groups. The teams they commanded either operated in static, cramped locations or from vehs such as up-armoured 4-wheeled Pinzgauers, WMIKs and Vectors. Often they would be bounced around in the back of Warriors or CVRTs, expected to be up and working mins into a short halt, where those around them would be allowed to stretch their legs and make a brew. LEWTs had to pick up a unit's TTPs without fuss and adhere to them with no margin for error. The work was relentless and difficult and the operators always knew that if they didn't listen and concentrate all the time they may miss the vital piece of information.

WO2 Mortimer, Cpl Van Der Cruyssen, LCpl Dawe and Sig Kenworthy in the back of a VECTOR

One key element of the Sqn arsenal was its flexibility. Where possible, everyone had been trained to do each other's job during the PDT. This trg continued throughout the deployment and allowed us to force package as required and absorb last minute tasking. If only we were earning air-miles for travelling around theatre!

Movement in Helmand is a real problem but one that can be overcome with patience and cunning! The OC became a master at hitching lifts in order to visit the Dets (at one point arriving into FOB Delhi on the back decks of a CVRT). But it must be the Tech Team **Cpl Steve Lawton** and **Cpl 'Blackie' Black** under **Sgt Chris Lowe**, who surpassed any previous records. They travelled endlessly, often at short notice, living out of a day sack yet carrying and escorting huge knobbly bags to MOGs and FOBs in order to repair and service eqpt. It is testimony to their amazing improvisation and technical ability that the Sqn was maintained at full working capacity throughout the tour.

Of course it wasn't all a struggle at the front lines (wherever they were). Our Tech Sup Spec **Cpl Gordan Tait** worked tirelessly to

ensure the insatiable demand for EW spares, ammo and personal kit was forthcoming and together with **AYofS Cpl Dan Tucker** fought an equally important battle ensuring comms were maintained through the dedicated EW Data Comms Net.

Now some atmospherics, written by the soldiers working in the Dets:

Kajaki In Kajaki, the boys have risen to the challenge of supporting C Coy 40 Cdo and are producing excellent results and enjoying the 'views' of their labour. Regular Mortar, Javelin and .50 Cal engagements punctuate the early morning stillness or go on late into the night. When elements of the Sqn first arrived at Kajaki the sun was literally cracking the crags. However, in no time at all, the images of **LCpl Andy Sexton** sun worshipping in his (very wrong) thong were forgotten and the daily re-supply turned into an opportunity to keep warm rather than just a bit of phys'. Some have taken to the Kajaki diet and det routine more than most. When **LCpl 'Pete' Van Der Cruyssen** first offered to make dinner, all waited with barely concealed hunger. After 5 mins licking of lips he walked in proudly dishing out the fruit of his labours: Boil in the bag for everyone!

Bastion For some people the best thing about going on tour will be the new experiences, for some the money, for others just the medal. For **Sig Ryan Kearney**, it is all about size and you can't get the smile off his face now that he has actually found someone smaller than him - **Faiz** one of the locally employed civilians!

BRF LEWT According to J2, the Taliban believe: "When winter comes ISAF will go home and we will be successful", they obviously haven't spent much time on Sennybridge or Salisbury Plain during winter. We are still here, wrapped in an outstanding set of issued personal eqpt – the most surprisingly useful being the woollen wrist warmers.

Garmsir The EW det at FOB Delhi in Garmsir is the most southern AO that 237 Sqn work in. FOB Delhi is about 150km from the Afghanistan/Pakistan border and while we are here we are supporting B Coy 1 RGR – to be woken by the mixed sound of bagpipes and mortars now classes as just another 'normal' morning there. At the time of writing the LEWT is manned by **Sig Carl Johnson**, **Cpls Al Dye** and **Mark Issitt** and **LCpls James Sadler**, **Sarah Kain** and **'Woody' Woodland.** Garmsir is also a favourite hunting ground of the OC, who, if he is not in Bde or at the LEWT CP, may occasionally be found hatching plans under the expert guidance and experience of **WO2 Ed Mortimer** and **SSgt Steve Rimmer**.

FOB Delhi Garmsir

Some of the known and frequently used EF firing points are as little as 400m away. This is trench warfare that our great-grandfathers would have recognised and the various signs that have been erected in dug outs, such as 'welcome to the front line' add to the strange tableau. But no-one ever forgets that this is a deadly game. Rest assured readers, moral is high among the boys here... Det Comd, **Cpl Mark Issitt** has had a few bad hair days during his stay and is not enjoying the best sleep pattern, he shares a room with an RMP who snores so loudly that **Cpl Issitt's** only consolation is his assumption that the Taliban are kept awake too...

Lashkar Gah The Bde EW Coordination Cell (BEWCC) sits within the Bde HQ, based at the provincial capital, Lashkar Gar. Normally staffed by a crew of 7 (OC, OpsWO, IntWO, Analyst Staff and Radio Operators). It is here that much of the planning for the op role of EW and the analysis of information sent by the teams on the ground is achieved. Liaison with other staff branches is continuous. Information is also passed up the chain of command to the EW Cell at RC(S) and down into the LEWT CP based at Bastion. **Capt Tom Skinner**, usually to be found preaching EW to 40 Cdo in Camp Bastion, was installed for a short while in the BEWCC at Lashkar Gah. Whilst on a long night shift he discovered the following verse, subsequently attributed to a young Intelligence Analyst **LCpl Duncan Shaw**. **Capt Skinner** was so moved by the experience that he demanded it must be published. So here it is. And it is possibly the first ever 14 Sig Regt (EW) War Poem:

> Amazing BEWCC, how sweet the sound,
> Of Colonels and Majors milling around.
>
> Watching them all from my EW workstation,
> I am sure I can sense a mild desperation.
>
> The highlight of the day is the morning brief,
> Which the OC attends, to our relief.
>
> As I write this poem from within the wire,
> The INTWO scowls with considerable ire.
>
> I suppose I had better get back to work,
> It's Bingo in the NAAFI tonight, our only perk!

Back in Brawdy, where the Sqn Rear Party resides, family life has continued. Whilst on R&R, **Maj Steve Cole** returned to find a very talkative daughter and **Sgt Justin Jenkins** a brand new baby boy! Congratulations to him and his wife **Sharon**. Meanwhile **Cpl Tinsley's** little boy had grown ginger hair (he is very proud) and **Cpl Ben Carter's** girl **Bethany** now supports Everton. Finally, our deepest sympathies are with **WO2(AUSWO) Colin Quaife** on the sad passing of his mother whilst he was serving with us in Helmand.

For those of you that have made it all the way to the bottom of this article I hope that you have found it informative, honest and possibly even mildly entertaining. For those of you that want to know more about what we do, come and find out! For those of you that would rather not come all the way to Brawdy or Helmand, you'll have to wait for the next instalment from 226 Sqn who are deploying shortly. Oh, and by the way, I heard that!

224 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj S Roberts** Int Corps
SSM	**WO2 G Shuck**

The Sqn has seen many new faces arrive and a few regular faces disappear in the last 6 months. We welcome **Flt Lt Iain Logan** and **Diana** to the Sqn and we say goodbye to **Flt Lt John Cochrane** and **Laura**, but who knows when we will see **John** again as he seems to turn up when you least expect it. Other arrivals have been **SSgt Bernie Lovick**, **Sgt Graham Young**, **Sgt John Hetherington** just to name a few. Congratulations to **Sgt Michael McNelis** and **Julie** on the birth of their son, **Zak**.

EXERCISE DRAGON'S SPINNAKER - *by WO2(SSM) Shuck*

The 0300hrs start was too early for the majority of the group but after several cups of strong, caffeine laced coffee, we departed Digby in the minibus for JSASTC at Gosport. Along the way, **WO2(YofS(EW)) 'Mitch' Mitchell** attempted to quash any rumours of high winds taking boats out into uncharted waters. Within the group there was a mixture of experience, from total novice, of which I was one, to salty sea dogs. One thing was certain though and that was everyone was excited at the prospect of the challenges that we were to face in the coming week.

On arrival, all hands were put to the pumps; unloading food and personal eqpt onto the boat, receiving our safety brief on the actions taken if (God forbid!) there was an accident at sea. The boat we were assigned to was a 34ft Victoria named "*Placuna*". Bed spaces were small, but practical and required excellent "admin" as once you arose in the morning everything you owned was packed away into your bed space. This was something **LCpl Reece** did have some difficulties with, initially. The remainder of the first day was taken to get accustomed to terminologies used by ocean faring people and learn some vital knot tying. Most of the group picked up the basics quickly and confidence was brimming as everyone retired to bed for the first night on board.

Day 2 started in a more humane manner with the Skipper making eggs and bacon for the crew. The food was going to serve 2 purposes, the first being to prove that it was possible to make a fantastic meal on the dodgy looking stove and secondly to line the stomach, just in case the sea was a little choppy. Fortunately, on Day 1 none of the crew saw their digested food again; however there were some close calls once we started bobbing on the Solent. As we left the calm waters of Gosport and made our way out in the channel lanes, the wind started to pick up and the boat began to sway more vigorously. **Cpl 'Russ' Makinson** managed to take a photograph of the SSM looking out to sea. His face was completely drained of any blood and there was a look of horror as a wave came crashing over the lip of the deck. This scene was to re-occur throughout the week to different members of the crew. Our first destination was the port of Cowes, which was a small boating village situated on the south coast on the Isle of Wight. We were informed by the skipper that the distance 'as the crow flies' was approximately 6 miles, so would take 3 – 4 hrs with the tide and wind against us. We would at least get to our destination in daylight!

Our progress was affected by the strong wind and tides that were battering down onto every vessel in the Solent. When conditions dictate you cannot travel in a straight line, you must zigzag across the water. This procedure is known as "Gybing and Tacking" and does work even though you feel like you are marking time as you carry out the drills. It basically means you can steer the boat in a manner that uses the wind to its maximum effect. Arriving in daylight never did materialise and after 5 hrs on the water we slowly crawled into the port of Cowes. Day 1 was slowly drawing to an end and it wasn't until we finally had a warm shower and some even warmer food that we reflected on what we had achieved.

Days 3 and 4 saw the crew practising man overboard drills in some choppy but realistic conditions. On the helm was **LCpl Reece**, who took several attempts at steering the boat close enough to the dummy so that it could be retrieved with a large hook. Eventually, after some barracking from the crew, he managed to get within the required distance; so he didn't lose all of his street credibility. All of the crew took their turns at this drill and so by lunch time we were throwing the boat around with ease. The next drill we were introduced to was "bump and grind". This was the name given to the technique used to bring the boat alongside a jetty or bank, whereby you manoeuvre the boat into the tide and by increasing or decreasing the revs on the engine you should be able to move the boat into the bank. This proved not to be as straight forward as it sounded. But after some minor bumps and serious grinds we all felt satisfied that this should be left to the experts within the crew. The Skipper must have lost several strands of greying hair when his boat collided with a rather expensive looking deluxe "Stink Pot" but fortunately for us, the crew was not around to witness our "carry on cruising" antics. At the end of the day we were more than happy to go ashore and try and regain our land legs with the help of some frothy beer and chips. In fact one member of the crew really got carried away with the prospect of shore leave and spent the majority of the night throwing away his money in a casino. We know who you are but for now we will leave it to the imagination of the reader to guess. **Sgt 'Andy' Dove**, who had been on many an exped before, proved to be an excellent boats man and helped the crew with the drills and routine on the boat. In fact he enjoyed himself so much that he decided to stay on the boat for the second week to keep the B crew entertained. For **Sgt 'Graham' Young** this was his first week in the unit so managing to get away for a week's sailing so quickly must have been a great morale boost.

From the whole team, **WO2(SSM) Gaz Shuck**, **Sgt Graham Young**, **Sgt Andy Dove**, **Cpl Russ Makinson**, **Cpl Carice Allen** and **LCpl Tim Reece**, we would like to thank **Mitch** for a fantastic week and hopefully we will have the opportunity in the near future to get away sailing again.

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Aitken**
SSM	**WO2 A Minorczyk**

On return from our 6-month tour in Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 6, 245 Sig Sqn have been involved in a number of activities. The obvious were 'returning from tour' drinks on and off camp and some well-deserved downtime. On return from POTL the reconstitution of the Sqn took place. This is where Whiskey Tp took on the role of the armour as Armd Tp and Zulu Tp took on the role of the Lt Tp. Zulu also took on the responsibility of the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) capability.

Our first week back together as a whole Sqn was a MATTs and WHIPs week down in Penally Camp, which obviously included our own Sqn bar for the week and lots of entertainment in downtown Tenby. Our antics were caught on CCTV and the very kind bar staff reminded us of what we got up to by showing us the next day, very funny viewing. We also had our very own quiz night provided by **LCpl 'Alan' Balharry**, which saw 2 teams battling it to the end on a tiebreak.

On completion of MATTs and WHIPs, SLE Tp attended an SLE OPTAG course down in Folkestone. Obviously we stood out and attracted the wrong people down town. We also endured some horrendous weather and 'pay as you dine' for the first time, which left everyone borrowing money from each other to pay for breakfast.

From there SLE was deployed on Ex FIRST FLIGHT to test the callout procedure, this also included a Bowman plug up at South Cerney before returning back to sunny Brawdy. When we were deployed in Afghanistan, the Regt went through 'Bowmanisation', and this has meant that a few members of the Sqn have attended Bowman courses down in Blandford and also here at 14 Sig Regt (EW). 245 also played a good part in the Regtl ex this year, as enemy for the remaining 237 Sqn, 226 Sqn and HQ elements. Some good attacks from our lads and some good reactions from HQ Sqn that lead to the capture of **LCpl 'Tommy' Tucker** and **LCpl 'Tim' Kerr** at BEWCC who were under their control for the rest of the day.

Another good enemy attack saw **LCpl 'Eddie' Green** walk all the way into BEWCC's compound without being seen or even heard. As he entered the camp he placed a 'congratulations you have been contacted' card inside the portaloo before returning to the fence line. Only then did we start to open fire, well in **Eddie**! Nice work. We then bugged out before it was too late. On our getaway, members of HQ Sqn tried everyway to stop us. Making human barriers in the road and putting down some ferocious firepower. But **Eddie's** getaway driving was far too impressive to stop anyone and we got away unscathed.

The 245 volleyball campaign started in high hopes; soon to be dashed by the sheer height of the net. Over the period of the day we took part in 4 extremely close games; all meant fighting tooth and nail. The day was a complete success and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day and is looking forward to coming events in the CO's cup for a bit of redemption.

SGT BARRY KEEN'S MEMORIAL AUCTION - *by LCpl Bosher*

Under testing circumstances, **Sgt Barry Keen's** friends and colleagues of 245 Sig Sqn and the rest of 14 Sig Regt (EW) squeezed into a cosy Foxes Den in order to raise funds for **Baz Keen's** family. **Sgt Barry Keen's** mother had already requested that any funds raised should be donated back to the Regt, ensuring the troops benefited from any cash raised. Laid out on tables were **Baz's** military effects. People were talking and bustling around, the mood in the room was a happy one and everyone appeared ready for a good night of bidding.

Maj Aitken, OC 245 Sqn, made an opening address and the auction officially started. The floor was handed over to **Sgt Morrison**, the man with the hammer! **Baz's** belongings started to be displayed at the front of the room. Lot 1 was a DPM range day sack – "Who will start at £20?" The bidding got off to an hesitant start, no one wanting to peak too soon or run out of money. As the lots rolled through, the drink flowed and the bids became more and more generous and the funds began to rise.

Cpl Green was the lucky recipient of a white kettle, sold for £30. Two other bargains were also picked up; a metal mug for £50 to **Cpl Blake** and just to show we are fair and unbiased we even sold a foldable wash bowl to the RAF for £50, congratulations **Cpl New**. Slightly more glamorous was a donated signed Newcastle top which was fiercely contested for and sold for a whopping £380.

Just when everyone thought the auction was ready to end 2 exciting 'once in a lifetime' lots were entered. The new CO, **Lt Col Carmichael** and the RSM, **WO1 Taylor** offered their own personal 'services'..... dinner for 4 cooked by the CO and RSM at the CO's house. As everyone's hand went up, the bidding war began until just 2 were left to thrash it out. **Cpl Jowett** (on a Tech's wages) was desperately trying to out bid the combined buying power of **Cpl Tucker**, **Cpl Hickie**, **Cpl Green** and **Sig Thompson** and the two sides battled it out until a fantastic £500 bid was made and the hammer fell in favour of the quartet (unlucky **Cpl Jowett**). The *pièce de résistance* was yet to come – 'A day as RSM'. The rules of the RSM apprenticeship were laid out by **WO1 Taylor** and it wasn't just a day in is office making brews and polishing shells. Tea and toast and an evening meal in the Sgts and WOs Mess, a pace stick for the day, a WO1(RSM) wrist band for the day, maybe even some time on the drill square with some troops and generally an insight as to what the RSM does on a day to day basis. As people began to mutter and chat, it was clear a lot of Sgts saw this as their last chance. But the most intense bidding came from **LCpl 'Malibu' Stacey** and **LCpl 'Bonnie' Langford** who were eager to be in the RSM's office for all the right reasons, not for a 'two day' BPFA time! **LCpl Langford** stuck to his guns and was victorious with a bid of £320; I think both the RSM and **Bonnie** were happy with the result.

Overall I believe everyone had a good evening and we were certainly happy with the money raised. Thanks to the selfless bidding and determination of many the evening was an outstanding success; after the hammer fell on the last lot, the total amount raised was £4311.

Most importantly of all **Sgt Barry Keen** – gone but not forgotten.

US EXCHANGE OFFICER ON EXERCISE ICEBREAKER 07
- by Maj J Wagner

When I was posted to 14 Sig Regt (EW) in July of last year, one of the first things that I heard about was the British Army's AT programme. The US Army does not have a similar sports programme except for Olympic athletes and I decided that during my 2 year posting as the Regt's Senior Intelligence Officer, I should try to get out to at least a few AT events. I did not know at the time that I would soon have an opportunity to participate in a sport I had wanted to try since seeing it in the 2002 Winter Olympics: the luge.

After doing some research on the internet to find the Army Winter Sports Association's website and information on ICEBREAKER 07, I soon signed up, contacted the event's organizers and was on the list of participants who would head to Calgary in Alberta, Canada, on 8 January. When the big day came and the group was waiting at Heathrow waiting to get on the plane, everyone was really psyched up, ready to go and nervous as well. In addition to the luge, ICEBREAKER 07 also included service pers trying out the skeleton and the two-man bobsleigh for the first time. Regardless of whether participants were sliding feet first (luge), headfirst (skeleton), or sitting (bobsleigh), everyone was wondering, just a little, what we were in for when we got to Canada.

On our first full day in Canada, the coaches divided us into groups according to what event we would participate in. After signing the obligatory release forms absolving the Calgary Olympic Park from all liability in the event of an accident, we were fitted to an Olympic style sled and 'walked' the track. All winter sledding sports require athletes to memorize the track and walking the track is really a guided tour along the track by the coaches. The coaches talk athletes through the turns, telling them how and when to steer their sleds. It is important for athletes to listen to the coaches' advice carefully and catch on quickly to the techniques that they pass on. Each athlete only got 2 – 3 runs down the track per trg day, so we had to learn a lot during the daily walks of the track and mental imaging.
Our first day began at about the halfway point on the luge track and was intended to get us used to the feel of our sleds. The first time down the track was a complete adrenaline rush; it would be the same for the rest of the week as the coaches took us higher up the track. The feeling was incredible. Not only were we travelling at speeds up to 90 mph, but the G-forces (up to 4.5 g) on our necks and bodies were incredible, especially when our runs were clean (sled generally centred on the track with no bumps against the walls of the track) and we travelled even faster.

Jill in track

After the first day, the coaches took us up to the Junior Olympic start. Then we were above the kreisel, a near complete circle that is meant to slow athletes down as they enter the lower part of the track. As the saying in the US goes, 'Yeh, right!' It sure didn't feel like we slowed that much. As our group learned, the trickiest part was coming out of the kreisel. Poor timing guaranteed a bumpy ride through the remaining turns on the track and dumped more than one rider later in the week.

The 4th and 5th days were reserved for starts just below the actual starting ramp for the Olympic women's start. We never used the ramp on this track. An actual start in the luge, a combination that begins in the sitting position and combines hurling yourself forwards from two steel bars mounted above the track and then pushing off with a rapid scooting motion using spiked gloves, is an event unto itself. Not to worry though, because there was plenty of excitement to be had from where we were. From this position, we were now well above the straight in the track where the now famous Jamaican bobsleigh team

crashed in the 1988 Olympics. In contrast to our earlier starts on days 3 and 4, we were now hitting this straight at near top speeds; mistiming the turns prior to the straight meant we would hit the walls several times with both our shoulders and ankles. Despite the fact that we all wore padding in the right places (as well as helmets), almost everyone took home souvenirs of large, dark bruises on both shoulders, courtesy of the straight. The bumps were worth it though.

A clean run from this height on the track was incredible because the speed that your sleigh picked up was phenomenal. Holding your neck up was impossible and all you could do was tuck your head to the side and hold on!

After spending a week at Calgary, I would recommend ICEBREAKER 08 to anyone interested in trying any of the sliding disciplines, but especially the luge. The speed was a fantastic rush, the coaching was high quality and the event itself was well organized. Best of all, the afternoons were open for some skiing on the hill at the sports park or sight seeing in Calgary.

A YOUNG OFFICER'S ATTACHMENT - *by 2Lt Holmstrom*

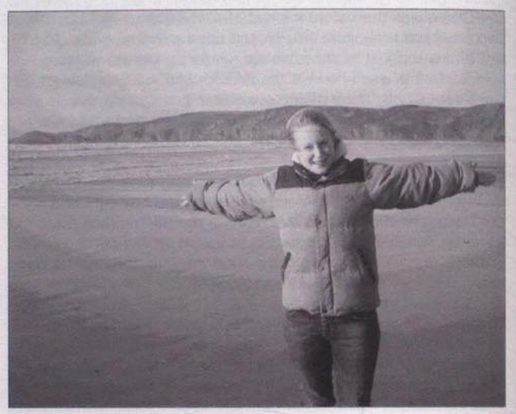
I stopped to 'double check' the map. I had a fair idea of where Cawdor Barracks was; (basically as South West in Wales as is physically possible) but felt somewhat concerned that I'd managed to reach the sea before even seeing signs to the place. Looking at the map didn't however help a great deal because it wasn't actually featured, so I thought I'd trust gut instinct, carry on a bit further, and see what lay ahead! Low and behold, just around the corner from the beach, which I soon came to learn was Newgale Beach, was 14 Sig Regt. Slightly in the back of beyond but with a beach only minutes away, I knew I was onto a winner. Endless possibilities for all sorts of fun!

That evening I settled into my room and went for a wander around the Mess. It appeared very empty but I put that down to it being early evening on a Sunday, most folk were probably on their way back from the weekend.

On Monday morning I met up with **Capt Jo Godfrey**, my mentor for the first few days of my attachment. **Jo** spent the day helping me to get my bearings around camp and giving me tips on who to salute, who is good to have onside and key personalities within the Regt. Making the move from calling a Sgt Maj: 'sir' to 'Sergeant Major' being one of the strangest adjustments.

What initially really struck me about 14 Sig Regt was the size of the place; it was huge considering how few people were about. I soon found out why it was so deserted. The role of the Regt is so unique, that there is a constant rotation out to both Afghanistan and Iraq, so they are never at full strength, always around 100 plus down. There is also such huge scope for AT and there are always people away on courses. The facilities at local Castlemartin are second to none; top of the range kit for a whole multitude of sports ranging from power boating to mountain biking. So if you're into AT or you want to get some more qualifications under your belt, Brawdy is definitely the place to be.

The Regt is keen on fitness, they only work a 4 day week but they do a good PT session 3 out of the 4 days and then if you fancy it, you can go x-country trg over lunch amongst other things. As with the Army in general, lack of fitness is frowned upon and if you're unlucky enough to get yourself onto remedial PT at this Regt, you'll find yourself on 9 x PT sessions per week! Interesting in a 4 day week. The CO's cup is also a big thing. I played the 'token girl' for 245 Sqn's volleyball team. Unfortunately we lost, possibly due to my horrendous playing; it is however, the taking part that counts!



2Lt Holmstrom enjoying the beach at Brawdy

I had a varied colourful stay, full of opportunities to get an idea of 'life in the real Army' outside the confines of Sandhurst. Over the 4 weeks I participated in many different activities including; running in the Royal Signals Cross Country; acting as 'safety' for an NBC shoot, listening to World briefs from various intelligence NCOs, participating in the legendary Brawdy vs Ship Inn Pub quiz, walking part of the scenic Pembrokeshire Coastal Path and a night out at the infamous Minnie's nightclub in Haverfordwest. Despite its location bearing quite an uncanny resemblance to the setting of the film '28 Days Later', Brawdy is one of the most beautiful places in the world..... on a good day and I had a really fantastic, insightful stay. I learnt a lot; not least about my inability to play volleyball! The 3 themes the new CO has installed; Get the job done, Get your career on track and Get a life, are a firm base on which I will now start to build my Army career.

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col JM Hodges**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

Elmpt Station is a far quieter place these days with a large element of 16 Sig Regt away on ops in Afghanistan. The Regt are now fully established in their role in sp of the Helmand Task Force and ISAF elements. With troops and dets situated all-over theatre, our soldiers are being tasked to conduct a huge variety of jobs in very different places and situations. To prepare for these wide ranging roles, each soldier has had to undergo a large amount of trg in the form of mil exs such as JAVELIN CRUSADER and trade-related courses. Concurrently, the Germany Based Elements contingent have been conducting the 'Bowmanisation' of the Regt and preparing for forthcoming exs in sp of the ARRC. Teams and individuals have also been away representing the Regt at winter sports.

EXERCISE JAVELIN CRUSADER

Just under a fortnight before the first troops set off for Afghanistan, the culmination of months of trg manifested itself in the form of Ex JAVELIN CRUSADER. Elmpt Station was turned into a miniature Helmand Province complete with Forward Operating Bases, as deploying soldiers were rigorously tested on their soldiering skills. Having received trg on how to deal with various scenarios that could occur, including dealing with the media, attacks on convoys and the treatment of casualties, this was the final opportunity to put these skills into practice in the safety of a trg environment. After several days of very little sleep and a lot of simulated enemy action, the ex finished with a drumhead service conducted by the padre, followed by the CO's final address. This ex has given us a great confidence boost and shown everyone that we are now ready to go to Afghanistan. We have trained for a variety of situations and now my Tp just wants to get out there and do our jobs." said **Lt Collins**, who will be deploying in support of ISAF Regional Command South.

Lashkar Gar Troop practise their convoy drills

DEPLOYABLE TROOP – KANDAHAR - *by Sig Chapman*

In the run up to OP HERRICK 8, 230 Sig Sqn had to undergo a lot of pre-deployment trg. It started with the OPTAG trg which provided information, ranging from the local customs in Afghanistan to the skills and drills required on the ground. To put the OPTAG trg into practice, there was a 2 day ex that allowed us to apply the trg to various scenarios, including mortar attacks, suicide bombers and the handling of the press. Ongoing throughout the trg period, there was the trade trg to be considered, with many soldiers going on specialist trg relevant to their jobs out in theatre. The Sqn also put on continuation trg which among other things covered duties of a sentry and mine awareness. All this trg culminated in the CO's Confirmation Ex. It was split into 2 parts, with the first 2 days incorporating some final trg of basic skills used on the ground such as veh and person searching. The final 2 days were scenario based and designed to test us on what we had learned. The sects were put under pressure with scenarios ranging from multiple casualty situations to suspected IEDs. To mark the end of a successful ex and trg period, the Padre held a Drum Head Service in the field. At the end of this the CO made his final address to us before deployment. With trg complete, the Sqn is looking forward to eventually heading into theatre and the challenges it will bring.

The Padre conducts the drumhead ceremony shortly before deployment

GERESHK TROOP – GERESHK - *by LCpl Taylor*

For the 27 soldiers and 1 officer of Gereshk Tp, the past few months have been a very busy time of almost constant trg, from basic soldiering and tradecraft up to OPTAG and confirmation exs prior to our deployment to the Helmand Valley on Op HERRICK 8.

When the Tp was first put together, many of us had never met – some guys had only just turned up to their first unit and told they were deploying. The trg schedule was predominantly made up of courses outside of camp and a lot of us (more so the operators) were moving from one place to another on a multitude of courses for the kit we will be operating in theatre with some of us spending more than 2 months out of unit. This unfortunately meant we still hadn't the chance to really bond as a Tp properly by the time OPTAG came around.

OPTAG was 2 days of briefings which, unlike my previous tour, I found very informative and took a lot on board from them. After a few more courses and additional confirmation trg we finally got our first ex together as a Tp on Ex JAVELIN CRUSADER. This 3 day ex was run by the Trg Wing and was designed as a confirmation of our skills and drills. The Tp toughed it through 3 days of hard serials designed to test our ability to react to mortars, contacts, IEDs and amongst other things a very hard focus on care under fire and battle casualty drills. By the end of the 3 days, we were all very pleased with what we had achieved as a Tp and had bonded really well together, to the point where we were confident in each other as well as ourselves. The Tp Comd and CO both added that they were more than confident that we could get the job done. The Tp was now ready to deploy deep into the Helmand Valley to do the jobs we had been trg so hard for.

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XI - *by Sig Chapman*

Five members of the Regt took part in the Corps Ski Camp and Championships this year in the Austrian Alps. We left Elmpt early one Saturday morning but only after we had managed to make sure everyone had their passport to hand....for the second time! After a gruelling 8 hr drive through Germany into Austria and on to Zell-Am-Zee, we eventually arrived at the hostel which would be home for the next month. After unpacking and settling in (for a whole 5 mins) 'Team 16' ventured into the town to get a feel for the culture and introduce ourselves to the locals. Monday was to be the start of a month's skiing, so we made the most of the time we had!

So the skiing began. We had a morning team ski and then in the afternoon we were seeded into groups according to our ability. Somehow 3 of us ended up in the same group with only the team captain, **Lt Swindell**, being left with the Beginners and **Cpl Taylor** flying the competitive flag in the more advanced group. During the first week, we were introduced to our instructors who took us off and taught us how to improve our skiing technique, from whatever level we were at. While **Lt Swindell** was learning the very basics and **Cpl Taylor** was going through a gruelling advanced session, the rest of us were having fun just skiing around, learning tricks and jumps and the occasional off piste adventure! In fact most of our group realised it is possible to have too much fun, after some very hard falls on very compact snow and ice – believe me they hurt! Shortly after that, most people thought it would be wise to invest in helmets! In the second week we learnt how to carve; this was not as easy as we thought. It took us a few falls, bumps and cuts until we got to grips with it but some people were naturals. Nevertheless it was all good fun and we could all talk about our track-suit soldier war stories in the bar that same night!

The whole team spent the middle weekend in Salzburg, the birth-place of Mozart, to gather some more of the Austrian culture. During the 3rd week the more advanced groups started practising on the slalom gates, so our instructors made sure we all had a go just so that we could get a taste for it. By this time some of the beginners were starting to catch up with some of the intermediates, so it was time for a Ski-Off! This particularly worried **Sig Chapman**, who was in real danger of being relegated from the team. Thankfully for him he just managed to hold on to his place by the skin of his teeth. On the Thursday of that week the course was prepared for race week. All of the fencing went up and so did the gates. On Friday morning we had a seeding race,

to find out where our starting positions would be on the Monday, and by Friday night the results were on the wall in the corridor! Celebration and commiseration drinks were called for all round!

Race Week was then upon us. The week many people had been waiting for, while others had hoped it would never come. **Sig Allen** had thankfully recovered from a minor injury at the end of the previous week and 'Team 16' was ready for battle! Two races each per day at first does not sound too much but factor in all the admin and marshalling duties that go along with that and the hours do mount up. It was not an easy week by any means.

At the conclusion of Race Week, the whole team had improved and moved up the seeding list but unfortunately, none of us had done quite enough to claim a prize. To conclude the ex there was a presentation on the final Thursday night, where awards were given to the category winners as well as the most improved skiers. Unfortunately 'Team 16' did not win anything this year but all had improved their skiing vastly over the 4 weeks and we also managed to have a good time. There's always next year!

EXERCISE RACING ICE - *by Sig Longlands*

I had only just taken up the discipline of Luge before getting the opportunity to participate in Ex RACING ICE. This was held in Winterberg, Germany. When I first saw the track, my thoughts were a mixture of fear and excitement. With most of the track being down hill and the top speed for the track being recorded at 140 kph, this would mean I would be on the very edge of my abilities. Having fractured my foot in the last race in Canada a month before, I was especially concerned but soon conquered those fears.

On the day of arrival we got settled into the hotel which was located 5 mins away from the track and then got the sleds unpacked from the trailer and put them in a building near to where we would be starting from. The next day we did our track walk with our coach, **Mike Howard**, showing us where and where not we needed to steer, when we were sliding and when to let the sled do its thing (which for me was crashing a fair bit).

An hour or so after we did our track walk, we were all ready to go with padding and sleds ready. We had our first run from half way up the track leaving us to navigate our way down this very thin track (about a meter wide). It took us around 29.5 to 32.1 secs to finish with me constantly coming last, unless someone crashed which was not that often. From halfway down the track we were reaching speeds of 100 kph. On the second day we started a bit higher up the track from the beginning of Corner 4, which should have taken us around 57.4 secs for the quickest or 59.4 for me when I came last again. We did 3 runs that day and I was struggling with a couple of corners which made me crash and not finish twice making it a bad day for me.

On Day 3 we started from the same spot as the day before and we started to get a bit quicker, reaching speeds of 106.5 kpmh for the quickest person. I personally was doing around a 105 kph run. Day 4 and 5 were not so brilliant either, with me crashing a few times and managing to stop right in front of my coach and the medic. By Day 6, the day before race day, we started going off the ramp which I was a bit anxious about. Even our coach, a former professional, said he had trouble getting round the first corner after the ramp and said that he had come off his sled a couple of times. So getting it right was imperative because if you lose time up the top of the track then it would be near impossible to do well. That day I was struggling with the middle of the track but in the first few splits on the 2 runs we did, I was in the lead for the first time all week. Later in the track I had some difficulties turning which put me back to 4th on the first and 6th on the next run.

Sig Longlands launches himself on a run that saw him hit speeds in excess of 100kph

Race day was upon us and the conditions were the same as they had been all week; raining and foggy with a bit of wind. We were last on that day, with the bobsleighs going first and then the bob skeletons. I was to go 5th and on watching those before me on the monitor, I felt very confident that I had a chance of winning as the favourites had all made mistakes by being overly-aggressive. So on my first run, I went for the biggest pull on the bars to get me started and this worked for the first 3 splits, where I was lying quickest until I crashed and came off the sled. I then managed to get back on but for the final corner you need some speed to get up the hill but because I had crashed I did not have enough. I had to get off the sled and was unable to finish. The second run went far better because I finished. I was 5th quickest overall.

Later that evening we had the presentation where the awards were handed out. I did not win anything...not even for the most spectacular crash which went to a bob skeleton who went into a corner too late, slid along the roof and did a barrel roll in the air. I'm pretty sure I was a close second.

21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT)

CO	**Lt Col DA Craft**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) S Mayell**

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS - *by Sgt Eaves*

Since December, Regtl Ops has focused on supporting the 16 Air Asslt (AA) Bde Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) and planning for Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER, which is the Regt's CT3 level ex. There has been some time for the team to get out the office. **Maj Ian Ballantyne** and **Capt Dave Coffey** deployed on a recce to Op HERRICK to conduct a technical overview of the ICS delivered by JHF (A) HQ and spread some Christmas joy. They returned with **WO1(YofS) Dave Thomas** who had been deployed with 52 Inf Bde in Lashkar Gah for 2 months helping out as the Bde Yeoman. There has been an addition to the team with **Mrs Jenna Turner** taking over as the new PVRO Clerk. This has reduced the workload of the Ops SNCO; just in time for **Sgt Dawn Oakes** to leave for an internal posting to Hotel Tp; she is replaced by **Sgt Ian Fisher**. Welcome to the new arrivals and goodbye to **Dawn**.

Sgt Ian Fisher quickly got into step by deploying on a recce to Morocco for a JHF ex at the end of the year. With all the comings and goings, **Capt Rick Carley** and **Sgt Phil Eaves** have not been able to escape but have been the lynchpin of the team. With Regtl Ops fully manned, we were ready for the 16 AA Bde MRX, Regtl exs and supporting the Op TELIC 12 MRX in Germany as well as driving the Sqns forward with Bowman.

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Johnston**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Pollock**

As the Christmas leave drew closer, we closed the Camp on a high note with **Sig Zanone** passing out from his PTI Course, more to follow on that, and the Regtl Ski Team coming back from a hard earned holiday skiing! We re-emerged from our leave slumber and got back on our hamster wheels and started running again. Welcome 2008! The Sqn has already got up to a lot this year. We provided Real Life Sp to 16 AA Bde MRX for their deployment in April at Westdown Camp, while conducting Pre-Deployment Trg on Sennybridge for Regtl pers. The Regt's T&S budget is taking a hammering at the moment as the HQ Comd Team keep flying to Scotland to recce the Munro's for this year's Lanyard Trophy. It's been a busy year already. So a warning to anyone due posting here shortly, in the words of the Cub Scouts, be prepared!

MY PTI ADVENTURE - *by Sig Zanone*

Imagine yourself sat in HQ MT covering Duty Driver and minding your own business when your Tp SSgt says: "You expressed an interest in doing your PTI course didn't you?" If this happens to you, then don't reply: "Yeah would love to." Just keep your mouth shut.

Two days after proving to the 2IC that I could do 100 press-ups in a 'oner', I was packing my bags to go to Aldershot the home of the PTI School. I tried to get as much trg done as I could in those days This mainly involved drinking heavily and eating lots of pies. This had been the trg regime of all the other 21 Sig Regt candidates in the past, so I figured it must work. I was very apprehensive as I had heard so many horror stories. I tipped up at Hammersley Barracks and soon found out that the first week would be the hardest. During the first week the course lost 52 candidates but the guys that were instructing the course ensured that we had a good laugh despite the massive amount of PT we were doing. My biggest problem in fact was digesting the not-so-fantastic food that we were served after long hard days, learning huge amounts of information and doing even more PT.

Overall the course was long (12 weeks in total) and intense but I certainly got fit and now proudly wear my crossed swords. If you are thinking about doing this I would highly recommend it because it is achievable. To any who set their sights; yes the pies did help... not!

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER 14 NOVEMBER – 14 DECEMBER 07 - *by Cpl Day*

Ex MERCURY GLACIER was a chance for 21 Sig Regt to get known again after a long absence from the Corps Ski Camp. The team, consisting of **Maj Bee Bryan, WO2(YofS) 'Pat' Patrick, Cpl Kate Hopkinson** and **LCpl Ryan Claughton** deployed to Zell Am See in Austria but the long minibus journey nearly came to a grinding halt as the driver, who shall remain nameless (but he is a YofS), nearly missed a vital fuel stop. Once there we met up with the newly posted **Cpl Chris Day** who had already been there for a week.

On our arrival we were greeted with plenty of fresh snow which came in handy for our trg sessions. For most of the team the first few days were hard going with some spectacular crashes and plenty of laughter but we recovered well and all found our ski legs again.

The seeding races were a great success with all the team members achieving 2 clean runs. **WO2(YofS) Patrick** reached his peak and managed 21st in his first run and 20th in his second. Pity he couldn't continue this way.

In the Grand Slalom (GS) Individual Race we again did very well with **Cpl Day** in 3rd, **Maj Bryan** in 14th, **LCpl Claughton** in 23rd, **WO2(YofS) Patrick** in 25th and **Cpl Kate Hopkinson** in 32nd. We then competed in the GS Team Event in which we managed to gain a respectable 3rd place overall.

The Slalom Individual event saw **Maj Bryan** have a fantastic run up until the point she was disqualified for missing a gate.

Maj Bee Bryan, Cpl Chris Day, Cpl Kate Hopkinson, LCpl Ryan Claughton and WO2(YofS) 'Pat' Patrick show off their new silverware

However, the rest of the team performed well and we managed another 3rd place.

Overall, this was a very successful ski camp for the team and has put the Regt back on the map. Special mentions should be made for **Cpl Hopkinson** who won the Female Combination Championship and **Cpl Day** who came 2nd in the Male Combination Championship.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B Bryan**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Smith**

220 Sig Sqn hit the ground running following a much needed break over the Christmas and New Year period. We welcome the new faces of **Sgt Holroyd**, **Cpl Andrews**, **LCpl Vayle**, **Sig Parris** and **Sig Wardley** and bid farewell and good luck to **LCpl Haworth** and **Sig Milburn** who are both posted to 216 Sig Sqn ready for deployment on Op HERRICK 8.

For most of January and the start of February the Sqn was tasked to provide sp to the HICON at the 16 Bde MRX, which involved almost every member of the Sqn at some level. From the build pre-ex to the 3 weeks of ex, Sqn pers presented themselves extremely well. The professional attitude shown throughout resulted in a very smoothly run HQ, where a good working relationship was developed between the staff and soldiers. During this busy start to the year, **WO2(YofS) 'Pat' Patrick** and **Lt Matt Tremelling** still managed to squeeze in a helicopter handling ex on the new Ex PUMA SCORPION 1.

EXERCISE PUMA SCORPION 1 - *by Lt Tremelling*

Ex PUMA SCORPION 1 brought together 33 (Puma) Sqn from RAF Benson and 220 Sig Sqn for night time trg in and around Colerne. On a cold but clear Wednesday afternoon, dets from Golf, Hotel, and India Tps deployed onto Colerne Airfield and prepared for the arrival of 2 helicopters from 33 Sqn RAF. At exactly 1630hrs, 2 x Puma helicopters came into view just above the horizon and landed on the football pitch. Following a brief for all pers by **WO2(YofS) Patrick** and a cup of tea for the pilots, the airlifts began. The plan was ambitious, to practise both ground troops and the aircrew in Ground to Air (G2A) comms, different Helicopter Landings Site (HLS) marking methods, troop embarkation and disembarkation drills, CASEVAC drills, and under slung load trg. All the various drills were done during the day and at night, both white and black light methods were practised.

The helicopters were completely at the 'mercy' of the ground call signs and reactive to tasking. **Sgt 'Oz' Osmond** led the dets on the ground when rigging and connecting the trailer used as the under slung load. **WO2(YofS) Patrick**, drawing on his experience of working with 33 Squadron in Iraq, threw his own serials into the mix, by calling "contact on the HLS!" as the Puma was on it's

final approach. These serials tested the pilots' reactions and drills with their low flying skills coming into play.

The sound of helicopters around the area was an excellent reminder for the troops that Air Support is the main role of 21 Sig Regt and even though it was cold and dark, everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. The same could not be said for all of the local community, some of whom took exception to having to turn the volume on their televisions up to watch that night's episode of Coronation Street.

As the det comds grew more comfortable tasking the pilots, the serials came thick and fast. Det crews who were not being used were loaded onto the Pumas as PAX and were treated to flights around the local area, much to everyone's enjoyment. **WO2(SSM) Alex Smith** was given a tour of Wiltshire by night and enjoyed surveying his domain.

220 Sig Sqn's **Cpl 'Doc' Foster, Sig Baige** and others like them, who had been on ops with the Joint Helicopter Force in Afghanistan and Iraq, were impressed with the trg that had been laid on. New arrivals to the Sqn like **Sig Wardley** straight from Phase 2 trg at RSS Blandford, were excited to be involved with the aircraft on only his second day at work.

Ex PUMA SCORPION 1 was the first of many PUMA SCORPION trg days involving elements of 220 Sig Sqn and Joint Helicopter Command's Sp Helicopters and exs will continue to build on skills needed for the Regt's Air Sp role.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING - *by 2lt Pirt*

Early in January, members of 21 Sig Regt preparing to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan were dispatched to SENTA for their live firing and battle skills trg package. This package was produced in order to ensure that our soldiers are even better prepared for the rigours and trials of ops. Soldiers received lessons covering; wpn ranges, eqpt familiarisation, battle skills, and theatre specific presentations. Following an APWT to ensure individuals could still shoot straight, a daily progression followed working from an individual battle skills range, up to groups of 4 coordinating pairs fire and manoeuvre up a wet and windy hill with some conveniently sited water features. Concurrent activities had everyone gaining experience of GPMG wpn handling, PRC 506 and PRC 117 operation.

Lessons on VCPs and reactions to ambush put a mix of individuals together in unfamiliar groups and gave JNCOs good chance to test their leadership abilities. They also provided a valuable lesson in basic skills and drills, that could ultimately give someone the confidence to act decisively in difficult situations, which might be experienced on tour. Evening presentations about life in theatre from Tp Comds recently returned from theatre, gave everyone an insight into daily life. Helpful tips on what to take and leave behind were also well received.

LCpl 'Tank' Morgan looking very pleased with himself after another successful day 'sweating' on the ranges

Friday's activity was a GPMG range that rounded off a cold, wet, windy and yet by most accounts a very enjoyable and rewarding week that clearly demonstrated its usefulness to those involved and those who visited during the week. The success of this trg vindicated all the hard work put in by the Trg Wing staff and will no doubt support the inclusion of this package as a regular part of the Regt's calendar.

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj I Blower MBE**
SSM **WO2(SSM) S Lithgow**

The Sqn is all back in after an arduous Christmas leave period where every body took the opportunity to recharge and get ready for a busy New Year. We've welcomed some new faces into the Sqn and hope they'll adjust to the pace of life, though we always try to temper this with some fun stuff too! We've had a busy few months already this year working towards 16 AA Bde's MRX as well as Ex RED BEAUFIGHTER at the beginning of March. True to form though, we've made sure that there's some AT in the pipeline and have even sent a few off to Norway to build snowmen, more about them later.

EXERCISE CLOCKWORK - *by LCpl Toppin*

With our brand-spanking new cold weather kit bulging out of our bags, **Flt Sgt Jarvis, Sig Glover** and I left RAF Brize Norton for Norway, where we were guaranteed we'd see some snow. After what seemed a very long 3 hrs, we landed into what looked like the cover of a Christmas card but was actually the town of Bardufoss. Having arrived in the northern region of Norway, we were ready to begin Ex CLOCKWORK to get trained up in cold weather survival and of course build a few snowmen! We received our arrivals brief during which we were promised it was going to get colder and that we'd forget what the sun looked like because we weren't going to see it for a month.

For the first 4 days the biggest threat for us wasn't hypothermia but death from PowerPoint as we were given lessons, lectures and demonstrations on how to prepare for and survive in Arctic conditions. The 5th day was far more interesting as we were divided into groups and boarded a helicopter using the Arctic Huddle technique, which I was quite dubious about to begin with, then deployed on to the Trg Area. We spent our first day setting up our tents and keeping warm and spent a lot of time in our sleeping bags, which was fine by me. One unusual job we had to keep doing throughout the night was brushing the snow off the tent. This was quite important because if we didn't do this then it would collapse on top of us. Still it wasn't fun getting out of our sleeping bags and stepping out into -20°.

The next day we concentrated on learning how to navigate and manoeuvre around mountainous terrain. It was at this moment that I realised that packing absolutely every bit of warm kit I had might have been a mistake, as it meant that I was carrying about double the weight of the others. On top of this I was the first to be nominated to pull/drag the pulk; this was basically all our stores and our tent which along with all my personal kit meant I kept pretty warm. In fact it got to a point where we had to stop and actually start removing layers of clothing. Something I didn't think I'd be doing when I was surrounded by snow.

The final day of our cold weather course saw us operating tactically, using sentries and camouflage. I lucked in on the sentry duty by getting to do an hour and a half stag as opposed to half an hour because we were attacked and my replacement had to go out on patrol. We left our camp after this and were forced to build shelters from what we could, so we chopped down trees which we used for fuel as well as shelter and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. This was the end of our cold weather trg but we stayed on in Norway providing ground to air comms in sp of a naval ex which proved to be good trade trg. I enjoyed by time in Norway but was glad to get back to the UK where I could see my family and friends and not worry too much about hypothermia. I'm glad now though that I can say to my friends who I catch complaining about the weather: 'Well you think this is cold...."

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE MISSION REHEARSAL EXERCISE
- by LCpl Higgins

The first day of the ex was the setup phase and at 0600hrs on a freezing cold winter morning, AOCC (L) deployed from

Netheravon to Westdown Camp in Salisbury to take part in 16 AA Bde MRX. The AOCC (L)'s role during the ex was to provide close air sp to Forward Air Controllers on the ground and to assist in the safety of aircraft checking in and out of the trg area.

On Day 1, **LCpl Morgan** and I were tasked with setting up all the comms eqpt in order to provide the AOCC (L) staff secure SATCOM and UHF capabilities. This included setting up masts and remoting the PRC 117 into the HQ. After testing comms, we realized that everyone using comms eqpt near our location were on much higher power than us, which meant that none of our eqpt worked.

A few hours of trying one thing after the other brought us no joy, so we had to do the one thing that signallers dread and we moved location. We chose well and all comms were finally in and working. No sooner had we finished then the HQ began filling up. **Lt Harrison** decided another net needed setting up, though this did not impress the many staff officers whose desks we were trampling all over to lay cable.

Once the comms were setup and working, things slowed down a little. After sitting in the Pinzgaur for 12 hrs a day, the highlights of the ex were watching an SAC trying not to be embarrassed walking past a platoon of paratroopers as they all growled at her and the SO2 who would come running out saying we needed to "go mobile", so he could see the aircraft coming in and guess what type it was.

The second week of the ex was a lot busier and there were a lot more aircraft coming onto the trg area ('Go Mobile!') so this meant even earlier mornings and later nights, which was quite tiring. Everyone received some good trg and it's always nice to be out of camp isn't it?

XXII 22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col ND Fraser**
A/RSM **WO2(RQMS) Combe**

VISIT OF BRIG AP BRISTOW, COMD 1 SIG BDE

The Regt welcomed the new Bde Comd during his first visit to MOD Stafford; a busy visit which concluded with a Regtl Dinner in the Officers Mess. For the record and to dispel any 'unfounded' myths that **Col Graham Norton** (DComd 1 Sig Bde) does not possess a wallet – it was noted that he found it in him to buy a round of drinks (a bottle of port, at least)! Other highlights of the visit included a medals presentation in the WOs and Sgts Mess; **Capt Tom Lappin** received the Meritorious Service Medal and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals were awarded to **SSgt(FofS) Vishal Pun, SSgt(YofS) Lamb, SSgt Luke, Sgts Dowson, Jeanne** and **Kubirkumar Limbu** and Operational Service Medals were awarded to **Sgts Colbert** and **Lloyd**. It was also nice to see **Maj Al Long** and **Maj Tim Blackmore**, the COS and DCOS of 1 Sig Bde, who accompanied the Comd throughout his visit.

Brig AP Bristow with the medal recipients

COMARRC CHANGE OF COMMAND
- by LCpL Ghanendra Jimee

Before going on long leave at the close of 2007, 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn had an opportunity to bring the year to a poignant conclusion by taking part in the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Change of Command Parade at Rheindahlen in Germany. On 13 December 2007, **Lt Gen Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO** (outgoing COMARRC) handed over command to **Lt Gen A R D Sheriff CBE** during a spectacular ceremony which was graced with the presence of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), **Gen John Craddock** and mil contingents from 17 nations, all of whom were in their finest uniform. Needless to say, the soldiers from 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn stood out as the smartest of a very fine bunch. All in all, a cracking end to the year.

COMARRC inspecting 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn at the Change of Command Parade on 13 December 2007

BRINGING FALCON INTO SERVICE
- by Capt Graham Clarke

Tasked with providing the FALCON Implementation Team (FIT), 22 Sig Regt has for some time now been looking firmly to the future, while continuing to deliver current capability at full throttle. OC FIT and (also) OC 217 Sig Sqn, **Maj Steve Abram** is now wholly in the driving seat, offering a focus for the contributions from CSDC, O & D branches and BAe Systems. 22 Sig Regt and BAe Systems have nurtured an excellent working relationship and exchange visits took place in January 2008, ironing out much of the detail and managing expectation from both perspectives. Of particular note, thanks largely to the invaluable support from the likes of **Lorna Cross** and **Kieron Durick** in the APC, the team manning is shaping up nicely and the FIT looks set to form jointly in Blandford and Stafford during the first week or so of April 2008. Amongst the first to be posted in (assigned in JPA parlance!) are **Sgts Chichester** and **Barnard**, currently of 30 Sig Regt. They join an established team from 22 Sig Regt, from which much of the manning has been drawn.

END OF AN ERA FOR 222 SIGNAL SQUADRON!

Freshly recovered from a trg sp task for 16 Air Assault (AA) Bde's Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) on Salisbury Plain, 222 Sig Sqn now look gleefully to a future filled with FALCON and void of Ptarmigan. Hurray, I hear? However where one story ends, another begins and this is unfortunately the way of things for 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn, who will now shoulder the brunt of trg sp tasks whilst 222 Sig Sqn deploy on Op HERRICK and then take receipt of the first tranche of FALCON.

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR BADMINTON - *by Sgt Mohan*

Competing strongly in 3 major competitions, the Army Championships, Royal Signals Championship and 5 Div Championship, 22 Sig Regt's Badminton Team closed the 2007 season with a wheelbarrow full of silverware. In both the Army and Royal Signals Championships, the Regt claimed the Unit Team Event Runners-Up prize but they finally found their form during the 5 Div tournament, where they claimed top prize. In addition, from the Army championships, **SSgt Gagan Thapa** and **Sgt Mohan Gurung** returned as the Unit Doubles Runners Up. New to the game, **Cpl Nicky Dodgson** won the Female Novice event as well as the Plate Competition and **LCpl Anna Gailey** was Female Novice Runner-Up. At the Royal Signals tournament, **SSgt Gagan** and **Sgt Mohan** won the Veterans event. **Cpl Nicky Dodgson** took the Female title with **LCpl Emma Chapplow** as Runner-Up. The 2 of them then completed the double by taking the Doubles title as well. **Sgt Mohan** and **LCpl Bhim** won the 5 Div Doubles Tournament, **Sgt Mohan** having already secured the Singles title. Notably, **SSgt Gagan** and **Sgt Mohan** have been selected to represent Corps in the Inter-Corps Badminton Championship in 2008. It therefore goes without saying that 22 Sig Regt Badminton Team is certainly one to watch for 2008!

22 Sig Regt's Badminton Team with their season's prizes

THE ALL-CONQUERING FIRST ELEVEN

Continuing the form that saw them lift the Corps trophy in 2007, the Regtl Football Team has just earned a place in the final of the West Midlands Inter Service Challenge Cup, taking place on 19 March 08 in Cosford. Keep up the good work lads.

SOCIAL

After an extremely testing year (making and breaking stuff?), Eng Sp Tp, which is headed up by **WO1(FofS) Claxton** and **SSgt Dear**, had their Tp outing, centred around Seniors *v* Juniors ten-pin bowling. Needless to say, much was at stake. The first frame was a white wash for the Seniors, although the Juniors' scores were consistent (except for **LCpl Blacker**, who scored a mighty 43 in his first frame). Fairly and convincingly beaten, the Juniors were quick to claim foul play, stating that they had been unfairly handicapped when **LCpl Blacker** was assigned to their team! Chin up lads. A few members of the Regt cleared their diaries for the afternoon of Monday 28 January in order to partake in a session of simulated sky diving at Airkix in Milton Keynes. The activity, which was made possible courtesy of 18 Sig Regt, proved to be great fun and not at all educational. **2Lt Pete Crawley** led by example throughout, highlighting to **2Lt Elliot Moore**, **Sig Sullivan** and **LCpl Chin** the eternal truth that troop commanding is more about enthusiasm than talent! Fortunately the Adjt, **Capt Graham Clarke** drew much of the fire from **Pete Crawley**, by continually crashing head-first into the glass walls.

WELCOME AND FAREWELL

Eng Sp Tp says goodbye to **LCpl Wood** and **LCpl Wilson**, who will both be sorely missed. To replace them, **Cpls Emma Bond** and **Kelly Blair** have hit the ground running and **Cpl Blair** is already sorting out the AESP 'library' and **Cpl Bond**, the R&I. Welcome.

The Regtl MT extends a warm welcome to **Cpl Rob McEwan** from Blandford, who is no longer bullet-proof as he is no longer the SOinC(A)'s driver. Welcome back to the real world! A welcome also goes out to the 3 kids; **Sigs Davis**, **Foster-William** and **Lyth** who have arrived straight from Blandford. Keep your head down and you too could drive the SOinC(A) one day. 222 Sig Sqn were sad to lose **SSgt Lovick**, who eventually left for RAF Digby after a delay with his clearances (due to his dodgy past?). He has been replaced by **SSgt Rob Luke**, who returned from the Falkland Islands to reclaim the steering wheel of Golf Tp. Golf Tp also bids farewell to **LCpl Adam Winchurch** who leaves shortly to commence an intensive burger-flipping apprenticeship at McDonalds. Further welcomes go out to **Sig Brown**, **LCpl Wilson** and **Sig Glasby**.

LOOK FORWARD

The immediate future is crammed full of activity but the obvious highlights are the Regtl Battle Camp (last week February, first week March), Ex EXECUTIVE STRETCH (2 April) and the Freedom of Stafford Parade (19 April).

TRIBUTE TO OUTGOING OIC WIRE NOTES
- by Capt Graham Clarke

2Lt Pete Crawley has recently 'unburdened' himself of the responsibility for preparing the Regt's Wire Note submissions. His tenure as 'Mr WIRE' was brought to a close as the consequence of a 'smear' campaign (led by his successor), which set out to prove that **2Lt Crawley** was in fact becoming too proficient at the preparation of the notes, thereby reducing to zero his inflow of extras and leaving a veritable chasm in the monthly Orderly Officer plot. **Pete** has now been reassigned to a new task, about which he knows nothing. Well done **Pete**!

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT

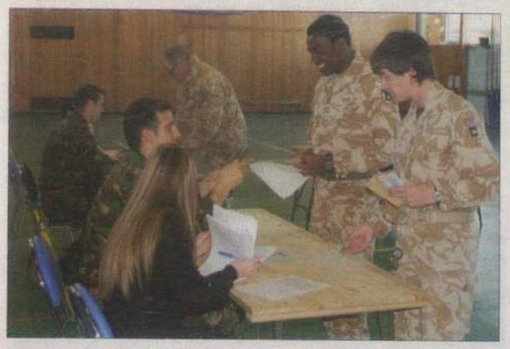
CO **Lt Col C Ford**
RSM **WO1(RSM) D Brett**

Life within the Regt continues at a pace, as well as supporting those deployed on Op HERRICK and GRIMES, the regular inspection teams have descended upon Bramcote. Under the watchful eyes of the MTO, **Capt Tol**, **WO1(ASM/RSM) Smith** and **SSgt(FofS) Rup** the Regt prepared itself for ECI. All the hard work which those who did not deploy put into the inspection reaped great rewards as the Regt achieved a 'Green'. The standard has now been set for the Sqns when they finally return from Op HERRICK. Although a little belated, the Regt would now like to welcome the new QM (A) and 2IC Regt **Maj Chris Hymas** and his wife **Sue** – we all hope you have a relaxing time at Bramcote and ease into the work slowly.

The final Families Sunday lunch took place on 20 January 08 and once again it was very well supported and a great success. The Regt would like to thank **Mr Alan McClelland** from the Army Welfare Service who bravely briefed those attending the lunch on what to expect when their loved ones return from Afghanistan. Lets just say when he mentioned that they may under perform when they get back was met by a few dirty laughs by certain wives.

The Families Sunday Lunch

Finally hot of the press Kabul Support Unit (KSU) have now returned to Bramcote and undergoing their 5 day Normalisation programme.



Sgt Sabiston and Sig Titus happy to be home

The Kabul Support Unit are welcomed back

250 QUEEN'S GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON
OC **Maj J Anderson**
SSM **WO2 Lok**

EXERCISE GLOBAL ROCK 08 - *by 2Lt Si Tucker*

Ex GLOBAL ROCK 08 was a continuation trg ex in Gibraltar for 14 members of Comms Sp Tp. The aim was to broaden Tp experience of eqpt and other Regts and Services as part of the Regt's continued role of facilitating JTFHQ comms. During the ex, there was plenty of opportunity to interact with unfamiliar units. The RN took the Tp out on patrols off Gibraltar in their fast RIBs, looking for smugglers and the cheeky Spaniard motor boat which got promptly chased out of British water. The Royal Gibraltar Regt provided FIBUA trg which turned out to be a highlight as 8 members of the Tp were integrated as a 3rd sect in one of their pl for the day. The tr was made more interesting with 'Spanglish' interpretation needed between sects at the doorway on the break-ins. As the ex came to an end, the Tp had sailing lessons next to the runway resulting in **Sig Chris Chambers** rather embarrassingly falling overboard during a moment of zero wind. The sailing was a brilliant end to the ex, not just for those taking part, but also for those who weren't, thanks to the return of the glorious weather.

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON DEPLOYMENT TO OP HERRICK 6/7

HELMAND ICS SIG SQN

OC **Maj E Dallyn**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Robinson**

256 Sig Sqn HQ team

It has been a busy and exciting period for the Sqn as its time on Op HERRICK draws to a close. Christmas may not have been 'normal' for most people but thanks to a constant stream of welfare parcels every day, morale was dangerously high. Indeed we would like to thank all the loved ones and more importantly those good willed but anonymous people that sent shoe boxes full of sweets and goodies, especially from **WO2(YofS) Martin Reed**.

The tempo has remained high with new points of presence being established and new eqpt arriving in theatre. As ever all the soldiers rose not only to the challenge but well beyond as they upheld the Corps tradition of making it work, no matter what. As if things weren't busy enough the weather played its part in our fun with the CP flooding, forcing everyone to get hands on clearing the water before it affected services. The Sqn bade farewell to **WO2(SSM) Robinson** who was sacked/moved to Kandahar to act as co-ord for JtNETCEN and JFCIS, a move that he jumped at with excitement. At the time of writing this, the Sqn is busy handing over to 16 Sig Regt and we wish them all the best on their tour and hope to see them safely back in 6 (long) months time.

ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON TROOP AT CAMP BASTION
- by Sig Tyler

Tp OC **2Lt A McPhun**
Tp SSgt **SSgt C Henson**

Camp Bastion is a beast that does not like to sleep and it has certainly been keeping the Tp awake at night. There were plenty of projects lined up for the Tp, especially for the Inst Techs and the IS Engrs. The Mechs were going to be kept busy laying fibre for the OVERTASK project, the new Tier 2 Hospital that was being built and the movement of units over to Britannia Lines (also known as Bastion 2).

As the tour draws to a close, Line Sect find themselves in the thick of it as usual with 'fast-balls' coming thick and fast. Contractors on Bastion have contributed quite nicely to our workload by recently boring through the pit and duct system and effectively cutting comms to half of the Camp. **Sgt Ski Zukowski** was then tasked to teach a team of Afghan labourers the fine art of pulling cable, to replace the mission critical links that had been lost – not good for his patience or his cigarette intake.

LCpl Griff Griffiths has been busy keeping Subbies gainfully employed. On a recent stop-over in Bastion, **Lt Gardner-Clark** foolishly volunteered to go out with the Mechs and pull some

cable. After a hard days graft pulling in 800m of fibre and feeling pleased with a job well done, **LCpl Griffiths** discovered that he had pulled in the wrong type of fibre. With pleas of "Please don't tell **Lt Gardner-Clark**", he then sloped off and re-pulled the fibre in record-breaking time the next morning.

All in all, everyone has learnt a lot more about their trade, whether they are Techs or Operators. At times we have been pushed to the limits, with people away at the FOBs or on R&R but we have coped well. The ever changing tempo in theatre has kept us all on our toes. One minute it will be chilled out, the next everyone has got a job to do. Comms have been set up from scratch at FOB Dwyer in the south and at FOB Edinburgh in the north at Musa Qualah. I think that we've done what we were tasked to do successfully but it wouldn't have been possible without everyone mucking in together.

CS SIGNAL TROOP - *by LCpl Malcolm*

Tp OC	**Lt Gardner-Clarke**
Tp SSgt	**Sgt Horsburgh**

At the beginning of January I finally arrived at the Herrick Rear Link Det, part of Lashkar Gah ICS Sig Tp to be greeted by snow (which I thought I had left back in the UK). My predecessor **Cpl Mark Bowcott**, who had seen the light, had already left to go to Blandford to become an IS Engr.

The first few days were busy with the handover from **Sig Alan Cridland** from Camp Bastion, who was holding the fort. It soon settled down as we awaited the arrival of his brother **Sig Andrew Cridland** and **Sig 'Clarkey' Clarke** (the resident Det crew) who had both been on R&R and were now stuck in Bastion.

A few weeks into the tour disaster struck as during heavy rain our tent flooded. We awoke to see the contents of our tent floating around us, being helped along by a tidal wave every time the guard force veh drove past. The det hadn't escaped either with the night shift having to work quickly to stop the basement from turning into a new swimming pool.

The end of tour is now in sight and preparations for handover are in full swing. The long trip home via Kandahar via Bastion will start soon with **Sig 'Landers' Landry** being the guinea pig sent off home alone. Everyone is now looking forward to their Post Tour Leave and taking on the future roles of Early Entry HQ and JTFHQ.

ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON TROOP AT CAMP BASTION

Tp OC	**2Lt A Kelly**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt M Barringer**

Storms and high winds were predicted for December and storms and high winds were what we got. Our weather system was nick named 'HURRICANE GRANT' after **LCpl Grant**, who was less confident the next day. The inflatable satellite radome which had been deemed safe as houses, moments later was found moving on a path of destruction and terror from the det all the way to the Danish BG, as it lifted and bounced its way over the roof tops and was stopped only by the infamous Gereshk tower.

Comms aside, the Tp has participated in a series of fitness events, which included a 26km DANCON March, a half marathon which was won by **Capt 'Sword' Matthews** and a charity PFT. We have been kept busy by various projects around camp taking winterisation, summerisation and fire making to new levels. HICS Sig Tp would like to bid farewell to **Cpl 'Dan' Lamkin** and **Capt Matthews** and welcome **2Lt 'Ned' Kelly**.

Finally, **Sig 'Chumpers' Chadwick** has started a really exciting Dig Club on camp!

OP HERRICK 7 – KABUL SUPPORT UNIT CAMP SOUTER
OC Maj A Balsdon SSM WO2(SSM) D Burdus

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col SL Streete MBE TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) M Concepcion**

Now that the Christmas silly season is over, the Regt has got back into its ex and trg programme. The New Year kicked off with our annual Ex COLD START, which paired up with some pre-deployment trg for the next Tp about to deploy on Op OCULUS – 697 (K) Sig Tp. The Regt went one further than the normal PR via local press or even radio and hosted an ITV news cameraman and reporter for the day. Perhaps it might have just been a quiet period on the world and local news front but nonetheless 31 Sig Regt (V) was featured on 2 different regions' local TV news bulletins. If it's a crate for having one's picture in *The Wire*, I'm not sure what it is for being on TV, especially if you're the one filmed tripping up whilst trying to storm a window in the FIBUA house! The Regt welcomes a new SPSI at Southfields with **SSgt Billy King** joining us from 216 Sig Sqn. Unfortunately, 2 past key figures in the Regt's history passed away in January and the CO represented the Regt at both 31 Sig Regt's first CO's funeral, **Col Jim Paterson** and its first Hon Col's funeral, **Col Reg Woods**.

The unit has continued to have plenty of fun, as well as hard work, with its monthly golf competition, a great joint Mess Burns Dinner Night and another outstanding AT exped, this time to the

Sahara. The Southfield's elements were also very grateful to Wandsworth Borough Council, who invited those working or living in the borough that had deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the last 4 years to an exceptionally smart evening drinks reception. A contingent of Regulars and TA attended with partners and were treated to a special evening where a new monument was unveiled listing local units that have been on overseas operations since WW2. With another 2 x TA soldiers and our regular FofS, **WO2 'Max' Challis**, having just deployed on ops, we welcome back others on their return. **Maj Anthony Lamb**, the past CO of 56 Sig Sqn, has kindly written an article detailing his busy deployment in Iraq as an example of one TA officer's experiences.

83 (LONDON) SUPPORT SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj T Crosby**
SSM	

83 (L) Sp Sqn was busy enjoying itself over Christmas with a couple of excellent social functions, starting with our annual Christmas Ball at our Southfields TA Centre on 8 December. Everyone attended in formal evening wear for the catered 5 course Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, followed by a disco and prize raffle, which was comically compared by **Sgt Phil Chadwick**. The evening's events were a roaring success and all who attended indulged in a little too much festive merriment, although everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves into the early hours of the morning. Many thanks go to **Sgt Liz Lafferty** for organising a superb evening.

83 Sp Sqn Christmas Ball. Sgt Kirsten Morris, Sgt Liz Lafferty, SSgt Mick Lynn and LCpl Funmi Osho

The ball was followed just a couple of weeks later by a charity monkey racing night on our last drill night before Christmas, which was hosted by 'Darth Vader' (**WO2(FofS) Challis**) and 'Maximus Chadimus' (**Sgt Chadwick**). What started as a friendly charity night turned into a hostile bidding war between the syndicates. The main protagonists were **Capt Wadia's** syndicate backed up by **Capt Haines** and **Maj Pete Griffiths'** syndicate backed up by **WO2(RQMS) Craig Marlowe** who were determined to outbid each other. 'Darth Vader' had to restore order by making the respective culprits do push ups. Food was lovingly prepared by **LCpl Tash Wynn** and **Sig Tim Roberts** who had no concept of what a budget of £100 consisted of as he overspent by £80. The evening was also a way of saying goodbye to our clerk, **Jo Eldridge**. After serving the unit for 7 years, the collection was so big that her present had to be bought from a jewellers in Bond Street which showed the appreciation of everyone who worked with over the years. The monkey racing raised a total sum of £480 for 'Help for Heroes', so many thanks to everyone who took part and bid or donated money.

After Christmas we had to say goodbye to our SPSI, **SSgt Mick Lynn** who is posted to 22 Sig Regt. All the Sqn wish him all the best in Stafford. In his place comes **SSgt Billy King** who joins us from 216 Para Sig Sqn and has already had soldiers (and officers!) catching his infectious enthusiasm. We're sure if he keeps going the way he started, he'll have a real impact and probably need to up his weekly quota of pies!

5 (QOOH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CL Murison**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Taylor**

It was into the New Year with the bang as the Sqn embarked on Ex COLD START at Longmoor Camp. The weekend started off on Saturday, with a high level of trg, introducing the concepts that are required for operating in a built up environment. Although at times rather cold, it was good to see everyone taking part and getting stuck in. Spirits were raised for many of the soldiers when they had the opportunity to throw petrol bombs, although some of 41 Sig Sqn looked old hands at this. After the trg, the tempo stepped up and the Regt moved into the war fighting role which saw many low level incidents which were designed to test the junior comds. This then escalated overnight and by Sunday morning the Regt was in full fighting mode, ready to expel the enemy. The dawn attack started at 0500hrs and continued through to 0830hrs. It was exhausting and very demanding, especially after the nights patrolling. However, the enemy were expelled and it was back to the TACs for tea and medals.

As well as Ex COLD START, the Sqn saw 3 members help with providing trg for Op OCULUS. The troops started with of an early morning PFT under the supervision of **Sgt Belcher**. This was followed by a comprehensive range package including a pistol shoot, organised and run by **SSgt Welsh**, **WO2 Taylor** and **Sig Salmon**. This was interrupted by a Central News TV crew who filmed some of the activities for an article, which appeared on the evening news that night. The following day saw the star struck troops taking in the delights of map reading followed by an orienteering course. This was shortly followed by an impromptu search party, lead by the RSM, looking for a certain lost LCpl who was over an hour late. The weekend was a success and saw the troops gelling together in readiness for deployment.

With the start of the New Year came the traditional Burns Supper hosted by 5 Sqn. Following on from last year's success, **SSgt Claire Goodwin** again took the Haggis by the horns and arranged a fair spread worthy of the great man himself. The evening was conducted in a relaxed manner with piper, dancers, toasts and a hearty history lesson on the life, wife, mistresses and children of Robert Burns.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj I Holland**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Hall**

Another year upon us and lots of trg and exs to keep the TA soldiers on their toes. With the TA 100 year anniversary this year, it looks like it will be another busy year for the TA. The New Year started of with an inf FIBUA ex at Longmoor Camp. Nothing better than a long weekend of not much sleep and lots of physical endurance, straight after the festive period! Initial refresher trg in FIBUA tactics, petrol bomb trg, as well as POW handling and the orders process led into the overnight phase. There was even a real life TV crew there to add to the reality! **Capt Francis** and **WO2 Hall** stepped up to provide the comd element for the inf coy. Pls took turns at static guard, patrolling and Quick Reaction Force (QRF) duties and had to deal with many incidents, including IEDs, snipers, rioting civilians and medical evacuations. It was one of the best weekends in recent memory and for many, the reason why the TA attracted them in the first place. It was great for the many new soldiers to take part in this trg and a great retention tool as well.

Congratulations to **LCpls Alison Rowsell** and **Stella Jennings** for being selected to attend Ex MIDNIGHT SUN in Greenland later this summer. They will both be taking part in the mountain climbing phase of the ex. Several other members of the Sqn have just returned from North Africa after taking part in a week long trekking exped in the Sahara with OC 83 Sqn, **Maj Terry Crosby**. Still on the AT side of life, 20 members of the Sqn will be heading off to the Austrian Tyrol for the Regtl skiing trip at the end of February. Before that, we have a Regtl trade trg ex to look

forward to and several visits to our TA Centre including one by the CO and the new Bde Comd of 2 Inf Bde. Although not AT as such, the Sqn under our SQMS, **SSgt John Atherton** and SPSI, **SSgt Mac Mucmullen** with several members of the Sqn will be cycling from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise money for charity for 2 weeks in the summer. We wish 2 of our soldiers all the best for their up coming deployment to Afghanistan with the Royal Irish. Both **LCpl Dodgson** and **Sig Grace** are filling an inf role in theatre and have just completed extra wpns and inf trg before they deploy in March

Finally, it was with much sadness that our former SSM, **WO2 Jim Paine** lost his struggle against cancer just before Christmas. Several members of the Sqn attended his funeral and wake in Kent. He will be sorely missed. He was a real character who was very proud to have served in the Corps both as a Regular and TA soldier.

TA TRADE TRAINING

Seven of the Sqn's soldiers recently completed their trade trg and are now proud to be called ICS Operators within 2 (NC) Bde. We all thought initially that a signaller's job was just "talking over a radio" but after our 9 day course, we now all realise how much more we can offer and it is not just radios that we use.

Pieces of eqpt such as Brent, Airwave, Edwin, Reebok and Bowman became a reality as the soldiers were trained to use the kit which supports our unit's role as a field sqn in support of 2 (SE) Bde on UK Ops scenarios, such as flooding and natural disasters. Lessons on topics such as VP, interception, antenna propagation and of course mast erecting, all came to use in our field ex. For many of us it was our first real experience of any mil comms kit and a steep learning curve. However the instruction and 'idiots guide' booklets really helped us achieve our aims. The end of course exams meant plenty of revision was needed by most but everyone eventually passed their exams. We now need to practise these drills regularly and in time develop onto out Class 2 trade courses.

SAHARA TREKKING EXPEDITION 19 – 28 JANUARY 2008
- by Sig Hardy

After a flight of just under 4 hrs, we arrived at Marrakech, a very populated town. The way of life is so different to the UK that the first night was a culture shock. By the end of the trip though, you got used to the ways and the whole experience was one I'd loved so much that I would be telling the story for quite some time. The journey from Marrakech to the Sahara was a long one but we broke it up into two 5 hr minibus rides over 2 days. Heading into the desert was an everlasting memory for me as we walked towards the sunset and away from the civilisation of the red coloured mud houses and Sky TV.

We trekked for 4 full days and 2 half days in the Sahara, camping in 2 man tents. The life in the desert was of plenty, with green trees and foliage everywhere. The treks where a challenge when it came to the high sand dunes – as you can imagine the sand runs away from under your feet, so climbing the dunes had to be done as quickly as you could sp that you used less energy sinking and more energy climbing. Although we were in a group, we could trek at our own pace as for miles and miles there was dune after dune, so trekkers stood out and getting lost wasn't that easy! They gave the highest sand dune a name called 'Eric', which we climb on the 3rd full day of trekking. From the first person at the bottom to the last person at the top it took 35 mins to climb. Even though it is sand and you know if you fall you're not going anywhere because you sink, the fear of heights was setting in but still we all made it. I will never forget the most amazing sunsets I have ever seen and the most amazing stars as well. It was a chance of a lifetime and a trip I would recommend to anyone. Trekking in the Sahara has made me see a little of the world which I never could of dreamed of so now I'm in for the next adventure. I would like to thank **Maj Crosby** for giving us this chance by organising the AT exped.

The trekkers at the top of a Saharan sand dune!

SNATCHES OF REFLECTIONS OF OP TELIC 10
- by Maj Anthony Lamb

Op TELIC is the name given to the enduring op in Iraq and I was a part of 1 Mech Bde's tour of duty known as Op TELIC 10. As a TA officer, I made the personal decision that it was time to put my hand up and offer my services to the Regular component. I was initially mobilised in December 07 to command a TA Sig Sqn in the Balkans but a week before I was due to go to the mobilisation centre, my Bde Comd phoned to tell me that the Balkans was off…"but don't worry we have a couple of other jobs to consider…both in Iraq". This didn't worry me – but my wife had something to say about it though.

So off I went to join HQ 1 Mech Bde as the Staff Officer responsible for the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE), one of the arms of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the one responsible for the integrity of the country's international borders (including Iran!). I was also double hatted as the Comd of the Borders Transition Team – responsible for coalition force trg of the DBE in the British AO. In summary, my role was to oversee the capability development of this 8000 strong Iraqi border security force. I was expected to be the subject matter expert on all things DBE and to be able to advise and shape Div, Bde and BG planning and activity in supporting the way forward for this organisation. I also had to keep the US Multi-National Corps (MNC-I) and Force (MNF-I) HQs in Baghdad situationally aware by providing ground truth on borders issues in the British Area of Operations (AO) in Basra province.

The DBE is a very disparate organisation. Region 4 DBE is responsible for the borders of Maysan and Basra Provinces – 600km of land and waterways. Their HQ was close by to our mil base at Basra Air Station (BAS) and I regularly met with the senior officers there. The organisation includes the Border Guards, responsible for manning the border forts and protecting the integrity of the borders, and the Coastal Border Guards, responsible for interdicting smuggling along the waterways. The DBE was also operationally responsible for all land, sea and air ports of entry, the official gateways into and out of Iraq.

On arrival in theatre, my first task was to find, understand and assess this organisation. For the first 3 months on Op Telic 10, I made it my business to orchestrate ops which made it possible to project me and my team of US border enforcement advisers out to the Iranian border, to meet Iraqi comds on the ground. I regularly visited border forts, the 3 land ports of entry, the key sea entry port at Umm Qasr and also spent time at the DBE trg academy at Shaiba. With **Nadi**, my trusted interpreter, I focussed on developing contacts across the spectrum of the organisation. Key Leader Engagement (KLE) was the focus here. At this time, the Bde's focus was squarely on Basra City and fighting to protect our men and women in the PJCC and Basra Palace, so although I was constrained by Force Protection issues and helicopter availability, I had freedom of manoeuvre to plan and execute my team's activity across the whole of the UK AO.

Mid way through my tour, with the handover of Basra Palace and the PJCC, 1 Mech Bde 'repostured' out of Basra and into the air station. The Bde's role turned to 'overwatch'. Our Bde Comd turned his attention to capability building of the ISF and so I was able to use my understanding and connections within the DBE to help shape planning and implementation of capability building of the DBE. Suddenly from being an unwanted distraction for the BGs, the borders became a real focus of attention. This was an equally exciting time for me as I was heavily involved in planning at all levels and was able to oversee the valuable effects that the men and women of the BGs were able to achieve in working with the DBE on the ground. My team conducted 'Train the Trainer' packages with the Iraqis in all areas of activity from boat maintenance through to combat lifesaving and basic instruction packages. We also briefed everyone from PJHQ down to BG Comds on the DBE and borders issues.

Maj Anthony Lamb pictured at a border post surrounded by the local border enforcement officers

So how did I find day to day life on ops? Prior to mobilisation, I had spent 5 years as a Housemaster at Eastbourne College in the boarding house environment. Despite its own trials and tribulations, this did not prepare me for the experiences of ops. On my arrival, after taking only 5 steps off the Hercules aircraft at Basra Airport, the shout went up to "hit the deck" as the first rocket attack came in. By the time I left the UK base at the air station in November, I had experienced over 500 rocket attacks in 390 separate salvoes; some close, some a long way off. Like everyone else I developed a sixth sense – being aware of my sheltering options. I learned to hit the deck anywhere at any time: throwing myself out of bed onto the floor and into my strategically placed body armour and helmet; in the dining hall hitting the deck with a bowl of rapidly melting ice cream in one hand and cursing myself that I didn't have a spoon in the other; in the showers, in the middle of meetings or whilst out running. The alarm usually gave 5 – 20 secs warning. There was the feeling of relief when the all clear sounded and then the feeling of guilt, sadness and annoyance on hearing that someone had copped it somewhere on the base.

The heat was oppressive and yet as an Aussie I craved it. Nevertheless, 50°C is more than a 'Koala can bear'. Drivers were dragged out of armd vehs, where the combined ambient temperature and the heat of adjacent engines created ovens of 70°C. Boots melted to armd plating, helicopters lacked the lift capacity to get more than half their normal load off the ground at the height of summer and yet the ops had to go on.

I always felt immensely proud to be a part of this group of men and women of 1 Mech Bde. The humour and the stoicism were always there. Young people recently turned 18 were doing themselves and their generation proud. Sometimes draped over the cupola of an armd veh, heads in hands snatching a few minutes downtime, eyes hollowed with fatigue; other times smiling, backslapping groups sharing a funny story in a huddle whilst waiting to mount up as part of a 70 veh resupply into the city or a strike op. This was not the generation of iPod-wearing, slopey-shouldered youth that our society sometimes scornfully refers to as "the youth of today". Everybody pulled in the same direction. People looked out for each other, always quick to step in and offer sp when someone was down. At the end of November I returned safely from my tour, a wiser and more enriched individual. I was sorry not to have attended the church service that 1 Mech Bde held in Winchester Cathedral in early December. I took the decision to go to my own daughters' Christmas plays instead – I owed them some time too. By all accounts the Cathedral was packed to the brim – a sea of desert cam, a closed affair where the men and women gave their thanks for their safe return and paused to reflect on the mates who did not come back. There was not a dry eye in the cavernous building and rightly so too. I took my time out in Eastbourne College's chapel a day later.

I don't regret for a moment my time on mobilised service. My wife and 2 young girls took the hit of my absence and I missed them a great deal. I experienced moments of sadness and despair, particularly when I witnessed the repatriation ceremonies of our fallen comrades who were returned home to the bosoms of their families and country. I also experienced the immense pride one gets from working with a great bunch of men and women and from being a part of something big. I experienced frustration and anger when I banged my head against crippling Iraqi bureaucracy and arrogant senior Iraqi officers, who evaded our sp to protect their own rackets. Equally I met some of the bravest men I have known – Iraqi officers who put the lives of themselves and their families at risk by working alongside us for a better Iraq.

32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col HA Jenkins**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Wilson**

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G J Lindsay**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Poulson**

The Capital Sqn has had a very busy start to 2008. Recovering from the Christmas festivities, we hit the ground running with a directed comms ex, Burns Supper and then a mil skills weekend at Garelochhead. Not forgetting our Wednesday drill nights, with one of the highlights being the visit of **Brig Hargreaves** to the Sqn where he met the troops and presented a commendation to **Capt Gaw** for his work on Op HERRICK 5.

Along with the weekends and drill nights we've also been running with a High Readiness Reserve trial, preparation for Op TOSCA and our usual UK Ops commitment.

Brig Hargreaves presents Capt Gaw with his Op HERRICK Commendation

The Sqn would like to welcome recent transferees to Edinburgh, **LCpl Cornish** and **Sig Fullbrook**. We extend hearty congratulations to **Sig Gay** for being awarded Top Student at the Bde Trade Camp at the end of January; the same camp that **Sig Fullbrook** went to intending to train as a Class 3 operator but returned triumphant as a Class 3 technician!

EXERCISE EASTERN ESPRIT

The first weekend of the year saw the newly formed Tps deploying with their kit in anger for the first time. After a detailed recce of Kirknewton airfield on the Friday, the troops just had to turn up, pack their kit and roll out of the TA Centre gates on Saturday morning.

It wasn't long before we had 2 HF dets set up and communicating with each other, admittedly they were only 500m apart but it did work! **Sig Whiffen** and **LCpl Leckie** soon brushed off the BATCO wallets and started talking in bigrams and trigrams until no one had the slightest idea what was going on. It was also a great chance to fire up the generators for the first time in the New Year, although **Cpl Lowe** took a while to realise that we have the type of generator that requires fuel to run.

SSgt Cook setting up the mast on Ex EASTERN ESPRIT

Meanwhile, back at the TA Centre, Command Tp deployed all the CST kit into the COMMCEN to test the NSTN, ERAS laptops, INMARSAT and AIRWAVE kit in the dismounted role.

On Saturday evening we returned to the TA Centre for an all ranks Sqn Burns Supper. The night started with **Cpl Lowe** being awarded the John Brown Trophy for the being the best soldier in 2007, a well deserved award. Following the 'Address to a Haggis' from **Sgt Munro**, we tucked into a traditional feast of haggis, neeps and tatties, interspersed with poem and song from the man himself. **WO2(SSM) Poulson** teamed up with **SSgt Cook** to deliver the immortal memory in their own unique style whilst **SSgt Forbes** had to don a head torch to aide his aging eyesight to read out a poem.

Sunday saw all of the kit from the previous day being washed down and checked over ready for handing over to the instructors for trade camp later in the month. A great weekend to blow out the cobwebs, starting the year as we mean to go on.

MILITARY SKILLS WEEKEND IN GARELOCHHEAD
- by LCpl Holly Cornish

You always know that a mil skills weekend on Training Area in the middle of February is going to be fun. This was no exception. It was in fact a weekend of advice giving. The first being, 'stick to the paths', after it was demonstrated by the SSM that skipping down an embankment results in sitting in the mud at the bottom of the hill.

Saturday morning consisted of a range package and some comms tuition. All went swimmingly... quite literally as several soldiers found themselves knee deep in water, although **Sig Fullbrook** managed to go one better by rolling through the water, during the comms practical. Second piece of advice – beware of peat bogs.

The afternoon's activities were mainly mil skills based. We started with a pyrotechnics lesson given by **Capt Gaw**, in which we learned not to look into a live mini-flare (**Sig McGeachie**) and not to fire para illums at the SSM (**LCpl Cornish**). The latter ended up setting part of the wettest trg area in Scotland on fire and it is at this point that I would like to point out **LCpl Cornish** was not trying to advance her TA career by removing all those who outrank her, although she nearly succeeded as most of the SNCOs ran off to fight the bush fire single handily – Rambo style they won! The next lesson was on how to set up trip flares and was given by the SSM. It went so well, none of the flares then set up by members of the Sqn actually went off, I think by this point the SSM was starting to question why he had actually got up that morning.

The last activity of the day was the casualty evacuation. **2Lt Hardwick** was the casualty and the terrain was peat bogs, need I say more? After a tab on Sunday morning, we retired back to Edinburgh, happy but exhausted.

It was a fantastic, if challenging, weekend all round and we would like to apologise to **SSM Poulson** for raising his blood pressure that little bit more.

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col MJ Finch**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Legg**

90 (NORTH RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

A/OC	**Capt B Hogg**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Hunter**

No time was wasted by the Sqn and its members getting straight back into the mil swing of things after a much earned Christmas leave. The first and most pressing engagement was the visit of Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant (HMLL) to Hartlepool TA Centre on 22 January 08 to present a large number of accolades and certificates to various recipients from the TA, Army and Air Force Cadets. The extensive planning and preparation was not wasted on such a prestigious event. The Drill Hall was set up for one of the highest attended HMLL's visits the area has seen in a number of years. The Hall was laid out accommodating around 160 people consisting of family and friends of all recipients. It was an extremely proud night for many people in recognition of their hard work and efforts in many different and diverse areas of mil life.

SSgt Dave Ross used the limited time beforehand to get his 8 man Honour Guard up to speed on the drill side of life, as they played a vital part in proceedings. You never get a second chance at a first impression! The Honour Guard went without a hitch and impressed the inspecting officer no end. From 90 Sig Sqn members, **Sgt K Knibbs** received her HMLL Certificate for efforts in the Sqn and Regt over a number of years. All in all there were 52 recipients, all of which were thoroughly deserved. Over and above the Honour Guard, the remainder of the Sqn were involved in many different ways, ranging from security, bar staff and ushers. Not to mention the sterling work done by the Adjt, **Capt Jane Ellis** and 90 Sqn 2IC, **Capt Ross Anderson** in announcing over the PA system, the extensive list of citations and recipients without one fault!

Acting OC Sqn, **Capt Brad Hogg** had the responsibility of hosting the HMLL and from his speech at the end of the awards, the HMLL had an outstanding night and thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the evening. No rest for the wicked however, the Sqn has a busy few weeks and months ahead with RSIT looming large, Regtl Mil Cadre Course, MATTs weekends and the first ex of the year, Ex SPRING FALCON 08 to come in close succession to try and close the loop on this trg year. If the HMLL visit is anything to go by, the Sqn is off to a flyer and will push on into the New Year with confidence and high hopes.

TA DISTRICT FOOTBALL CUP FINAL
34 SIG REGT (V) *v* 299 PARA ENG SQN
- by Sgt Dave Graham

A depleted but not defeated 34 Sig Regt team took on 299 Para Eng Sqn from Wakefield in the final of the TA District Cup in heavy conditions. Missing some key players, namely team captain **Sgt Dave Graham** (injury) and **Capt Matt Usher** (work commitments), the Regt started in somewhat uncertain fashion. After many words of wisdom from the squad prior to kick off, these seemed to have fallen on deaf ears as the visiting team raced into an early 2 goal lead. As a result of poor communication, lack of concentration and players' general inability to defend we allowed the Sappers the comfort of 2 goals.

The victorious Northern Signallers

However, as the first half progressed, we started to pass, move and communicate as we have been doing in previous rounds and the Sappers found the increase in tempo difficult to contain. Chances started coming our way and in truth, we should have been level at half time. This was not to be, through excellent goal keeping from the visitors and so it remained 0 – 2 at the break. After some strong half-time words from the management and senior players and a forced change made with **SSgt Taff Bartlett** coming on, 34 Sig Regt took the field for the 2nd half and what a difference that half-time talk made! Individuals throughout the squad were hungrier and more eager than their opposite numbers and this was no more evident than **Sgt Mark Middlemiss** who covered every blade of grass in the final 45 mins.

Pressure was beginning to tell and it was no surprise when **Cpl Greg Cairnes** halved the deficit early into the 2nd half. After excellent wing play down the left from **WO2 Ross Thubron** the ball was fed invitingly to **SSgt Mo Morrison** whose cross cum shot rebounded off the post allowing **Cpl Greg Cairnes** a simple header from 2 yds. The pattern for the rest of the half was set and the Regt, with new found confidence, continued as they had started the half and in fairness at this stage 299 Sqn were hanging on to their slender lead. Midway through, 34 Sig Regt went deservedly level after numerous wasted corners. Finally a bit of quality was put into the box and up popped **Sgt Frank Henderson** to fire a bullet of a header past their stranded keeper. Game On! We now had their tails up and 299 Para Eng Sqn looked deflated throughout their team, with only their goalkeeper performing to the standard you would expect of a cup final.

With 10 mins to go, the comeback was complete. **Cpl Greg Cairnes** bagged his second goal after more flowing football involving many of the team. As usual with any Royal Signals team, the final 5 mins was a little nervous but in all fairness once we had woken up and realised we were in a Cup Final, the result was never in doubt. In fact it took a 'Man of the Match' display from the visiting keeper to eventually keep the score down. So a deserved 3 – 2 victory and on to the National TA Cup Competition. A big thank you goes out to all Regtl pers who braved the conditions to support the guys for what is a considerable achievement.

35th (SOUTH MIDLAND) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col MG Hanson**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Overton**

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

The Regt is now focussed on preparing and supporting our 15-strong cohort to sp our twinned 22 Sig Regt in Op HERRICK. Our newly created Command Leadership Wing has risen to the challenge with TA trg TA. New eqpts are the order of the day with 2 Switching Centrals, one of the air portable variety and an air portable SAN, are soon to arrive in the Regt.

We eagerly await our complement of Bowman and as of March, we will begin training on the new 1 Sig Bde Richelieu eqpt in Stafford. There is a also a major change in Regtl personalities with the Adjt, **Capt Matt Jones** about to be replaced by **Capt Nicola Berry** and the RSM, **WO1 Overton** is also in his handover on commissioning to **WO1 Balmforth** whom we welcome back as he served before with 58 Sqn in Newcastle-Under-Lyme. The next focus will be TA 100 and we are looking to mount an event in Birmingham whilst supporting the national events as well. 2008 will be a critical year for the future of 35 Sig Regt. We have increased in strength by 13% over the last year to 80% of establishment and retention figures have also improved dramatically. We have also doubled our BME numbers. We now look to build on these foundations as we look towards our future, especially in support of Op HERRICK for a number of years to come and also further integration with 22 Sig Regt

SUPPORT SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj William Henderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Mair**

- by Capt Nav Muhammad

Sp Sqn has been particularly busy in these first few months of the year, continuing to act as the focal point for the essential services for the Sqns. Our Chefs, Drivers and REME have been kept busy in sp of the Sqns with the Regtl and Bde Exs. Keeping the ageing veh fleet on the road and the Soldiers and Officers fed keeps us all on our toes.The balancing act is managing the Recruit Selection Weekends, the Phase 1A Trg and the ongoing OPTAG Trg.

This could not be done without the sp of the robust and dedicated team here in the Sqn and my thanks goes to the QM, his store men and the LAD who take the brunt of the burden.

Cpl Andy Carroll of 95 Signal Squadron hard at work

Special thanks go to our Chefs who do sterling work in Camp and in the field with their irrepressible good humour.

RECRUITING - *by Capt Bath*

The year has got off to a flying start on the recruiting front with a number of Officer Applications drawn from our Regtl website in the first months of the year and this is good news indeed. Our efforts to recruit the right quality and quantity of soldiers into the Regt continues unabated and see the Regt taking the lead in what is a Bde recruiting surge across the West Midlands from February through to the end of May. On top of the recruiting surge the Regt continues to sp the Corps Recruiting Team with the Army Careers Exhibition (ACE) Midlands Soldier, CRR with the Direct Entry Territorial Army Potential Officer (DE TAPO) campaign and of course the Bde Summer Recruiting Surge "Midlands Challenge" Those TA soldiers that are involved with recruiting know only too well the work that comes with every entrant and they continue to do this with good humour and professionalism. As well as the normal run of events that OAR opens up, in the past year there have been an increased use of regular Army "Clinics" in town centres which have needed the sp of the TA to make the manning viable. These are very cost effective and produce a steady stream of recruits for both Regular and TA Units

Sig Bath at the Telford ACIO Clinic

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Paul Rodenhurst**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Stowell**

EXERCISE MERCURY KESTREL - *SSgt Jeffers Ford*

Ex MERCURY KESTREL saw the Regt shake out for a full Regtl comms ex on Nesscliffe Trg Area just outside Shrewsbury and for an ex staged early in the year, the weather gods truly smiled on us. It was warm and sunny all weekend.

The Sqn has seen an influx of young soldiers over the past 12 months and this was the first time that we were able to take enough of them into the field in the role for which they had trained so hard. The ex was pitched at the right level, so that all of the drills associated with safe veh preparation and movement, clearing and moving into a position, guarding and defence of the position, camouflage and concealment and routine once comms were established could be practised and managed by the experienced junior and senior NCOs so that it gave the younger soldiers a solid grounding in what we expect of them in the field.

Everyone who attended for the weekend gave 100% and the OC was delighted with the level of commitment and professionalism of the Sqn. This bodes well for the annual camp later this year and the Sqn can look forward to this with real confidence. The ex ended with the normal round of veh dekitting and good natured banter in the hangers before the troops shook off the green and headed back to their day jobs. My hat is off to you all and thank you for an excellent trg ex.

Maj Rodenhurst sends secret message to the Squadron – the water's warm!

58 (STAFFORDSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj David McCormack**
SSM	**SSgt (ASSM) Purdon**

VISIT TO PORTSMOUTH'S HISTORIC DOCKYARD 8/9 DECEMBER 07 - *by LCpl Gilford*

This eagerly awaited weekend didn't disappoint as a very healthy number of both Regular and TA personnel made the long trip from The Potteries to the "Home of the Royal Navy". Saturday morning began with a guided tour around the world famous *HMS Victory* and not even the dreadful weather could dampen the enthusiasm of the Sqn who gained a fascinating insight to life aboard *Victory* during the Napoleonic era. To find out that one of the serving Ship's Company during the Battle of Trafalgar was one **Lt John Scott** only fuelled the rumours that our very own **Capt 'John' Scott** had in fact seen service under Nelson and had subsequently been promoted (once!).

With the rain continuing to fall horizontally we made our way to the "Invincible" – that's the Public House as opposed to the Aircraft Carrier for a well earned lunch break. It was here that a number of unsuspecting workmen were kidnapped by **LCpls 'Joy' Gilford** and **'Cez' Riley** and **Sig 'Rach' Poulton** until they allowed them to wear their fluorescent vests and hard hats. The Sqn were then treated to a bizarre "Village People" type dance routine by the above mentioned! The afternoon was spent perusing *HMS Warrior* and the many museums throughout the Dockyard. At this stage, **OCdt 'Harry' Harrison** managed to get his "history teacher" head on and gave a rather worryingly detailed briefing on the "Cat O'Nine tails" used to discipline the ship's crew – is there something we should know ? After sampling the various nightspots of Portsmouth and Gosport it was an early start to Sunday morning and the Royal Navy Submarine Museum. This gave the Sqn a unique chance to board *HMS Alliance* (an A Class submarine commissioned in 1947) which since her retirement in 1979 has been in dry dock at Gosport. An ex-serving member on the submarine gave an awe inspiring insight to life on board. Not sure if any members of the Sqn will be queuing at the Navy Careers Office to transfer to the naval submarine reserve! Many thanks to **OCdt Harrison** for organising a particularly interesting and overall very enjoyable weekend (especially from PSI, **Sgt 'Granny' Groundsell** who was able to drink in his local all weekend!

58 SQUADRON CHRISTMAS FUNCTION 2007

Not only was this a chance for many of the most recent additions to the Sqn to sample a formal Regtl type dinner, it also gave us all a chance to say our farewells to **Sgt 'Bill' Lambert** who has finally hung his pay book up after over 30 years service here at Newcastle-Under-Lyme. The dinner was also attended by invited guests, family and friends and in all well over 100 people came to celebrate another year passing, in traditional 58 Sqn fashion. Special thanks to **Capt 'John' Scott** and his team for laying on a great night and to SPSI, **SSgt 'Dave' Purdon** who not only ensured that all of the waiting staff, supplied by the local Air Cadet Force, were looked after but also entertained the top table for the majority of the evening. **Sgt Lambert** has now embarked on a "Round the World" trip and the Sqn would like to wish him a fantastic trip and look forward to hearing from him in various exotic locations.

OC SQUADRONS' CHRISTMAS PRIZES

Best Recruit	**Sig Sloan**
Best Overall Contribution	**Pte Budd**
OC's Prize	**SSgt James**

And finally..... congratulations to the following on their recent promotions, **SSgt 'Gill' Heesom** and **LCpls 'Cookie' Cook, 'Martin' Caton, 'Scotty' Knowles** and last but not least **'Wayne' Phillips.** The bell in the Sqn bar hasn't stopped since Christmas. Our best wishes also go to **SSgt 'Aaron' James** and **Tara** on the birth of their daughter **Morgan** – sleepless nights and dirty nappies await!

89 (WARWICKSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Chris Moseley**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Wright**

SQN PERSONALITY NEWS

After a challenging and successful year for the Sqn in 2007, we welcome back **Cpl Towers** and newly promoted **LCpl Nichols** from ops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Congratulations go to a number of members of the Sqn for their recent promotions:

SSgt to **WO2 Proffitt**
LCpl to **Cpl Fulthorpe**
Sigs to **LCpls Sammon, Copson** and **Nichols**

OPERATION TELIC 10 - *by LCpl Nichols*

LCpl Nichols at the Kuwaiti border

I mobilised on 16 April 07 to deploy on Op TELIC 10 with 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215). After spending my initial 2 weeks at RTMC Chilwell carrying out mobilisation trg, which included medicals, briefings and what would happen upon de-mobilisation, I reported to 1 Mech Bde in Tidworth to start my OPTAG trg.
On 16 May we deployed to Kuwait and spent a week carrying out RSOI trg and further continuation trg in order to prepare us for the months ahead. After we finished our RSOI trg we flew by Hercules into Basra International Airport and our first night was spent in a transit camp, where we received briefings about the rules of the Contingency Operating Base (COB) which was to be our home for the next 6 months. We were also given briefings by our Tp SSgt about what had already happened to the advance parties, where they had deployed and what they had done so far.

Our Tp had various responsibilities while on Op TELIC with operators deployed around the City and the surrounding province but inside the COB, our Tp had 2 main roles: one was Brigade Processing Facility (BPF) and the was the mobile HQ. We deployed this either as a static HQ or in the form of a couple of Land Rovers to Camp Bucca in Kuwait and to Talill as and when it was needed. For this role we had 4 Bulldogs, 6 Land Rovers with a dismounted HQ kit and some DRASH tents in case they were needed.

For most of my tour I stayed in the COB and was used in the BPF, which was in continuous use throughout. I was deployed for 5 weeks to Safwaan Hill to operate the rebro between Umm Qasar and the COB, which was manned by myself and another operator and guarded by a multiple from the Rifles. During my time on Op TELIC 10, I completed a Class 3 – 2 workbook during the course.

We left Iraq on 25 November flying to Kuwait and then onwards to Cyprus where we would spend 24 hours relaxing. After we left Cyprus, we spent a night in Tidworth and then onwards to Chilwell the next day where we handed in our kit, cleaned our rifles, had a medical and received more briefings before we were allowed to come home.

EXERCISE WARWICKSHIRE BEAR 1 - *by Cpl Priestman*

2008 kicked off in earnest on a bright morning on 26 January with Ex WARWICKSHIRE BEAR 1. The aim of the ex was to teach and refresh troops in basic mil skills, ranging from First Aid, Target Indication and Harbour Drills to a Mil Swimming Assessment. Tagging along with us on this weekend were members of both Sp and 48 Sqn and all those participating commented on the high trg value they managed to get out of the ex.

In all a big thank you goes to 89 Sig Sqn's MT PSI **Cpl 'Vic' Priestman** for organising a challenging weekend.

95 (SHROPSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Ann Downie**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) McIntosh**

EXERCISE BAVARIAN DRAGON - *by SSgt P Stewart*

Once again the ever willing **Capt Alex Rodgers** and **SSgt Paul Stewart** led another team of willing Volunteers into the hills. Ex BAVARIAN DRAGON was an AT and Mil Skills ex designed to take our Officers and Soldiers outside their comfort zone and into an environment with which most were totally unfamiliar.

The team was made up of 14 members of the Regt; some had experienced the Klettersteige before but for others it was a whole new experience. The Klettersteige or 'Iron way' is a series of mountain routes that were used in WW1 and WW2 by troops when moving through and fighting in the Alps. Some routes were used more than others and to assist the troops moving around the mountains, fixed safety was installed by the Alpine troops. This mostly consisted of rough hemp ropes and wooden ladders but in some of the more fortified positions, tunnels were dug right into the mountains and there are some very fine examples of these on the Italian side of the Alps, where this is called "Via Ferrata"

Since the end of the war the routes have been developed as tourist attractions for people who have a fondness for the mountain and want to take on a hill with a good degree of safety.

The rope has been replaced with wire and the wooden ladders with metal, pegs and stemples have also been cemented into the faces to give the climber added assistance. The Klettersteige allows you to climb beyond your normal range and still remain safe. Some specialist eqpt is required but the cost of this is small when compared to other sports and of course you do not have to buy, you can rent or borrow the eqpt. Aside from the normal helmet, boots and mountain safety gear, you require a specially designed 'Arrester System'. This consists of a harness that fits to a sit harness and has 2 outsized carabineers attached to straps. This allows you to clip into the wire and always maintain one attachment at all times even when changing from one wire to another.

Maj Downie firmly attached to the mountain!

Sig Michael Durrant – just hanging around

Should the worst happen and you came away from the face, you could only fall a limited distance because of the wire attachments, which are about every 15 ft. Once your carabineers hit the anchor point, they would jam and if you stopped as suddenly as your carabineer you would very likely suffer injury, so each harness is fitted with a tight figure eight friction device, through which runs about 6 feet of rope, so as the carabineer straps tighten the rope is dragged through the friction device, which effectively 'Slams on the brakes' and this should bring you safely to a halt. Then of course, the Mickey taking can begin.

Many peaks were climbed, much beer was consumed and a fine time was had by all, we even found time for cultural visits to some of the stunning castles and to dabble in a spot of canoeing. It doesn't get any better than this.

37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col JE Sutton**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DE Cupit**

53 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC **Maj Marcus Cosgrove**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Steve Webb**

EXERCISE VIXENS ARCHER – ANNUAL CAMP 2007

We must start by saying farewell to **Maj John Symmons** who leaves the Sqn after 2 years in command to try his hand as the Trg Maj with the Wales UOTC at nearby Maindy Bks. Ex VIXENS ARCHER would be his last outing with 53 Sqn and the largest turnout on camp for any of the Sqns is testament to how well the Sqn is thriving. Unfortunately they couldn't quite bring home the Sports Day Trophy but there is still time for Champion Sqn Competition. That mantle falls to the newly appointed OC, **Maj Marcus Cosgrove**, who has previous experience of the Regt having been OC of 93 Sqn and more recently, leading the 97 Sqn deployment to Bosnia. A final farewell to **Sgt Hew 'Shaky' Wakeham** who leaves the Sqn after 22 years service and we wish you all the best in your future civilian employment and good luck to **Sgt Oly Neeve** who will have a hard time trying to fill those boots.October saw the Regt make the long journey (longer for some than for those of us in Cardiff) to Castlemartin which we would call home for 2 weeks. Activities planned for the fortnight included Mil Skills, a Range Package, Trade Trg and AT; as well as an Inter-Sqn sports day and the requisite social functions.

The mil skills package was geared around Sect Battle Drills, with a series of battle lessons leading to a pl level tactical deployment. A period of field routine and patrolling from an established harbour location culminated in a deliberate pl attack. Skills were revisited /revised across the group with focus also given to NCOs and Junior Officers with command appointments throughout. The number of weary, but smiling, faces in the cookhouse for breakfast following the attack gave testament to the amount of enjoyment had by all. The Range Package saw the skills learned in the previous phase put into application. Starting with the compulsory zeroing practice and APWTs, progression was made through application of fire and patrol alleys all the way to a sect in defence shoot. The package culminated in the Fire Team Assessment, where the requirement is to complete 2 miles in less than 22 mins with personal kit. A significant proportion of the Regt passed this assessment, some surprising themselves with their performances!

A church service in nearby St. David's Cathedral provided an interesting counterpoint to the mil trg undertaken in the week and gave an opportunity to come together as a Regt and enjoy a cream tea in the visitors centre too. An all ranks function allowed all concerned to bear witness to the performance of the England Rugby team, counter pointed by the Welsh members of the Regt before baring their tortured souls on the karaoke machine (although some may say that it was the ear drums that were tortured).Sports day saw fierce competition on pitch and court, with prizes for football, basketball, volleyball and tennis up for grabs. The tug-o-war was the deciding event with a victory on the final pull giving 96 Sqn the overall trophy for the day over 53 Sqn (the home team). Trade trg was split with a number of individuals undertaking Bowman conversion trg whilst the remainder worked through a round robin "Jack of all trades" session, covering topics within BSS and across the various Class 3 syllabi; followed by a "Master of one" session where specific focus was given to each of the 3 trades, with individuals making significant inroads to completing the requirements of their trade workbooks.

Finally we had an AT day on the water, canoeing on the Atlantic Ocean, albeit inside the Pembroke toll bridge and climbing on the coast, followed by a day walking on the beautiful Pembrokeshire coastline. A coupe of people overcame their fear of heights, with many more getting more than a little wet and a few with a blister or two to show for their efforts.

The climbing day saw **Padre Philip Francis** overcoming a problem with his legs whilst abseiling, although this may have had something to do with being assisted by **OCdt Sally Wrigley**.

EXERCISE VON TRAPP DRAGON 08 – REGIMENTAL SKIING EXPEDITION

SKI TOURING – FIEBERBRUNN AUSTRIA

The ski touring team was led by instructor **SSgt Tim Abbott.** The aim of the ex was to gain the Ski Tour Proficiency qualification. This involves touring on skis, 'as it says on the tin' to quote a famous ad.

As I signed up for this I thought this is going to be a nice pleasant experience walking through the nice countryside in peace and quiet, in isolation away from the crowded slopes and little kids getting under our feet on the normal piste. I was right to a certain degree, but this degree was slightly off the mark! It was when we started getting the kit when we realised this isn't quite what it seems. What are these things which you strap to your self that go beep? Oh they're for in case you get caught in an avalanche and need to be found in the tons of snow that might fall on you. Brilliant I thought, good idea, but why do we need these? Because we're going where there may be avalanches, pointing towards the mountain, obviously! Brilliant!

We were in the peace and quiet away from the crowds and the scenery was pleasant. Well it was pleasant when I had chance to look at it but most of the time was spent looking at the skis of the person in front and breathing very heavily. The country side turned out to be the side of a mountain and a steep mountain at that. So up we went with a few supplies strapped to our backs and our furry skins on our touring skis. With a few cries of 'Are we nearly there yet?' – we weren't, we walked up the mountain onwards and upwards into the blue yonder, at least it wasn't a snowy blizzard! The snow was deep and with the odd person falling over and trying to get up in the deep snow, there proved to be some entertaining moments as we persevered onwards. But it was worth it getting to the top for the sheer exhilaration and views, which I think are the main reason for getting up there.

Then it was time to come down! Easy, I thought, we'll be down in no time. It did take a bit longer than I thought as it takes a bit of adjusting to skiing in the deep snow. Wipe outs were a bit softer and everything looks blue when you open your eyes under the snow, trust me I now know from experience! Oh and watch out for the rocks, trees and occasional buildings which are lurking below, no probs! Oh and don't forget to watch out for those pesky avalanches! Cheers **Tim**!

PO Anna Reed, Sgt Fred Smart and Sgt Toby Brooksbank warming up before the ascent!

FROM BOBO-LAND TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN
A BEGINNER'S VIEW
- by Sig Andy Macham

It all began with me signing up months ago, putting off my preparation until closer to the time and then suddenly realising that now was the time to go! Having carefully ticked off everything on the kit-list, my bag was bursting at the seams and I was still panicking in case I had forgotten something.The coach ride was long and uncomfortable and could probably be used to extract information from detainees. But 26 hrs later, we prised ourselves from the seats as we arrived at the hotel that would be home for the next week. We had already chosen who we wanted to share a room with, only to find we would be getting closer to each other than we thought – in the double beds. Fortunately there were single mattresses and single duvets though! Phew!

Soon we were kitted out, with boots that were only mildly painful and the release mechanisms adjusted to the correct settings. The first night was a welcome to Austria briefing from our host, **Phil Fluck**, (www.tyroleanadventures.com) who told us what would be happening during the rest of the week. He then gave a presentation about his charity Children's Education Nepal (CEN) and persuaded some people to buy woolly hats to raise money.

On Day 1, following advice from seasoned skiers, I had dressed in several layers, to keep warm. After the initial kafuffle of putting on boots and skis was over, we headed for our first challenge – Bobo land. The beginners group was made up of 9 keen and eager novices and an excellent instructor, **Sgt Judy Dunn**. Bobo land is the fenced off section of the piste with a gentle slope and easy to use ways to get to the top. The first day was covering the basics; such as how to start, how to stop, how to fall over and eventually how to turn. Because you cannot use even a simple lift or moving walkway without knowing the basics first we did a lot of sidestepping up the slope. By the time we had our first break, I was rather warm. When I opened my jacket, I disappeared from sight in a cloud of steam. After adjusting the number of layers, we returned to the nursery slope and carried on. Some of the group were struggling at this stage, barely able to stand up.

Bobo is a penguin and his image is everywhere and he seemed to be attracting the Austrian half-term holiday children. It can be a little upsetting to see children who have only just learnt to walk, skiing so much better than you. By the afternoon our group had mastered Bobo land. Having learnt how to fall over, turn and stop, it was time to be let loose on the grown-up slopes. We started by going halfway up on a T-bar to a point level with the highest point in Bobo land. It was the same slope except now we were not surrounded by the fence. After a few runs, we progressed to the top of the T-bar lift, and tried our first Blue run. It was a massacre! Everyone wiped out at least once, mostly twice, coming down! One person got carried away and as he speeded up, decided to head for a section of piste which was empty. He discovered the reason it was empty was due to there being a large hole. His launch was good but he didn't do so well on the landing.

On Day 3, we moved on to another location, Steinplatz. This is a bowl at the top of a mountain reached by a gondola, which combines the joy of claustrophobia with the excitement of vertigo. It was a big step on from the previous day, being much higher with longer runs and steeper slopes. The point of AT is to push you out of the comfort zone and this was a very long way from what we had been comfortable with. This is the day when muscle fatigue starts to bite and you hit a 'wall' of aches & pains. It wasn't helped by other skiers and especially snow-boarders that would overtake aggressively and generally unnerve the novices. It was also our introduction to chair-lifts. I don't think I was the only one who managed to get on without problems (it's just sitting down, after all) but struggled to get off at the top (standing up while the chair is being pushed against the back of your legs). And the worst thing about falling over at the top of a chair lift is that you know the next one will be along soon, to add to the pile of people.

Day 4 brought some respite after the shock to the system of the previous day. It was still out of the comfort zone but we could at least see it occasionally. We were able to concentrate on our technique more, instead of worrying about survival (not that we had been in danger, but the body doesn't always know all the facts). This was also the worst day for weather, as snow was falling and occasional flurries obscured vision.

On Day 5, the weather was once again clear and bright and the fresh powder was much more fun. It is a little disconcerting to be zipping along with your skis 6 ins below the surface but you get used to it. Once again our comfort zone had moved up, so things that were concerning the day before, had became commonplace today. The entire party had come to Fiebebrunn today, and I felt a little self conscious when we were skiing alongside the experienced group at the end of the day as we made our way down the mountain. But I didn't wipe out in front of them too often, so it wasn't too bad!

Day 6, it was back to St Ulrich and Bobo. It being the last day of skiing, we returned to the slopes where it all started, so that we could return the kit at the end of the day. After a brief warm-up, we headed up to the top of the T-bar to be assessed coming down the Blue run. At the end of Day 2, this had been very scary,

with crashes and wipe-outs all the way down. This time, the slope was easy but I was nervous as my technique was being watched carefully. After we had all descended safely to the bottom, we took a chairlift to the peak of the mountain. Then we came down a long run back to the bottom.

It was still challenging but not as daunting as it could have been. As we skied down, it was amazing the progress that had been made in just a week, from stumbling around the nursery slope, to gliding gracefully (most of the time) around the flanks from the top of the mountain.

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col SJ Baker TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) AJ Wyatt**

38 SIGNAL REGIMENT'S OWN F1 DRIVER

Life as a trucker isn't too hard... at least not if your name is **WO2(AQMS) Damian Hardy**. For most people, the closest they get to Formula One is on a Sunday afternoon in front of the TV to follow the progress of **Lewis Hamilton**. But **WO2 Hardy** swapped his company car for the chance to drive for the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes F1 team.

Hamilton can however breathe a sigh of relief that his career is safe as **Damian Hardy** was behind the wheel of one of the team's 44-tonne Mercedes Actros trucks which are used to transport the team around Europe. Life-long F1 fan, **Damian**, jumped at the chance of spending 3 days working for the team even though he would be far from the bright lights of the track as part of the huge logistics operation working in the background to move the McLaren team between racetracks.

The whole team including race cars, spares and hospitality has to be taken down, packed and loaded, then relocated between races in the space of 5 days. This is quite a challenge when the F1 calendar has races on back-to-back weekends. For **Damian**, it meant a journey from Monza just outside Milan in Italy to Spa in Belgium, a trek of some 700 miles over the Alps, then through France, Luxemburg and finally into Belgium.

Damian says: "It came as no surprise to my wife that I was quick to say 'yes' when I was invited to drive for McLaren. I had turned down the chance to do this several times during 2006 when we were expecting our first child. With **Kimi Nicolas** (named after **Kimi Raikonnen** – current F1 World Champion) now 14 months old, this seemed a perfect time to go.

Damian Hardy at Monza with his McLaren F1 team 44 tonne Mercedes-Benz Actros truck

"Although McLaren has regular drivers, there are times when they need additional people to move the fleet around in the very tight timescale. When I submitted my holiday form and told my office what I was going to do, a silence fell around the room closely followed by 'You are taking 3 days off to go and drive a truck?'"

It all started with a driver familiarisation briefing at a Mercedes-Benz dealership in Sheffield. This was followed by a visit to the McLaren Technology Centre, the company's futuristic headquarters at Woking, from where he was taken to the airport for the flight to Italy. As it takes the McLaren team 24 hrs to dismantle and load all the facilities and eqpt onto the trucks, there was a chance for **Damian** to see the sights of the Milan before the journey to Belgium. As a military man, **WO2 Hardy** was expecting a formal briefing before the road move. However the briefing he was given really was brief. From start to finish it consisted of: "See you in Spa tomorrow. Oh, and if you break down, here is my mobile number." With all 'actions on' covered, the convoy of 30 articulated trucks, which stretched for a good 500m, set off from the Monza circuit into the Milan traffic at rush hour. Not the best timing.

Damian said, "The route from Monza headed across Northern Italy to the Alps and through the famous Mont Blanc tunnel which is over 11km long. I am sure it is a fabulous drive in a convertible, but it is very different in a maximum weight 44-tonne articulated truck. It was a bit hairy. There is only a 6-foot high Armco barrier between you and a very long drop and I certainly didn't want to scratch the £250,000 tractor and trailer."

Including breaks and driver changes, the drive to Spa-Francorchamps in the south-eastern region of Belgium was completed 17 hrs. When they arrived at Spa, **Damian** had time to walk around the circuit and enjoy totally unrestricted access to the track and pits. The trip finished with a driver de-briefing back at McLaren HQ and an opportunity for **Damian** to see the Mercedes SLR production facilities, where the hand-built £360,000 supercars are made and sold.

Driver	**Lewis Hamilton**	**Damian Hardy**
Vehicle	McLaren MP4-22	Mercedes-Benz Actros
Engine	Mercedes-Benz FO 108T V-8 2,398cc, 700bhp	Mercedes-Benz OM502LA V-8 16,000cc, 570bhp @ 19,000rpm @ 1,800 rpm
Emissions standard	Unknown	Direct injection diesel to Euro 4 emissions standard
Gearbox	Semi automatic - Seven forward and one reverse	Semi automatic - 16 forward and one reverse
Performance	0-100 mph = 3.6 seconds 0-100-0 mph = 6.6 seconds	Limited to 56 mph
Tyres	Bridgestone (average tyre life: 185 miles)	Michelin (average tyre life: 125,000 miles)
Kerb weight	600 kg	8,015 kg (tractor unit only)
Service interval	Every 30 laps	Every 75,000 miles
Fuel tank	Unknown	450 litres
Aspiration/induction	Normal	Turbo-intercooled
Fuel	Unleaded petrol	Diesel

46 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj JS Hubbard**
SSM **WO2(SSM) M Hallam**

OUR PAST FEW MONTHS - *by Capt Andy Harding*

In October 2007, the Sqn carried out a Mil Skills ex at Beckingham Trg Camp near Newark. The members of the Sqn were put through a series of tactics stands, such as Recce Patrols, while at the same time hosting members of East

Midlands UOTC to show the OCdts what the TA is all about. The OCdts got a lot out of it as they saw what can be done and how exciting it can be, as well as how much hard work is involved.

During 2007, the Sqn participated in a series of exs and events, achieving a great deal. As the year drew to a close, it was time to start enjoying the fruits of the hard work put in. There were so many promotions and new appointments that the Sqn could have put up a sign outside the TA Centre saying "Under New Management". At the end of the Remembrance Sunday parade, in his last act as SSM, **WO2 Andy Harding** handed over the 46 Sig Sqn Pace Stick to incoming SSM, **WO2 Mick Hallam**. **WO2 Hallam** got his own back later that day back at the Kingsway TA Centre when he presented **WO2 Harding** with a sword from the Regtl WOs and Sgts Mess to mark his departure from the Mess following his selection for commissioning.

Also in November, **Capt Steve May** left the Sqn after being its PSAO since March 1999. He was dined out in style by the Sqn and he was presented with a mountain bike to mark the occasion. He is replaced by **Capt Ken Scott** who has moved over from our Nottingham TA Centre and has now settled into his new office. We congratulate **Capt Jim Batchelor** on his appointment as Sqn 2IC, having being a Tp Comd in the Sqn for 6 years, and also congratulate 3 new Tp Comds on their appointment: **Capt Carolyn Ryan-Gilbank** and **Capt Andy Harding** on being commissioned from WO2 and **WO1 Dave Marrison** on transfer from the post of SVWO at RHQ in Sheffield.

We said farewell and wish every success to **Capt Kev Gator** who left to become 2IC Sp Sqn in Sheffield and to **WO1 Pete Beadle** who left on promotion from WO2 to take up the post of SVWO at RHQ. Further congratulations are in order as **Cpl Amanda Bettany** and her husband **Martin** are currently taking turns at stagging on throughout the night following the birth of their baby boy, **Alec Martin**. We are looking forward to **Cpl Bettany** resuming trg in early of March, or is it **Cpl B** who is looking forward to coming back? Sorry **Martin**.

JUNIOR RANKS CHRISTMAS DINNER

The OC, **Maj James Hubbard**, decreed that the theme for the 2007 dinner was to be Super Heroes and Super Villains. In the past it had been just the Sqn hierarchy acting as waiters who dressed up, while the diners just wore their best bib and tucker, but not in 2007. The waiters dressed up as Super Villains while the Junior Ranks and their guests dressed up as Super Heroes. There were some very good costumes, including Spidermen (yes, there was more than one), Darth Vader, Darth Maul, Yoda, Lara Croft, Obi Wan Kenobi, Buzz Lightyear, Batman and even Poison Ivy. A successful evening was had by all.

WOs AND SNCOs CHRISTMAS DRAW

This has always been a good event to finish off the year and 2007 was no exception. With many thanks to **Sgt John Simpson**, **Sgt Mark Adams** and **LCpl Sarah Dyche** good food and a great evening were enjoyed by all while the live music for the evening was provided by **Michael**, the son of **Sgt John Simpson**, and two of his friends. The evening's star entertainer had to be no other than **Sgt Mark Adams**, doing his usual party piece. He had to leave early to be at work the next day, entertaining the passengers on his coach tour. Many thanks **Mark**. Now that 2008 has arrived, the New Year resolutions have been made and as a Sqn, we are hungry to get on and face anything that is thrown at us.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj AJ Powell**
SSM **WO2(SSM) T Grant**

EXERCISE WHITE WINTER

Ex WHITE WINTER was a Regtl ICS weekend held at Wathgill Camp, Catterick. The aim of the was to begin the process of trg and revising the soldiers' trade skills. Soldiers were placed in syndicates appropriate to their trade and then rotated through a number of stands designed to refresh them on the various trades within the Regt. This is the first in series of exs designed to develop the solders' skills, with the culmination being Annual Camp in September this year.

The ex proved to be an excellent weekend that was enjoyed by all those who attended. The next challenge will be to continue the skills development on the next Regtl ICS weekend at the end of March.

REGIMENTAL CADRE WEEKEND

The final Regtl Cadre Weekend of the bounty year was held at Altcar Trg Camp north of Liverpool over the weekend 8 – 10 February 08. Whilst the weekend provided an opportunity for those who needed to complete their Mandatory Annual Training Tests (MATTs), there was also scenario based trg laid on to allow soldiers to progress their skills. The Saturday morning was filled with mines awareness trg, potential officer trg, eqpt care briefings, basic signalling skills trg and patrol skills trg. Following lunch on Saturday, the Regt moved onto MATTs based trg, including MATT 4. For those who hadn't passed MATT 4, a trip to the respirator test chamber was in order, while those that had previously passed it took part in a scenario-based ex which had been put together by **SSgt Wayne Bramwell** from 46 Sig Sqn. As usual his somewhat active imagination produced the goods with the troops being tasked with occupying a village, conducting chemical recces and then chemical surveys. The scenario finished with the troops coming under attack from an aerial bombardment. Sunday morning as ever saw the CFT. Although, 32 laps of the camp and trg area became a little repetitive, plenty of effort was put in by all of those involved, ensuring that most of the Sqn will be claiming their bounty this year. This was another good weekend which resulted in positive feedback from all levels. The new Cadre Weekend format seems to be catching on!

PADRE IN IRAQ - *By Padre Sean Robertshaw*

Padre Sean Robertshaw is the Team Rector of the Anglican Church in the Holme Valley and for the last 10 years he has also been the Padre of 38 Sig Regt. He is currently on attachment to the Army Foundation College (AFC) in Harrogate. On a freezing November morning back in 2006 he was on Catterick Trg Area, when his mobile phone rang. "Hello **Sean**. It's **Roger**. Would you like to go to Iraq for 6 months next year? Let me know before Christmas. Bye."

He was selected to join the UK Medical Group for the second half of their 6 month tour at Contingency Operating Base (COB) Basra. He met with them before they left the UK in late May 2007 and spent a weekend trg with and getting to know them. One of the first things he did was to lead their pre-deployment service. He also discovered more about where he would be living and, as he had never worked in a hospital before, learning how a Military Hospital with a Close Sp Med Sqn works. Although all priests visit congregation members in hospital, that's not quite the same as developing a chaplaincy to a specific group of people: The medical workers and their patients.

Padre Sean said, "For me, going on an op tour is about being authentic. I represent a link in the chain of trg which gets young people ready to serve in the Army and on ops. Two of the soldiers I served with in Iraq were graduates from AFC Harrogate and one of them, a young lass, was awarded a CO's Commendation whilst on tour. I hoped to see how the moral component of Army doctrine fitted together with the experience of high tempo ops. It might all sound a bit academic but it's not really. The moral component of fighting power is the 'Will to Fight' which is based around spiritual values, belief systems and moral judgment. The highest moral standards are expected of all our forces pers. Happily, my experience of the armed forces on ops in Iraq taught me that these principals are applied at all times and are reinforced by the chain of command. In essence the doctrine determines the grass roots practice."

He left from RAF Brize Norton for Basra on the 19 August 07 and was transferred to a Hercules for the flight forward under the cover of night to COB Basra. **Padre Sean** said: "We quite literally dropped out of the sky onto the runway before being herded to various vehs. It was very swift and cured me of any flying hang ups I may have harboured. I remember listening to 'Highway to Hell' by AC/DC on my MP3 player as we began our descent and it felt just like it at that moment."

At COB Basra, **Padre Sean** inherited and ran the Hard Rocket Café, an all-ranks off-duty relaxation area. It was essentially a very big tent which, along with the cookhouse tent, was used for all entertainment events, including watching the Rugby World Cup on a large screen TV. It had an alcohol-free bar and also stocked books, games and newspapers as well as hiring out DVDs and PSP games.

Sean said "It was a good facility and was well used by those in the COB. It was here and in the cookhouse that I would pick up on soldiers' troubles, worries and concerns as they were more relaxed and had time to talk. Often I would end up in the Chapel just round the corner, a much smaller but private tent, just listening and empathizing with the person concerned. The Chapel also doubled up as my HQ for steering 'entertainment ops' as I called them. Only good things came out of God's house.

"As for difficult parts of the tour, the work was relentless; the heat was searing especially when wearing helmet and heavy body armour and there were long hours working and long guard duties for many of the soldiers on top of their regular duties.

During the first 3 months of the tour the COB in which the Hospital was based came under heavy daily rocket attack which led to several casualties. The hospital was hit on 2 occasions, fortunately without causing further injury. There is that constant pressure behind all the work that is done. Some people receive life changing injuries while others don't make it. All that traffic finds its way though the doors of the hospital, and comes on top of the regular, routine, hospital work. All this is conducted in a dangerous, volatile environment."

Padre Sean also took on the role of chairing the COB's Social Events Group which made plans beyond the mil remit. Some of the things they organised to boost morale were a Halloween party, regular quizzes, BBQs, a fund-raising event for Macmillan Nurses in the UK, a Pickle and Trafalgar Night, a Village Fete complete with Morris dancing and a Race Night. He even joined in abseiling out of the airport control tower to raise money for BLESMA. All these events added to the overall morale during his tour and enabled the UK Medical Group to raise over $3,000 for charity

"What did I enjoy? I loved the camaraderie, the sense that we were all in this together. I was delighted to see that the high moral standards taught to all soldiers in the classroom are

Padre Sean Robertshaw on top of the Ziggurat of Ur, a 4000 year old flat- topped pyramid in southern Iraq

wholeheartedly embraced and implemented by everyone in theatre. I was inspired by the professionalism of the people I worked with and their selfless commitment to duty and to one another.

"I also appreciated the unsung heroes of the Iraqi conflict, the Bangladeshi and Indian cooks who provided fantastic meals for us 4 times a day. I also very much enjoyed meeting **Father Imad**, the Iraqi Christian leader in Basra, and listening to his stories about the Christian community and its continued aspirations. I also enjoyed my eclectic church congregation and bible study group. They were a real power house and supported me in prayer and care for the whole community. It was also good to work with fellow Chaplains. We met weekly to pray and support each other. One of the positive things was working with the Iraqi Army, teaching them basic first aid drills and watching them become more confident and professional.

"What did I learn? That my life in the UK is very easy! I learnt that loyalty is a two-way process and that the armed forces have it in 'bag fulls'; that life is precarious and that conflict does not have to be personal; that all people are precious and have great value. These lessons were perhaps more revision than revelation because I am well aware that difficult and hard things can happen at any time in all our lives.

"My final reflections: All mil pers away from home on ops miss their families and friends. Comms from Iraq to home are pretty good, although we were discouraged for security reasons from using our own mobile phones. Airmail letters, known as Blueys, and E-blueys, sent over the internet but delivered in printed form, were really good. Email, although very slow, was also a good way to communicate, especially when using ArmyNet, the website dedicated to the mil community."

Padre Sean arrived home on Thursday 29 November, less than 24 hrs after leaving the COB, and instead of going on leave, he went back to work on the Monday following his return. He met up again with the UK Medical Group on 11 December to conduct their end of tour service at All Saints Pavement Church in York, before they went on Post Operational Tour Leave.

39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col CM Lankester TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) MJ Petts**

With all the Christmas festivities now fading into memory, the busy ex and trg period begins with the "bang" of Ex COLD START. The Sqs then have a few weekends in which to finalise their individual trg requirements for the year, before the build up to the 2 Sig Bde CPX and Regt FTX come round once again. For this edition of *The Wire*, the Sqns describe their experiences on the recent Regtl Ex COLD START.

SUPPORT (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CM Dawes TD**
SPSI	**SSgt GW Proctor**

HQ Sqn now known as Sp Sqn has had a busy couple of months with both Sqn and Regtl exs and the annual Horfield All Ranks Christmas function. We welcome back **WO2(FofS (V)) Klass** on his safe return from Op HERRICK.

EXERCISE COLD START 2008

Ex COLD START is the annual inf based ex organised by 94 Sig Sqn and this year the venue was to be Minley Trg Area near Aldershot. The ex is known within the Regt for being a demanding yet fun ex; this year was no exception. The sp and directing staff provided the exercising troops with no end of entertainment as they managed to pick the largest bog in southern England in which to set up EXCON. **LCpl Vanesia Nash** provided yet more entertainment managing to get not 1 but

2 Land Rovers bogged in over the weekend which required REME assistance.

EXERCISE PHASE - *by Sigs Carly Smith and Emma Robinson*

When we first arrived it was raining heavily. In our minds we were thinking this should be renamed as Ex COLD (and very WET) START! We were met by the DS staff, put into 3 Pls, issued our rations and ammo and shown to our harbour areas.
The next morning we were shown some sect and patrol drills, it was a chance to practise different formations and using the terrain to our advantage. We were then given a briefing on Prisoners of War which was the first insight we had both experienced. We found this very interesting.

We were briefed on how to disarm, search, and administer first aid, segregate and escort POWs. We then went onto the main part of the ex which was to patrol to the bridge, then clear and occupy it. The patrol formations taught that morning were used as we patrolled through open and wooded ground. We were faced with 2 attacks before we got to our main objective. Our sect had to clear and occupy the bridge without our sect comd and 2 other pl members who had been injured but by then we were met by the other pls and the bridge was cleared and occupied under a hail of shots and pyrotechnics. After that we were distributed to different areas to stand guard and to set up harbour areas. The next morning we cleared up our harbour areas and patrolled down to Hawley Lake, ready for the final attack.
We were pleasantly surprised to find out that we would start the final attack with an asslt onto a beach. After the health and safety briefs and some trg on and off the water, the adrenalin was pumping and we wanted to crack on with the attack. We were the 2nd pl to arrive on the island and we were mainly needed as fire sp as the enemy had already been located and the pl there first were on their way in to destroy them.

The weekend was great mainly due to the amphibious attack which was completely new territory and also being able to practise different patrol formations and sect attacks. After a jam packed weekend in the field, the bus that arrived to collect us was by then the most beautiful sight we had seen all weekend!

THE ENEMY VIEWPOINT - *by Maj Clive Dawes*

The first weekend of the year turned out to be a real cracker. For those who got time off work, the weekend started with a helicopter trip from Bristol and once everyone was in place there were a number of pl and sect attacks, all supported by an incredible amount of ammo and pyro. Although all were tired and wet, there was plenty of excitement that outweighed the discomfort. I can still see the landing craft making their way through the plumes of water made by the simulated artillery attack. It was a pity however to see **WO2 Graham Peet** blown to pieces on the beach but at least he took some of the attacking forces with him. As comd of the enemy forces, I had but one mission: stop the blue force! In doing so, along with **WO1 Dickie Lee**, I managed to get "killed" a number of times and captured twice (even though **Sgt Caroline Carter's** ability to apply handcuffs wasn't too good and I could have escaped). **LCpl Marie Perry** did manage to "leg-it", chased by a full sect (after some discussion as to whether it was worth the energy). She was eventually retaken and fortunately not treated too harshly by her captors.

57 (CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Iain Sainsbury**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Ben Newby**

Ex COLD START is always a very apt name for an ex at this time of year. We were cold, wet and muddy through all of it, but spirits remained high. A high standard of trg was provided to all of us and one expects it was even better for potential recruits to come along and have a look at what they could be letting themselves in for! The ex began for a few "lucky" troops being deployed by CH-47 Chinook to 'Swynonia' on the Friday afternoon. For the remainder, the trip was rather more mundane and a coach trip from Bristol to Aldershot in the driving rain gave us the "perfect" opening to the ex.

On deployment into Swynonia, the troops were sorted into our pls and sects, issued ammo and rations, then sent to harbour areas to basher up, sort admin out and get their heads down while we waited for the rest of the troops to arrive, which took longer than expected due to the weather and the flooding at Bristol and Gloucester! There was only one problem with our harbour area which was the rain filled ditch you had to cross to get into it. The ditch claimed a lot of people that night and the next morning with its deceiving look of being shallow when it actually was over 2 ft deep!

We kicked off Saturday with learning and refreshing pl/sect tactics when patrolling and moving over ground and then we split up into our pls and patrolled to our objective, which was to capture a bridge. On the way we encountered an ambush, where we got to practise our newly refreshed lesson in sect and pl attacks and everyone got into the swing of things and started to get used to the sects they were working in. When it came down to the final asslt on Saturday, Sect 2 were leading followed by Sect 3 with us as Sect 1 bringing up the rear, the bridge was assaulted and won with very few 'casualties' to our pl. Our sect was tasked to guard the crossroads just down from the bridge. During the early evening 2 and 3 Sects were attacked by the scattered enemy forces we had defeated earlier. Although we were spared the direct asslt, we were ready to reinforce the other sects and repel the enemy aggression.

Sunday morning kicked off nicely with a short tab to the lake for our amphibious lake crossing. We were shown how to enter and exit the boats properly and went through our drills for when we landed on the beach. Then came the final asslt. We piled into the boats for our trip across the lake onto the beach and headed over to the other side and into the final attack, yet again using what we had learned from the previous attacks to make our asslt go more smoothly.

All in all it was a very good weekend to go on, morale was good and you could see how much effort people put in by the silence on the coach on the way back to Bristol, well except the snorers among us!!!

57 Sig Sqn cross Hawley lake, en route to their final attack

94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Vince Connelly TD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Matt Chapman**

EXERCISE COLD START - *by 2Lt Craster*

Ex COLD START was 94 Sig Sqn's opportunity to get back to the basics of soldiering with an inf ex. The scenario involved assisting a country that had been invaded by a neighbour for its oil and as such, elements of 94 Sig Sqn were re-rolled as an inf coy (with our other Regtl Sqns), sent to clear the enemy from the area near Minley Manor and Hawley Lake. The weekend started off with freezing temperatures and horizontal rain on the Friday night,

replaced by clear blue skies on the Saturday and strong winds on the Sunday. **Capt Macmillan** and **Capt Hawes**, both from 94 Sig Sqn took turns being Coy Comd and 2IC throughout the weekend, while the remainder of the Sqn made up 1 Pl. The Regt and attachments arrived later on the Friday evening to form up 2 and 3 Pls.

The O group on the Friday night began at 2330hrs, which resulted in the other 2 pl comds and myself finishing our orders at 0430hrs. After an hour's sleep we ware ready for the day ahead. First up were some refresher drills on basic inf skills and tactics. After that we were given an hour or so to make final preparations and run through our basic drills. H hr followed at 1200hrs with 1 Pl stepping over the Line of Departure. Almost immediately we came under contact and RTR drills were carried out allowing us to get into dead ground. We did exceptionally well over the next few hours clearing the enemy from the area with no major mishaps occurring. 1 Pl from 94 Sig Sqn operated with increasing confidence throughout the day gaining momentum and improving with each asslt.

On Saturday night, 1 Pl were placed a couple of hundred metres forward of the rest of the coy in a copse with 180 degree views of the surroundings. An unexpected enemy probe a couple of hours after dark resulted in the pl being stood to. Night turned into day with muzzle flashes lighting up the area in front of us. An asslt straight down the middle by half of the pl saw the enemy off, with 2 Pl's QRF arriving a few minutes later to search the area to our front.

On Sunday morning we moved onto Hawley Lake where we spent a couple of hours practising beach landings and being taught the tactics that would be needed for a successful asslt. The final attack went in with 3 Pl assaulting the beach first, being supported by simulated mortar fire. A massive amount of pyrotechnics and ammunition was used in securing the beach, really adding to the atmosphere and realism. The enemy responded by withdrawing to various in depth positions, allowing 2 Pl to land on the beach. 1 Pl followed suit and were immediately pushed to the front in order to clear the final area within our boundary. The hour running up to this point was a blur as pls merged with each other, pushed through each other and the final in depth enemy positions were successfully cleared.
All in all it was a fantastic exercise to get rid of the cob webs that had built up over the festive period and it was brilliant to get back to the basics of soldiering.

OC Coy for the day, Capt Nev McMillian delivers radio orders

EXERCISE CASTLE COMMS 1

It was a cold, but thankfully clear and dry, weekend in February and 94 Sig Sqn made a short journey south of its Windsor HQ to a number of locations around Aldershot and Longmoor for its first comms ex of the year. With the inf skills up to scratch after a highly enjoyable, although wet and muddy, Ex COLD START, the Sqn was to embark on what could be its last ever 'fully Clansman' CNR ex. With Bowman yet to be delivered the old Clansman skills were brought to bear on another challenging ex. With wide ranging experience on each of the 3 man dets and a special appearance by **Sgt Bilcliffe**, the troops deployed late on Friday evening with the task of establishing comms under the threat of potential engagement from enemy special forces. **LCpl O'Marah** was unfortunate to take another 'Clansman paperweight' out into the field, but after some PSI 'tech support' from **Sgt Bird**, the det was back up and running. It became clear that **Cpl Clarke** was so keen to be out on ex that he 'accidentally' broke his veh and had to be towed back to Windsor. The Sunday morning saw another early start as the dets fought a series of small contacts with the enemy special forces. The pure inf trg of COLD START paid massive dividends and the blue forces were victorious in battle.

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col FER Whichelo**
RSM **WO1 Coates**

EXERCISE BLUENOSE FINN - *by SSgt Dennison*

At 0015hrs on 5 January 2008, a group of would be skiers from 40 (U) Sig Regt mustered at Clonaver TA Centre for the start of the skiing ex to be held from 5 to12 January at Army Trg Centre (ATC) Hebertushaus, Oberstdorf, Bavaria. Weather conditions in NI could have allowed the ex to be conducted there, due to the amount of recent heavy snowfall along the east of the Province just after New Year.
After initial briefing checks and passport checks, etc, the group boarded the tpt under the command of exped leader, **Capt Derek Irvine**, and set out for the airport driven by the ever courteous **Sgt Wendy Cush**, who treated us to a pleasant stress free journey. We checked in and boarded our flight to Friedrichschafen.

Day 1 The group picked up 2 minibuses and initially followed a circular route back to the airport before following a crease in the map towards Oberstdorf, eventually arriving at Hubertushaus Ski Lodge. The group was met by the lodge manager, **Steve Clifford**. The lodge is a multi-activity centre, run by the ATC. The lodge building was once a German customs facility, which was closed down and offered for use to British Forces Germany. The centre boasts excellent accn and facilities such as a restaurant, bar, sauna, TV room, drying room, fitness suite, laundry room, as well as a well-equipped trg wing and classroom. After the usual mandatory briefings, a curfew timing of 2359hrs was imposed and straightaway, the group formed an escape committee. That night, the tunnellers started work on tunnels Tom, Dick and Harry.

Later that day, we were sized and issued with our ski eqpt. This was delayed, however, due to the fact that the Centre staff had trouble finding the colour-coordinated gear to match **LCpl Lisa Hanna's** new hat purchased from TV's Zig Zag. **Cpl Jackie McKeown** wasn't too bothered about her eqpt and was able to salvage some from the pile discarded by **LCpl Hanna**. The rest of the day was spent preparing ski gear and taking a well-deserved rest from a long and arduous journey.

Over dinner, **Capt Martin Mayo** and **Capt Derek Irvine** had a discussion on the abilities of the skiers and what groups they should be allocated to, dependent on their experience and ability. **Capt Mayo** was determined to be placed with the advanced group because he had watched the full boxed set of James Bond movies. Not only that, he had just purchased a very trendy ski suit in the Matalan sales. Through the course of the evening, group allocation would be the subject of lengthy debate.

Capt Martin Mayo did not take being dropped from the advanced group too well

Day 2 Breakfast was at 0730hrs and after a hearty morning meal; the group boarded the tpt and set off for the Feldhorn Zwei Land ski range, which straddles the Germany/Austria border. A ski-off was conducted by **Sgt Simon Coulson** from 4 Mercia Regt. It was determined that **Capt Mayo** would not be in the advanced group but he was in fact advised to retain the receipt for his newly purchased ski suit and obtain a full refund from Matalan. After a few pouts and a flutter of the eye lashes, **Capt Lucy Webster** was chosen for the advanced ski group. Weather conditions were not favourable due to heavy rain-fall, which created slushy conditions on the lower slopes and heavy snow-fall, strong freezing cross-winds, resulting in poor visibility and poor skiing conditions on the upper slopes. Most skiers found conditions difficult on Day 1, including **WO2 'Paddy' Peacock**, who kept falling over due to being issued with a set of mess tins instead of skis. These were exchanged, however, for the correct size of skis, which lead to an audition for the next James Bond movie, much to the dismay of **Capt Mayo**.

Day 3 Disaster struck on Day 3, as **LCpl Hanna** lost one of the bobbles from her new Zig Zag hat. Immediately all skiing was suspended and search parties were dispatched to find the missing item. **SSgt Cathy Barker** produced a Singer sewing machine from her emergency day sack and re-attached the severed balls. Normal skiing then resumed. The novice group were progressing well and after 3 days of instruction on how to tie their boots up, they safely progressed out of the mini-bus and onto the nursery slopes under the expert tuition of **Sgt Coulson**. **SSgt Ricky Dennison** took to the slopes like a new-born giraffe on Ecstasy. **Sig Shane Loughlin** was naturally comfortable on the slopes: he was to skiing as Evil Knievel was to safe cycling.

At the top of the Nebelhorn Mountain, Group 2 were enjoying glorious skiing conditions, where **Capt Sam Burgess** found it very difficult to manage his Zimmer frame down some of the red routes, hampered by **Capt Mayo**, the human snowball. **Sgt Neil McConnell** had no problems on his descent as he snow-ploughed at high-speed on his way down the slopes, clearing all obstacles in his path, including snow-boarders, women and children. **LCpl Nick Graham** was detached for a short time from Group 2 due to an over-sight in his orientation and after a grand tour of the Italian Dolomites; he joined the rest of his group for hot chocolate in the restaurant. All skiers at this stage were progressing well, none more than **SSgt Cathy Barker**, who treated the advanced group to a display of pole dancing. Needless to say, the pole won. At this stage, **Capt Marty Mayo** had got over the embarrassment of his self demotion, and was gaining his confidence as team biff.

Day 4 The weather on Day 4 was clear but we did not see the glorious sun-shine of the previous day. The slopes were well pisted, although somewhat icy, which lead to tricky conditions. This did not deter **Sgt McConnell**, who skied so much that his skis ended up to the same thickness as a Rizzla paper. **Capt Burgess** had improved immensely during the day, and was quoted as saying that it was due to the fact that he was no longer burdened by his colleague **Capt 'Rupert' Mayo.** The slopes were not as busy but there was still the problem of snowboarders blocking the centre of the piste, accompanied by **LCpl Nick Graham. Capt Irvine** had also improved immensely and was not skiing downhill with the aid of the same pool cues which helped him win the pool competition the previous night. **Capt Webster** maintained the same pose for the full length of a red run before a display to rival **Eddie the Eagle** and **Bambi** on ice, while attempting a ski jump.

Sgt Neil McConnell showing off his snow plough technique

Meanwhile, **Cpl Jackie McKeown** would not believe anything her instructor told her on the basis of her belief that all men are liars. **Sig Shane Loughlin** was challenging his instructor, **Sgt Coulson,** to a grand slalom race.

Day 5 All the groups at this stage were feeling the effects of a challenging ski package, but were confident that they had achieved the Basic Ski Proficiency. The rest of the day consisted of fun skiing in a relaxed environment, much to the pleasure of the whole group. This gave us all a chance to hone the skills that had been taught during the week. That evening, the escape tunnels were completed and the group went out and RVd at Reilly's Irish Bar, where **WO2 Peacock** sang some traditional war-time songs, which attracted the attention of the camp guards, who rounded up the group and drove them back to the lodge before curfew. On arrival, **Capt Irvine** was met by the MO, who surgically removed the pole cue from his grip.

Day 6 This was the final morning of the ski ex, prior to handing back accn and eqpt. Most of the group returned to the slopes, including **Capt Mayo**, who felt that he had to make an apology to the decent skiers of Bavaria. On completion of a good morning on the piste, the group returned to the lodge for post ex admin. The remainder of the day was spent returning to Friedrichschafen, culminating in a group meal and social evening in a posh hotel prior to the flight home. The group was full of excitement safe in the knowledge that we would be met on the other side by the ever courteous **Sgt Wendy Cush**.

Ex BLUENOSE FINN was a huge success and this was down to the hard work of Ex Comd **Capt Irvine** and **Sgt McConnell**. Big thanks are also extended to **Sgt Coulson** for his efforts and excellent ski Instruction, not to mention ATC Germany for the provision of excellent facilities and eqpt. The aim of the ex was achieved, resulting in skiers within the group from novice to advance having improved their skills immensely and more than capable on any piste safely within their limitations.

VISIT TO THE SOMME HERITAGE CENTRE
- by SSgt Stansfield

On a rather clear and warm February afternoon (very rare over here), a contingent of 40 Sig Regt embarked on a trip to The Somme Heritage Centre, with the intention of gaining an insight

into the life of the humble "Tommy" in the trenches of the Great War. Our tour, led by a resident expert, gave us every little detail imaginable. There were countless genuine artefacts on display, ranging from wpns and ammo to the actual uniforms worn by the soldiers in the Battle of The Somme. Interestingly one of the uniforms appeared to have the name and regimental number of our MTWO, **WO2 'Den' Watts** sewn into the collar.

As the tour progressed, we walked through reconstructed trenches depicting the fighting and living conditions the men had to endure and at times the mood of our party was very sombre as people reflected on the sacrifices made all those years ago. The tour culminated with a video, viewed over a reconstruction of 'No-Mans land' showing actual footage of the fighting at the Battle of The Somme, followed by a viewing of the various memorials constructed to commemorate those who gave their lives in France.

Maj White and SSgt Nordon and SSgt Den Nordon at the The Somme Heritage Centre

Any day out would not be complete without the obligatory photo and true to form **Maj 'Andy' White** and **SSgt 'Den' Nordon** weren't too far away as the camera was produced. Never ones to miss a photo opportunity they weren't happy with the first shot and insisted on a second one. The Somme Heritage centre is located in Newtownards, Northern Ireland and more information can be found at www.irishsoldier.org.

THE ROYAL GUN SALUTE WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 08

The Royal Gun Salute hosted by 40 (Ulster) Signal Regiment

Several months ago the unit was given the fantastic opportunity to host a large number of guests at Hillsbough Castle for the occasion of the Royal Gun Salute. For this extremely prestigious event, we invited our TA soldiers along with their civilian employers and members of the Belfast Civil Contingency (Comms) Committee. The event allowed the Regt to thank the civilian employers for all the support that they have given to the TA over the recent years. It also allowed the employers to gain a further understanding of the importance of the TA, in particular 40 (U) Sig Regt to both the rest of world ops and ops within the UK.

Royal gun salutes mark special royal occasions on certain days of the year. On these days Royal salutes are fired from locations in London, Edinburgh and Stirling Castles and Hillsborough Castle near Belfast. The origin of Royal Salutes can be traced back to the custom of ships discharging and unloading their guns when entering a foreign port, thus rendering them defenceless. Ships would usually discharge 7 guns, thought to be due to the mystical significance of the number 7. Land batteries, having a greater supply of gunpowder, were able to fire 3 guns for every shot fired by the ships, and so the salute by shore batteries was 21 guns. This discharge of rounds showed that that there was no hostile intent form either party. The occasion for this Royal Salute on Wednesday 6 February 2008 marked the Queen's accession to the throne.

The day turned out to be a warm and sunny one as 70 guests arrived at Hillsborough Castle in NI to be greeted by 18 mil hosts in Service Dress. After some tea and scones in the Throne Room and some light music from the NI band, the CO, **Lt Col Whichelo** made a short welcoming address and thanked the 3 distinct groups of guests; the employers of our TA soldiers; our wives, husbands, partners and families; and those that worked for the civil contingents (i.e. the Ambulance, Police, Fire Service etc. True to his word the CO managed to deliver his speech without running over time and we were soon ushered out onto the castle terrace to watch the Royal Gun Salute.

Capt Bob Pye and Maj Andy White proudly show off their medals

The 3 light guns were already in position facing over the garden on the castle. The Inspecting Officer was the Lord Lieutenant of County Down. At exactly 1200hrs, 21 rounds were fired in short succession by 101 Gun Battery (V). This took about 3 mins to complete. By this time we were all very grateful for the yellow foam ear defence that had been handed out. Once the Lord Lieutenant had inspected the troops, we were allowed to go forward and inspect the guns ourselves. For the next 10 mins there was a wave of flashes as everyone took the compulsory cheesy photos. It then took all of our effort to remove the guests from the guns and move them back into the Throne Room for a tasty buffet lunch and a glass of wine.

The Royal Gun Salute was a huge success for us. Due to the troubles in NI the majority of our TA soldiers do not wish us to have any contact with their employers and so it can be extremely difficult to educate the employers about the role of the unit and needs of the Armed Forces. For this prestigious event we were supported by a large number of our TA solders and employers. The employers have since said they felt incredibly honoured to be invited to such an event and so this can only build bridges for us in the future. We only hope we are fortunate again next year to have this fantastic opportunity.

EXERCISE XL WARRIOR 18 – 20 JANUARY 2008 AT BALLYKINLER TRAINING CAMP - *by Lt Farmer*

After the Christmas break, the Regt conducted its first large ex of the New Year in order to test our comms capability, develop individual battle skills and attempt to shed a few pounds from the festive period. Ex XL WARRIOR was also an opportunity for the

Bde Comd to see the Regt in action. A wide range of activities were conducted throughout the weekend. Mil skills included veh and foot patrols, route searches and urban and rural anti-ambush drills. This provided an opportunity for the exercising troops to relay reports through the Comms Sp Teams to Bronze HQ and EXCON.

Friday evening saw members of the Regt arrive at Ballykinler and move to the Operations In Built Up Areas (OIBUA) briefing room for the ex brief. Strangely more pers showed up than expected, and the Regtl Ops team found themselves hurriedly assigning these extra pers to sects. This presented the new SVWO, **WO1 Tom Finlay** with an opportunity to meet and greet the assembled troops and **LCpl Andy Bradshaw** to conduct some quick VP revision. That done it was of to bed for what promised to be a busy day.

Capt Lucy Webster pretending that officers can map read

On Saturday morning the FFR and CST crews make a hasty exit onto the trg area to setup for the ex. At the same time the sects were split into 2 groups to undertake urban and rural contact drills. In the 'Village' **Lt Simon Farmer** and **WO2 Steve Higgins** conducted anti-ambush drills. Meanwhile **WO2 Manny McCrea** was seen lurking around ditches and behind walls, apparently with some rather crude looking IEDs. For many this was the first-time they had conducted such trg and everyone benefited from the knowledge of the ex-Royal Irish instructors.
At lunchtime **SSgt Colin Ritchie** arrived at the village with the dreaded range stew which actually went down a treat. Many were heard to say it was the best they had tasted and the SQMS returned to the cookhouse with empty containers for perhaps the first time in history!

After lunch the sects began their Round Robin stands. **WO2 McCrea** and his team, once again armed with some suspicious objects and a large quantity of D10, provided detailed trg on search ops. Over at the ranges, **Cpl Andy Blair** put his new RMQ qualification to good use and many members of the Regt successfully completed their APWT for their Bounty. **Sgt Graham Simmons** conducted a Navigation stand at the Boathouse on Ballykinler Point. Ironically a sect (who will remain nameless) became geographically embarrassed and turned up some 15 mins late!

At the far side of the trg area, sects had the opportunity to practise veh anti-ambush and extraction drills. The hollow was the setting for this and sects soon realised that extracting up a 100 ft hill under effective enemy fire was not the simplest of tasks, made harder for those carrying man pack Bowman radios. Shattered and out of ammo, the teams were then launched into a casualty evacuation ex conducted by **Cpl Davy Burgess**.

Trg continued into Saturday evening and pers received a brief on the upcoming Gibraltar ex in June and the CO conducted Values and Standards for those who required it for Bounty. It was then of to the NAAFI for a well earned beer. The Round Robin continued on Sunday morning with sects completing their remaining 2 stands. Once complete, it was back to the 'Village' for the CFT. The PTI team, led by **Cfn 'Knoxy' Knox** from the Regt's REME det with his famous sense of humour, ably brought the Regt successfully around the 6 mile course. Ex XL WARRIOR was a great success and helped prepare the Regt for future larger exs which are due to take place later this year.

69 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

EXERCISE MAPLE TALK 2

Ex MAPLE TALK 2 was held at Magilligan trg area over the period 8 – 10 February 2008 and was the second in the series of Back To Basics exs organised by the OC, **Maj 'Monty' Montgomery**. Each ex is designed to progressively reinforce and revise all aspects of communication skills within the Sqn.

This ex was largely organised by **SSgt Palmer**, who took the OC's idea and put it into a plan. He also added other aspects such as the new Bowman VHF radio along with some other novel ideas! The ex began on the Friday evening when the Belfast team arrived at Magilligan to join the remainder of the Sqn based in Limavady. It was already late, so after a few briefings and a speech by the SSM **WO2 Gamble**, the Sqn were dismissed and gathered to enjoy last orders (no not the written type).

Saturday morning's activities began bright and early with trg and revision on various man pack and veh eqpts. **Sgts Young** and **Lynch** enjoyed teaching the PRC320 (not that difficult surely?) until the CO, **Lt Col Whichelo** appeared and started asking far too many difficult questions. Luckily the OC put his ex-Traffic Officer hat on and came to their rescue.

As the morning progressed, the dets were formed up using pers from both dets and mixing in other trades and Arms, with the operators. Class 3 – 2 workbooks were distributed, and the crews set to work on their maps and plans prior to being released to the ex area. When **SSgt Palmer** was happy with the preparation, dets were deployed to various locations within the trg area to set up comms and dets carried our any tasks as ordered and were moved to a second location and so on. Each time, with different tasks and different antennae. The weather was perfect and helped with the general atmosphere of achievement and enjoyment! All dets had to work back to EXCON, in the form of a fully set up BRONZE HQ, where the Limavady clerk, **Cpl Colhoun**, set about ensuring everyone carried out their responsibilities and making the place work!

The PSIs, **SSgts McDougal** and **Vinnie** (just arrived from 19 Bde) and **Sgt Dugdale**, shifted from det to det ensuring all was up to their standard, or at least being gentle with their criticisms! The officer's hit team, comprising the OC, **Capt Sam Burgess** (Belfast Det Comd) and **Capt Ian Wolfe** (Regtl Traffic Officer), struck fear (or was it amusement) as they too, travelled from det to det asking awkward questions and offering constructive criticism

where they could. The mixed dets proved a success for most although **Sig Marshall**, the only Sig Det Comd, soon became disheartened. Despite arriving arrive at his location, a serious issue prevented him from communicating - his tea was cold and then everything that could go wrong did go wrong, even the OC and a supply of Kleenex couldn't help him! As if 2 teams of travelling minstrels were not enough, each det would be assessed by a Class 1 Operator who would judge them on all aspects of the det. The second assessment team was **Cpl Ritchie** with **Sigs Priestly** and **Kyle**. Things went well during the assessment stage with **Sig Priestly** excelling at mast erection. It wasn't until the move back to EXCON location that everything went pear shape. First the Land Rover battery went flat and they had to push the veh down the road to get it started. Then the driver decided it didn't know how many wheels it wanted to power and eventually they limped back to base location where **Cpl Wilson** (LAD) had both problems fixed within 20 mins of their arrival back at location.

The day cracked on and it was not until late evening when ENDEX was called and the teams could be debriefed and retire to tell their war stories to the TA Medics in the NAAFI bar. Even **Lt Simon Farmer** gave up his golden blanket award and turned up in time for his round! Sunday morning arrived far too early for some and started with the OC briefing everyone on how we actually got to the ex stage. Lots of strange words such as Warning Orders, Op Orders, CSSOs, PERSREPs and PXRs were banded about which most of us had never heard before. The point was to show us that a lot of planning is required before, during and after an ex and that the magic 'ex fairy' does not just dream up an idea and it happens. As the OC and other officers set off to Limavady for a grading and promotion board, the rest of us continued with lessons, debriefs, det turn around and other good stuff.

In the meantime, a collection was held to help out the SQMS, **SSgt Colin Ritchie** who was last seen digging for gold (or that is what he said!), on the trg area **(see attached photo).** His excuse was he only won £10 of the €95 million jackpot, after spending all his weekend pay on it.

SSgt Colin Richie digging for gold

All in all, the ex was a success with lots of trg, work books being filled in, fresh air and sunshine (a novelty in this area). It was great to see the Belfast and Limavady dets mixing at both work and play and we now move forward to the March and April exs with more confidence in ourselves and our eqpt.

71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col CS Tallents TD**
RSM **WO1 P Joyce**

70 (EY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

EXERCISE ICHABOD VIPER - *by 2Lt Alex Taffs*

I feel I almost have to write this in order to prevent the possible rumours getting out of control. What is follows is what actually happened and how a vicar's wife nearly got kicked in on my first pl attack out of Sandhurst.

The weekend started well, as most normal people's weekends do, with sleep. We arrived at our DOP on STANTA late, after delays on the M11 and got our heads down for the night. It is very rare to be cold in an issue sleeping bag but this was one of those nights but we woke refreshed for lessons on sect and pl battle drills. The weather was bright and clear, the Haribo plentiful and the morale high – in short, all was good. Later that afternoon I gave my first set of orders out of officer trg. It was a big thing for me. I had spent ages making the best ground model of my TA career to date, using all the shades of powder paint going, but the first thing that surprised me was that only 4 people turned up.

I had been so used to giving orders to entire pls or trg wings at a time, it just felt, well, weird. That passed quickly, nightfall came and the 3 recce patrols went off to objectives JORDAN, CAPRICE and BEYONCE to gather intelligence for the following morning's dawn attack. The patrols duly returned with some extremely artistic sketch maps and surprisingly, no horrific stories of getting lost or falling into swamps. I then put together my plan for my first pl attack out of officer trg to take place at day break. No great dramas here, a bit of a ninja test in some respects; we had some senior cadets attached to us for the craic and also it was an assault on a 2-storey house with likely depth positions. After a few hours of sleep, we woke and prepared for battle. I led the pl off with the recce patrol from the previous night who were now my lead asslt sect. We got to a junction and I did a quick navigation check but there was a problem. Both the lead scout and sect comd were adamant that we should turn right and I was sure it was left. I thought back to trg and decided that I should have confidence in the ones who actually went out on the recce.

As we filed into the FUP opposite our objective, a dog begun to bark. This was the first of a number of warning signs. I was sure there were no dogs in the area, except possibly **Mr Pieper's** Labradoodle, that I had heard so much about from everyone, particularly **Cpl Mallia**. We were now just in the wood line, not much more than 5m or so from the fence surrounding the house. I sited the fire sp sect and turned to the asslt sect comd.

"Let's crawl forward and get eyes on" I said.
As we crawled forward a few metres in cover, I raised my rifle to view the objective in the SUSAT. As I scanned the house for the side entrance by which the asslt sect was going to enter, I noticed another strange thing;
"**Cpl Denton**, are those net curtains in the windows?"
"Er, yes I see them too, sir"
"Are you sure this is the objective you recced last night?"
"Absolutely, we were definitely here last night"
"I think this is a civilian house, not objective JORDAN"
"Yep, I see what you mean"

Sgt Laskey with the fire sp sect was eager to get going; we were only minutes from H hr. We dashed back to the remainder of the pl and filed away from that location with some urgency. The house turned out to be the local rectory and we were only seconds away from a Board of Enquiry and/or other such bad things.

We established our actual position and doubled to a hasty FUP, catching the enemy by surprise as they had been briefed on the direction that we were going to approach from. It would have been relatively easy to brush it all off as a 'deception plan' of epic proportions but in the end the bar story that it produced outweighed all that. The actual attack went in smoothly and quickly with the objective and 2 depth positions cleared in good time.

We all learnt a lot this weekend and have many more bar stories to tell for it and luckily no vicars or their wives were harmed in the process. Dented pride will be fixed with some remedial navigation lessons in the near future...

265 (KCLY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Palmer TD**
SSM **WO2 A Keeble**
SPSI **SSgt T Evans**

The last 3 months have been a quiet time for 265 (KCLY) Sp Sqn. Although a quiet time for the Sqn means we are still very active sending soldiers on recruit and trade courses, deploying on ex, welcoming pers back from op tours and then sending yet more out to other parts of the world. Following their successful completion of their recruit and pre-trade course trg, **Sigs Andy Turner**, **Lloyd Dellaway** and **Stuart Turner** deployed "up North" for their 9 day trade course. All 3 passed with flying colours to enhance the Sqn skill set even further. The beginning of December saw **Sig Jim Sutton** return in one piece from his tour of duty in Iraq and was duly promoted to LCpl. No sooner had he arrived back than **LCpls Jeff Porter** and **Aaron Pinchbeck** were leaving for their pre-deployment trg before joining up with 697 Sig Tp and deploying to Kosovo as part of Op OCULUS. We wish them all the best and hope they return safe and sound in 9 months time.

December brought the usual Christmas Ex. The Sqn deployed on Ex SHARP SANTA over the period of 7 – 9 December. Phase 1 of the ex was a veh night navex; the course designed by **WO2(SSM) Ade Keeble** started at 2100hrs and took us through the country roads around Crowborough. Team captains for the navex were **Pte Wayne Ede** and **LCpl Steve Williams**. Phase 2 began on Saturday morning with a series of mil stands designed to challenge the teams including such favourites as Battlefield Casualty Drills which involved rescuing a stranded Santa from a mine field, CBRN drills followed by veh recognition in full IPE. Saturday night the Sqn was treated to Christmas meal served by the Seniors and Offices followed by entertainment from DJ, **SSgt Mick Goodwin**. Sunday saw the final event with a game of non-stop kwik cricket. There were only ever 2 teams in contention and the eventual winners were **LCpl Steve Williams**, **Cpl Pete Alsop** and **Sig Dean Caiels**. On top of this, members of the Sqn were also deploying to North Wales to take part in selection processes for Ex MIDNIGHT SUN; an AT exped to Greenland in August.

Finally January came and the Sqn tottered off to Hythe Ranges to hone its shooting skills. The following week saw the Sqn deploy with the rest of the Regt to Napier Barracks on Ex PHOENIX TRAINER 1. Saturday morning involved relevant trade trg followed by mil skills (BCD and sect attacks) in the afternoon, with an Adjt's brief about JPA appraisals in the evening. Sunday morning, after the various Saturday night functions, all mil pers mustered for the CO's Challenge – a 2 mile loaded march, followed by a 2 mile field gun carry. This involved the collection of 2 tyres, an ammo box and finally a log, at different stages! The Sqn responded well to the challenges and managed an honourable 2nd place.

70 Sqn prepare for the CO's Challenge

SSgt Mathews acquires some tyres during the log race

The weekend was concluded with the CO's address, which included a brief about the High Readiness Reserve initiative. The weekend was a complete success and I am sure future Regtl weekends will be as successful.

EXERCISE COCKNEY PHOENIX SLIDE 08

After months of planning by **Capt Terry Hackett** and **Sgt Richie Marsh**, the 17 selected to brave the French Alps for Ex COCKNEY PHOENIX SLIDE arrived at RHQ on 26 January 2008 to start the AT event of the year. The exped was a mix of Regular and TA pers ranging in rank from Maj to Sig from within the Regt, instructed by **Capt Holly Richardson** our ski instructor Adjt and **SSgt Stu Foster**, our former IS Eng who we borrowed from 101 Log Bde. We were also lucky to borrow **Cpl Bill Francis** RLC attached from 2 MERCIAN who cooked for us for the week.

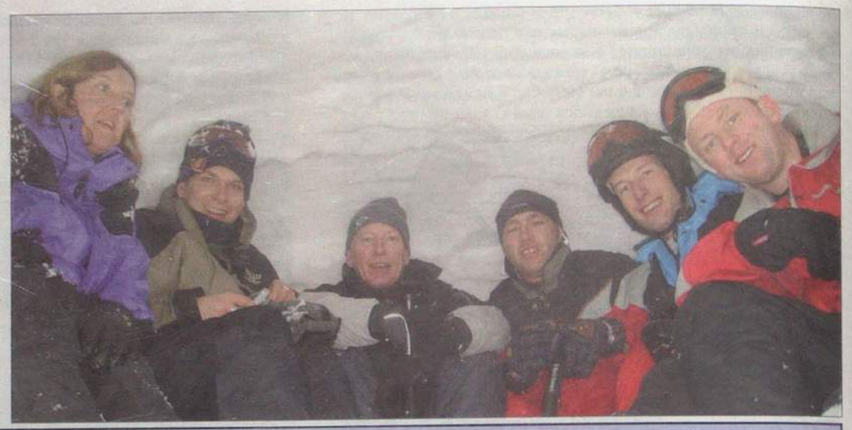
The aim of the ex was to introduce novices and develop existing skiers in order for them to gain the qualifications of Basic Ski Proficiency and Ski Tour Proficiency (BSP and STP) within the over arching mantra of AT.

This all seemed a long way off at Bexleyheath as a number of duties still had to be performed before we could depart. We were all fitted out with top quality skiing eqpt by **WO2(RQMS) Martyn Feather**. Next, we moved to the MT Dept, where we all practised the art of fitting snow chains under the watchful eye of **Sgt Jackie Morse**. After loading all the kit on to the Transit and 2 minibuses, a document check and final brief, we departed the TAC at 1730hrs for Dover to catch our ferry for the start of the long 1000km drive to our chalet.

After a demanding journey through the night, we arrived at our accn above the aptly named Avalanche Bar in the small French resort town of Chatel and with an organized human chain we unloaded all the kit from the vehs and settled in to our new surroundings. With final eqpt checks and adjustment complete, we were ready to start 5 days of intensive skiing After a day of initial trg the party was split into 2 groups for BSP and STP. The BSP group were introduced to the basic skills of controlled manoeuvre on the nursery slopes followed by gentle green and blue runs. The STP group grappled with advanced technical skills including off piste skiing across deep unpacked snow and the use of self-adhesive goat hair skins on the base of their skis used to provide grip for uphill skiing and climbing mountains.

After a few days the BSP had moved on to parallel techniques and tackled more demanding red slopes although some still maintained their reliance on their snow plough skills. The STP group had moved on to testing snow slabs for avalanche risk, using probes and transceivers. Their trg culminated in an introduction into digging both emergency and deliberate shelters in the snow.

The week flew by and before we knew it is was our final group meal prepared by our excellent chef **Bill**. In customary style an award was present to the most improved novice; this year **Sgt John Laskey**. After loading the tpt and clearing the accn, we departed for home interrupted only by some fresh snow providing an opportunity to exercise our snow chain skills. Kit and tpt squared away, the group dispersed from Bexleyheath early Sunday morning.



NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215)

OC **Maj RDW Rumsey**
RSM **WO1(RSM) A Caulfield**

It has been some months since 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215) has appeared in *The Wire* in what has been a very busy period for the Sqn. There have been many success stories from Op TELIC 10 and since our arrival back in the UK coincided with the Christmas silly season, there is certainly lots to tell in this overview and edited highlights of the last 4 months.

RETURN AND ROUND UP FROM OP TELIC 10

The latter part of Op TELIC 10 saw the shift in emphasis from war fighting ops to mil trg assistance in sp of the Iraqi security forces and in common with the rest of the Bde the Sqn was very busy.

BOWMAN SUPPORT TO *RFA SIR BEDIVERE* AND *HMS ARGYLL* - *by LCpl Tyler*

Towards the end of the tour on Op TELIC 10, **LCpl 'Tim' Tyler** and **SSgt (YofS) 'Greg' Cox** made a couple of vital trg sp visits to ships out in the Persian Gulf supporting ops in Iraq. The ships were not utilising their Bowman capability to its full potential and so the 'dream team' were deployed! The brief was that they had Bowman on board but no-one had been trained to use it. Their job entailed teaching them how to use the Bowman radios and ComBAT. A week was spent on each ship and this involved some interesting extra work for **LCpl Tyler** who got involved in a boarding op with the US Coast Guards onto a massive Indian super tanker. The boarding in total took about 2 hrs to complete but the most entertaining part of the whole thing was climbing back down the rope ladder to the RIB along side. This involved careful timing so you didn't go into the drink! The journey out and back to the ship on an Iraqi patrol boat was a little ropey to say the least; it is best put down to an experience to be had only once. Both visits were very productive and the crew of both ships benefited from the trg provided.

MONITORING, MENTORING AND TRAINING IRAQI SECURITY FORCES - *by LCpl Hughes*

Tasked to help in the trg of the Iraqi Security Forces, some members of the Sqn were selected to offer advice and sp in order to help produce a well trained and motivated force that could deal with any type of situation.

I was tasked to go and complete a recce of some Iraqi Army locations, specifically looking at where we could install temporary power and lighting so that the Iraqi security force HQ could operate more effectively in their new HQ location. It was obvious that they had very little but I also noticed the condition the new generators were in – these had recently been donated by the Americans. I also had to give lessons to improve confidence on the eqpt. Teaching was interesting and there were some translational challenges which had to be overcome. They were enthusiastic and hopefully, they learnt something and can look after the gehes better now which should prolong the life of the eqpt ten fold. This was the first of many deployments by trade specialists from the Sqn which also saw **Cpl 'Hugh' Morris** and **Cpl 'Elvis' Jones** attached to the Irish Guards BG and **Cpl 'Gromit' Wallace** to the 1RHA BG; all three were tasked to carry out recces of the Iraqi Security Forces CIS capabilities. This was to give a start state understanding in order to enable structured help and advice to be given to further develop Iraqi comms capability.

KUWAIT SUPPORT FACILITY (KSF) - *by Cpl Hayes*

Mobile Synergy and Dagger dets were deployed to Camp Buering, Kuwait in order to build and implement the KSF. Pre-planning and organisation proved difficult and politics prevented movement on desired dates. This gave **Cpl Virtue** a 2 month holiday when he deployed with an INET JOCS dial up package to provide comms on his recce for the insertion of the dets. The dets were finally granted permission to deploy and the det comds **Cpl Paul Hayes**, **Cpl Dodge** and **LCpl Mackie**, rolled out their dets and hit the ground running. The work to set up was hard with long working days and a few long nights too. All the hard work was however rewarded with some play, Mackie's Karaoke skills in the Green Beans Café were crowd pleasing (when he put the mic down). **Cpl Dodge** owns shares in Starbucks and Green Beans after he drunk them out of Latte's. The facilities on Camp Buering were excellent but after a couple of months of nothing but burgers, fried chicken and gallons of mountain dew and Coke, the guys were glad to get back to a British cookhouse and some real food.

The Synergy crew practising their moves to LCpl Mackie's karaoke in Kuwait

CHARITY EVENTS - *by Cpl Peters*

Despite the busy nature of ops, the Sqn still found time to organise and run a number of charity events which led to over £2000 being raised for BLESMA. It all started off with the charity darts tournament organised by **Cpl 'Dai' Mundy**, who appealed to the competitive nature of the Sqn and over the week, ran a knock-out darts competition. The final saw some fierce rivalry between the technicians and operators with **Cpl 'John' Hayes** keeping his cool to beat **LCpl 'Robbo' Robertson**. On the back of this success, **LCpl 'Neill' Mackie** organised a pool tournament and raffle. There were a few shock exits early on – notably **LCpl Arnold** who was beaten by the BALO, **Flt Lt 'Tina' Jessop** and had to go in to hiding for a few days after getting grief for being beaten by a girl. The evening of the final saw **Cpl Hayes** the champion of pub sports beaten by fellow tech **Cpl 'Danny' Miller**. The techs obviously had too much time on their hands! The final event organised by **Cpl 'Emma' Meadows** was a Halloween Generation Game theme with each dept entering a team. The evening was a huge success although it may just have been an excuse to get everyone to dip their hands in buckets of beans and eat weird food as marmite fan **Capt 'Harriet' Cairns** discovered.

2IC Capt 'Harriet' Cairns enjoying the marmite experience at the Generation Game night

GIRLS RUGBY TEAM - *by LCpl Yarwood*

To get in the spirit of the Rugby World Cup, 2 Royal Welsh Regiment organised a 7-a-side 'touch' rugby tournament. All the teams were all male except for a group of females from the Sqn and Bde HQ. After a few practices at understanding the rules, we were ready to give it our best. Our first game was against 4 Rifles. They thought they would take it easy on us as we were an all female team but they were in for a shock. We came at them hard, took a few players out and were flying in the lead at half time. The crowd loved it and the adrenaline was pumping through us all. The Rifles had a good drilling at half time by their coach and came back at us hard. **Cpl 'Donna' Swingler** felt the pain from one individual after she was taken down and out of the game. The score was very close and in the end we lost by a margin denting some pride along the way. Overall we came 8th out of 12 teams, which was not a bad result considering we played against all male teams – well done girls!

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION - *by Cpl McMahon*

The planning for the Sqn's Christmas function started in early October 2007. Due to the unit being deployed, the small Rear Party was tasked with organising the event. After some initial research by **SSgt 'Fozzy' Foster**, a plan was hatched to head somewhere slightly further a field; that field turned out to be Salisbury Race Course. Once the logistics and planning were finished, all that remained was to wait for the date and enjoy the evening. The members of the Sqn headed for the venue on coaches, provided through the welfare fund. Some of the guests were dressed to the nines, with new hairdos and nail jobs all round and that was just the blokes! While some of the Sqn decided to brighten up the evening, quite literally in bright pastel 'pimp' outfits who brought some colour and laughter to the occasion. With the music and drinks flowing never a good combination there was definitely some dodgy dancing going on. With all enjoying the festivities there was a few sore heads the next morning.

Cpl 'Donna Swingler' LCpl 'Hannah' Yarwood and LCpl Yapp show their appreciation of the food

JUNIORS *v* SENIORS FOOTBALL - *by Sig Paige*

On the morning of 12 December, the Sqn headed off to Bulford for the ultimate grudge-match of the year.....Juniors *v* Seniors football. Both teams arrived in good spirits and after a much needed warm-up, they were ready for the kick off. The Seniors in blue began the first half strongly and gained a 2 – 0 lead thanks to **SSgt Barrass** and a penalty from **Sgt 'Jonah' Jones**.

Needless to say, the Juniors, in mighty red (who were clearly better), kept their heads high. With the sell-out crowd cheering them on, they re-grouped and brought the game back to 2 – 2 with a great header from **Sig 'Smudge' Smith** and a penalty by **Sig 'Moonhead' Ewen**.

The second half was pretty slow but thanks to more penalties by **Sig Smith** and **Cpl 'Moe' Morris**, the Juniors went 4 – 2 up. With only 2 yellow cards shown for the whole match (down on last year!), **Lt 'Chris' Anderson** for deliberate handball and **Sgt Jones** for dissent (tut tut), it seemed only fitting to cap this and issue a red card to my Tp SSgt for foul language to complete the hat trick.

SSgt 'Fossy' Foster shows the young lads how it is done!

4 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC **Maj PR Griffiths**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Bayley**

The Sqn is now well ensconced in Basra, Iraq. The first few months have been busy: adapting to an unfamiliar environment and the op tempo, planning and executing the reorganization of the HQ from a CIS perspective and celebrating Christmas and New Year in the desert. The Sqn's soldiers are deployed to numerous locations in support of the Multi National Force effort – with even the OC managing to escape to Tallil to conduct Key Leadership Engagement and go sightseeing. However, we're still finding the time for sport and a myriad of charity events – with an increasingly popular rugby club, a Sqn led 5-a-side football competition for all Contingency Operating Base (COB) units, a highly successful quiz night and a Fantasy Football League. There's no time for boredom to set in! The OC is proud of his Sqn's commitment and ongoing efforts, both in and out of work, in Iraq and back in Osnabrück. The Black Rats.

CHRISTMAS ON THE COB

The festive time of year approached the members of 204 Sig Sqn soon after the Bde's deployment to Iraq and offered a break from the normal day-to-day life of those currently deployed on Op TELIC 11. A range of activities were laid on in the COB, catering for almost everyone's tastes. Of course, this started with a traditional and well-voiced carol service on Christmas Eve. The big event was the Turkey Trot, a 5 mile 'Fun Run' around the COB to raise money for the Help for Heroes campaign, an undoubtedly worthy cause. Some turned up in normal running kit, the Ops Officer, **Capt Ben Price**, sported superb leggings, the Turkey Trot t-shirt and his race number, which coincidently was 204. Others took the more 'festive approach'. Tigris Tp took the fancy dress idea to heart and costumes ranging from MFO box inspired Christmas presents to a nativity scene were seen around the course. The 'less is more' approach of **Sigs Wardle** and **Mills**, consisting of bare chests and Christmas Trees strapped to their heads, made the national tabloids courtesy of *The Sun*, the event sponsor. The biggest shout must go **LCpl Yates** and **Sig Miles**, whose 118 118 team effort, won them the prize for best fancy dress. Good effort girls!

For those unable to participate in the event, a Sqn potted sports afternoon was organised with games such as Dodgeball, Football and a strange version of an Egg and Spoon race which saw participants scurrying around Allenby Lines. Fun was had by all; partly due to the Officers and SNCOs covering the guard roster, allowing the junior ranks to enjoy a well deserved break. The customary Christmas dinner was served up by various personalities from the Bde Comd to the OC Sqn, **Maj Griffiths**. The Tp Comds were there too, ensuring a healthy amount of potatoes was enjoyed by all. After a hearty meal, the Sqn retired the Junior Ranks' Club for an evening of entertainment. **Cpl Ward** of Euphrates Tp provided something of a highlight in a strange outfit intended to resemble **Lilly Savage**. His Blankety Blank spin off was a great success, seeing the OC narrowly miss out on glory at the hands of an RLC Capt. No one leaves empty handed though and the handcrafted Blankety Blank cheque book and pens went down a treat. Despite being away from home, everyone enjoyed Christmas. In true Army spirit, the Sqn pulled together to celebrate. A big thanks to the members of the Rear Party for sending through a DVD of the Children's Christmas Party; it was warmly received by all the married members of the Sqn.

THE SCOTS GUARDS BATTLE GROUP REAR LINK DETACHMENT - *by LCpl Stone*

As part of the Sqn's sp to Op TELIC 11, 2 operators have been embedded with the Scots Guards BG providing close sp coms wherever required. **LCpl Stone** and **Sig Wardle** were the lucky 2 put forward for the task. "After some initial uncertainty, **Sig Wardle** and I were soon thrown into the deep end and found ourselves deploying out with the BG. The first tasks were Eagle VCPs, with our primary role being the provision and maintenance of TacSAT comms to the Patrol Comd. It didn't take the Guardsmen any time to start the ritual banter and try and wind us both up, but after giving as good as we got, everyone set about their business in good spirits.

It quickly became apparent that we would be used as additional infantrymen as well as vocational signallers, putting all our pre-deployment trg to the test. Thankfully, we more than held our own and the lads of the coy soon accepted us into the fold. After the initial op, we both found ourselves being utilised on an almost daily basis. So far, we have conducted additional Eagle VCPs as well as patrols based out of Warrior Fighting Veh and even some foot patrols; **Sig Wardle** enjoying a long tab back to the COB one evening.

The job has, thus far, been extremely interesting. We are managing to put our trade skills through their paces in an operationally testing environment and also to improve our basic soldiering skills. The current plan is for us to remain as a Rear Link for the foreseeable future and we are both relishing the challenge.'

TIGRIS TROOP OVERVIEW - *by Lt Sam Rice*

Since deploying on Op TELIC 11, the pace of life for Tigris Tp has been frantic. Once the handover had taken place, we set about getting the Bulldogs on the road and after a lot of hard work and even more scavenging for kit and spares, we achieved what seemed to be the impossible. Running concurrently to this were Tp Comd's inspections of all the FFR dets, sp to various ongoing ops and the supply of manpower to the numerous "be prepared to" tasks which lay firmly under the responsibility of the Tp. Numerous PACEXs and Tp trg have seen a great deal of success at Tp level. Revamping the Armd Fwd HQ has seen the acquisition of a Warrior and various individual and sect level deployments with BGs to gain experience for all.

The Tp is still committed to supporting the Monitoring, Mentoring and Trg of the Iraqi Army whenever required and this effort is ever developing. The Tp remains geographically divided with dets in Kuwait, Umm Qasr and numerous out-dets all providing the OC with the G6 product he requires. Hopefully, the tour will continue to be a busy and productive one for Tigris Tp. A belated welcome goes out to **SSgt Woodall** and **Sgt Skelhorn** who have commented on the lack of one in previous issues and a farewell to those members of the Tp who have gone back to Osnabrück early: keep the beers cold. We'll be back before you know it!

AIR REACTION FORCE - *by LCpl Guttadauro*

My time spent on Air Reaction Force (ARF) started slowly to begin with but it wasn't long until it picked up speed and I was attending an O gp prior to an op the following morning. ARF was to assist on 'Op BILLABONG', which would mean we would be conducting Eagle VCPs and IED checks which would provide safe passage for a convoy leaving the COB in the morning.
In the early hours of the morning, we assembled at the Ops Room before being driven on a Bedford to the HLS. Once there, we hopped on a Merlin and departed for the first checkpoint.
At this point I was starting to get a bit nervous and was quietly praying everything would go smoothly and there wouldn't be any problems. Looking around at everyone, I could immediately see that they were all thinking the same thing!
The Merlin landed on an open plain of ground near the first checkpoint and after it flew off, the teams moved out to start their individual tasks. It was also at this point that the dog handler was chasing his dog as it had ran off to chase some stray dogs, which had everyone laughing, lightening the mood. My role was to provide comms for the comd, so with that in mind, I took the TacSAT radio off my back (which I might add is heavy!) and promptly established comms with the ops room and the Merlin flying above. When we had completed our task, I called in the Merlin to land and we moved onto the next checkpoint.

When we arrived at the next one we conducted the same drills again, and once finished, we returned to the Merlin which took us back to the COB, mission accomplished.
Being on ARF was a great experience, and to go out on an op and actually put what I've been practising for the last 6 months into a real time situation was fantastic. I felt proud to have been part of the team and play an important role.

THE VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE - *by Sig Nikki Bradley*

The day before the visit, I was informed by the Sqn 2IC that I was taking part in tea and cakes and a chat at work. At first, I thought it was with our Sqn OC to see how we were finding the tour. After the nightshift, I went back to my room and ironed my uniform ready to meet the OC. It wasn't until I got to the HQ and met up with **Cpl 'Hairy' Thomson** that we clicked someone very important was visiting.

Cpl Thomson and Sig Bradley meet the Prime Minister

Once soldiers from across the Bde had arrived, we were told that it was the Prime Minister, **Gordon Brown**, who was visiting. There was media everywhere. We were told that he was planning to speak to as many people as he could. As I took my place next to **Cpl Thomson**, all we saw were camera flashes and a load of reporters and photographers trying to push their way to the front to get the best picture of the Prime Minister. When he got to our group he stopped and spoke with me and the others. He asked a lot about the welfare services and was very interested in whether or not we get much chance to phone home and keep in touch. He said that everyone at home is thinking about us being out here and that we are doing a brilliant job. It was good to see that the Prime Minister took the time out of his very busy schedule to come and visit the troops in Iraq, especially at Christmas. This is one memory that I will be able to keep and say to my family and friends for years to come that I was in Iraq and felt proud to be there.

CHARITY RAFFLE AND QUIZ NIGHT

On the evening of Friday 11 January 2008, approximately 80 pers from the COB in Basra, made their way to the ECHOS café in the old J1 Village. Nothing unusual in that, I hear you say! However, tonight was to help raise funds for the Army Benevolent Fund, and, hopefully, get their hands on a piece of memorabilia from various football and rugby teams from the UK and prizes donated from the EFI, ECHOS and BFBS Radio.

Cpl Tam Ingledew-Harteveldt and her team of willing helpers put a lot of hard work into making the evening a success, from writing letters to nearly every football and rugby club in the UK, to ensuring that the quiz questions weren't too difficult or too easy. The quiz went without a hitch and some of the answers given by some of the teams were certainly different, to say the least. The winners of the quiz were the "Early Leavers" made up of members of the RDG; who walked away with the top prize of $100. The girls' team from the UK Med Gp earned the consolation prize of the evening for some of the "most entertaining" answers to the questions. Before the raffle was drawn we found out the total monies raised from both the quiz and the raffle was $1560 – an excellent effort. **Cpl Ingledew-Harteveldt** would like to extend a special thank you to the following pers for their help in ensuring the evening went as smoothly as possible: **Cpls Gaz Parham**, **Sarah Ingledew-Harteveldt** and **LCpls Rachel Yates**, **Jenna Williams**, **Dan Vallelley** and **Sig Ewan Thomas**.

The raffle winners with their prizes

A huge thank you goes to everyone who attended and dug deep to raise this amount for such a worthwhile cause.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

OC **Maj Carter**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Ord**

It's been a busy year for us all at 207 Sig Sqn, but it has not been all work and no play. We have successfully deployed the Fwd HQ in BATUS and the Main HQ in Poland during Ex UHLAN EAGLE last year and have learnt many valuable lessons that we can take to Iraq in May. Once we returned from this gruelling ex season, it was time for the Christmas socialising. The Juniors easily beat the Seniors at both football and rugby, although it was hard work playing both games back to back. The Christmas party was organised by **SSgt Oulton** and **Sgt Bottrell**; it was a fantastic night with excellent food whose variety accommodated all palates. The entertainment was provided by the Sonix who covered a large variety of music and some popular charts songs.

SSgt Oulton driving his way through

The victorious Juniors

There were a lot of prizes to be won such as a GPS, Nintendo Wii, 50cc Scooter, iPod Touch, Surround Sound and many others. We highly recommend the Sonix for any social events in the future.
After Christmas leave it was straight back into the run of things with a couple of days on the ranges at STC then on to courses, MATTs or in work moving to our new garages, which hasn't been an easy task. Our new garages are bigger than the old ones but once they have the 207 touch they will be the envy of the Garrison. We are also able to get all our vehs inside now which means less wear and tear on the fleet! We received our Land Rovers back from BATUS and had to bring them back up to 207 standard which was a lot of hard work, along with the 43s that we have to send to 2 Bn REME for the duration of our tour.

Tigris Tp has been trg up as many people as possible on the new Bulldog armd veh for Op TELIC 12. There were 3 courses being run in total and the highlight was the .50 calibre ranges. This trg started before Christmas and concluded with **Lt Wells**, **LCpl Bean**, **Sig Papa** and **Sig McNee** on the ranges completing the AWA (**Sig Papa** had a smile from ear to ear after firing and could not stay quiet for an hour after!) The pace of life in 2008 has already seen an increase from a busy 2007. We have already completed the Soldier First package, Comd's Cadre, Telic Recce, Theatre Orientation Trg, Cascade Trg and the numerous special-to-arm trg courses and it is only just February! However, morale remains high in the Sqn, with the 70s night proving a real hit.

Some fantastic costumes, retro tunes and a hilarious dance off won by **Cpl Lee**, meant a fun night was had by all.

The Sqn says goodbye to **Capt Howe**, **LCpl Colling** and **LCpl Raby** and welcomes **Capt Peers**, **Sgt Beerling**, **Cpl Ashworth**, **LCpl Greenwood**, **Sig Docherty**, **Sig Hymas**, **Sig Philitoga** and **Sig Slessor**. We would also like to welcome **Cpl Fowler** and **LCpl Hunt** into the QM's dept, **Sig Russell** in the Gene Bay and **Sig Hawthorne** into the MT Section.

7 ARMD BDE SKILL-AT-ARMS MEET - *by Sig Nixon*

The Shooting Team of 207 Sig Sqn started out life with 2 days of zeroing and a multiple range package to get ready for the 7 Bde SAAM. This consisted of a March and Shoot, the Graham Trophy, the Roupell Cup, the Roberts Cup, a Pistol Shoot and a falling plate competition – we were in for a busy few days! Hopes were high from our scores from the APWT – averaging 43 out of 45 on the team but unfortunately on the first shoot we hit our first speed bump as **Cpl Fearn** managed to break his bolt and firing pin. This rendered him out of the first shoot and meant we were instantly behind everyone else. However, in true 207 style we didn't give in to our closest rivals – the Medics – beating them in a number of shoots but frustratingly not enough to beat them overall – next year boys!

With 2 days of average scoring across all the shoots we ended up mid-table and had only the falling plate competition to finish on the last day. We were drawn against 1RRF for the first leg and nerves were high; but our 4 man team proved more capable and able to take on the infantry at their own game. They put on a great display for the Sig Sqn and even at the end **Sig Nixon** and **SSgt Smith** played on squaddie humour with the quote "Do you need these?" as they handed over their remaining rounds. After beating 1RRF we were given a bye into the next round, which put us in the quarter finals against the 9/12th Lancers. We had hopes of turning over the 9/12 like we had the RRF. We set off at a good pace and managed to hit the first few targets at speed but it was to be their day as they beat us and then went on to win the overall competition as well as the majority of the individual trophies. **LCpl Bean** from 207 came close with a 5th in the individual scores.

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261)

OC **Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 A Morris**

ARMY ATHLETICS TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA
- by Sig 'Stu' Keighley

Two members of the Sqn were selected by the Army Athletics Association to take part in a warm weather trg camp based in Stellenbosch, South Africa. These were, **2Lt Climpson** and **Sig 'Stu' Keighley**. The camp lasted for 2 long, hot weeks and was based around Stellenbosch University, providing excellent facilities and a stunning mountain range for a backdrop. The main aim of the camp was to gather a group of like minded individuals and educate them on a range of trg techniques that could be passed on to others, thus promoting athletics throughout the Army.

The program included daily trg at all levels of intensity, lectures, coaching classes and competitions. There was also time in the evenings to re-hydrate and de-hydrate. The social aspect of the tour was always being overshadowed by the very hot climate which was unforgiving to a mix of hard phys and late-nights. **Sig Keighley** learned his lesson on an early morning 10km sprint with a GB tri-athlete mentoring him. Good effort though!
The 3 competitions undertaken against local youth athletics clubs were a great experience for all involved, regardless of results. The educational value of the tour was rounded off with a school visit helping to educate the children on the wide ranging disciplines that athletics can offer. The 2 weeks on the whole were a great success and have set the athletes up well for continuing to progress and improve Army athletics.

EXERCISE PRIME TAURUS - *by 2Lt 'Jeth' Calder*

After a good rest over the Christmas period, the soldiers of the Sqn were chomping at the bit to get out into the bracing January weather on Salisbury Plain. An interesting start to the ex ensued, with a short phase on Rushmore Trg Area to iron-out some teething issues with the new Drash tentage. It became clear that in high winds this took on many of the characteristics of a huge kite. Thankfully, Alpha Tp retained a strong grip and we didn't lose anything.Once on to SPTA, the weather continued to change its mind every 10 mins but the Sqn cracked on and tried not to fly away with the cam nets. Morale was expertly served up in the Main HQ cook tent by Sp Troop, who barely put a foot wrong until they bogged their vehs in right where Fwd HQ intended to set-up. All in all, a smoothly executed ex with few mishaps and no casualties to report; apart from the dead and dying vehs, which proved less robust than the Royal Signals soldiers behind their wheels! It is worth noting that our adversaries, the 'Hampshirians' didn't seem to like the rain and were nowhere to be found throughout the ex.

Main HQ – Almost invisible to the naked eye

CROSS COUNTRY - *by 2Lt 'Jeth' Calder*

The Sqn team attacked the end of season competitions with admirable spirit and were rewarded with some great results. In the 4 Div Championships, the men's team gained deserved victory in the Minor Units competition. In the subsequent Corps Championships, the female team placed 1st and the men's team ran in a respectable 3rd overall. Individually, **Sig Keighley** and **Capt Spencer** sprinted home to 1st and 2nd places maintaining their very sporting rivalry which **Sig Keighley** has always won. The Army Championships which resulted from the Sqn's Div victory was conveniently placed at the end of a 10-day Sqn ex on SPTA, so the runners involved were pulled off the ex to attend the toughest event of the year. The runners tried hard to stay on the ex but it was decided that jogging in Dorset was for the greater good. A gutsy performance saw the Sqn excel again achieving a 3rd place finish in the minor units' event – even up against strong competition from the Army School of PT. Special mention goes again to **Sig Keighley** for coming 9th and **Capt Spencer** for coming 11th. Well done to the entire squad that consisted of: **Capt Spencer**, **2Lt Climpson**, **WO2 Evans**, **SSgt(YofS) Charnley** (Team Capt), **Sgt Ward**, **Cpl Heathcote**, **Cpl Martin**, **Cpl Tibbetts**, **LCpl Jaques**, **LCpl Tuppen**, **LCpl Jackson**, **Sig Keighley** and **Sig Preistley.**

Size matters

102 LOGISTIC BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (262)

EXERCISE KHUKURI DIAMOND 13 – 28 JANUARY 2008
- by 2Lt Mark Long

Under the leadership of Bravo Tp Comd, **Lt Amy Jankiewicz**, 12 members of the Sqn embarked on a 2-week trekking exped to the Annapurna region of Nepal, accompanied by 3 external instructors **Capt Simon Evans**, 35 Engr Regt and **SSgt Mark Nowosielski**, 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt. We left Frankfurt on 13 January and flew to Kathmandu via Abu Dhabi.

On arrival in the Nepalese capital, we were met by representatives from the British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) and travelled to their base in Kathmandu where we stayed that evening. On 15 January we flew from Kathmandu to Nepal's second largest city Pokhara. The aeroplane, which was described by one member of the group as "a biscuit tin with wings", may have been disconcerting but it did offer us our first views of the stunning Himalayan mountain range. Once again we were very kindly accommodated by the British Gurkhas at their local base on the outskirts of Pokhara.

The next day provided an opportunity to acclimatise to the altitude and we spent the morning following the path of the famous Doko race that aspiring Gurkhas must complete in a certain time. The Doko is essentially a wicker basket with 2 shoulder straps and an additional strap that sits on the top of your head. In order to get a feel for what the potential recruits go through, we took turns at carrying a fully laden Doko (25kg) as we climbed the route. While it took us over an hour to walk it, the fastest ever recorded time is a remarkable 32 mins. Later that afternoon, we travelled to the far side of Pokhara where we climbed up to the Japanese World Peace Temple that overlooks the city.

The next morning we rose early as our guides from the trekking service arrived with the tpt to take us to Nayapul to start our trek around the lower part of the Annapurna circuit. Before starting the trek the group purchased a stuffed teddy that was awarded to anyone who had a 'sense of humour failure' and by definition 'lost their teddy'. After stopping at Ramghai for lunch, we finally reached our lodge at Tikhedhunga late in the afternoon at an altitude of 1558m. The first day had seen us climb nearly 500m; however the 2nd day of the trek would prove considerably more demanding.

Starting out from our lodge just before 09000hrs, we climbed over 500m before stopping for a much needed lunch at Ulleri. In doing so we cost a poor chicken its freedom, however he did provide us a delicious curry that accompanied our daal bhat (the national Nepali dish of rice covered in a lentil soup), so it didn't die in vain. As we pushed on to our destination at Ghorepani it began to rain and as we moved into the village itself, it began to snow heavily. Thankfully our lodge was equipped with a good fire and even though we were now at 2750m, spirits were high due to the provision of a piping hot shower and some great food.

Our weekend started earlier than most with a 0500hrs start so we could climb to the top of nearby Poonhill; hiking to 3200m in order to see the sun rise over the peaks of the Annapurna Range. After climbing a rather treacherous snow-covered path, we made it to the summit in time and were rewarded with spectacular views of the major peaks Annapurna 1 (the world's 10th highest peak), Annapurna South and Machhapuchhre (which is Nepali for "Fish's Tail"). Our descent back to Ghorepani was an event in itself. **WO2(FoS) Openshaw** came up with a novel way of tackling the situation by using her backside to descend the path. She was very vocal in her attempts to convince others to do the same and this earned her 'the teddy' for the remainder of the trek. After stopping in Ghorepani for a quick breakfast, we moved on to Banthanti where we took a break from our descent.

We had to climb down though some staggering valleys in order to get to Tadapani where we stayed the evening. It was here that **LCpl Iain Moore** astonished the local population by devouring 4 platters of daal bhat before tucking into some dessert. A local women's group who raise money for local building projects put on an impromptu traditional dance display for us in the lodge. Before we knew it we are all up dancing, although I'm not sure that **Sig Holmes** performance of "the robot" can be considered in any way traditional. Sunday saw us move further down into the

Members of Ex KHUKURI DIAMOND in front of Annapurna South

valley and after getting some great views of the rear slopes of Annapurna South, including witnessing an avalanche, we made our way to a Gurung village called Ghandruk. Having arrived there early in the afternoon we took the opportunity to visit a local school and sit in during an English class. While the school building itself was very basic, all of the children were diligently studying their books and were very happy to try out their newly learned vocabulary with us.

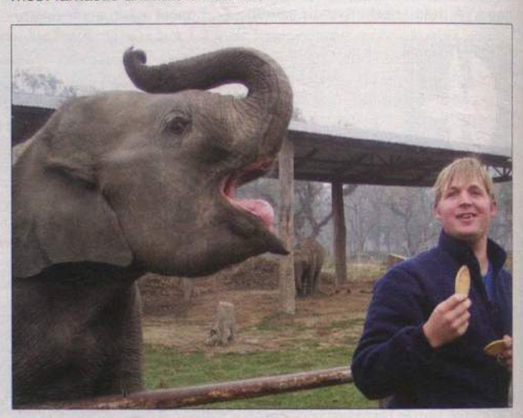
Monday was supposed to have seen us climb down one side of the valley and up the other side to a village called Tolka. Unfortunately an injury to one of the group meant that after some discussion of the available options, we decided to make our way back to Nayapul, via the small village of Syauli Bhazar. From here we are able to get tpt back to Pokhara and arrived back at the camp late in the evening. Taking advantage of our extra day in Pokhara we decided to go to the top of the local holy mountain called Sarangkot. We were rewarded with some great views of the city and as we climbed down we were treated to the sight of paragliders flying alongside trained hawks. Later that afternoon we travelled to the International Mountaineering Museum which contained some fascinating exhibits on the Himalayan mountain range.

On Wednesday, we travelled to Chitwan National Park but not before we stopped on route for a fast and furious 3 hrs of white water rafting on the River Trishuli. For the majority of the group this was their first experience of rafting and luckily they were not disappointed as the rapids grew more menacing the further down river we went. And if the rapids were not scary enough, the acts of piracy between our 2 rafts which saw **Cfn 'Ginge' Orchard** accosted and thrown overboard, only added to the excitement. After our escapades on the river, we continued on to Sauraha village on the boundary of the national park.

The next morning we boarded a flotilla of traditional canoes and travelled down the Rapti River into the park. All was going well until the canoe containing some of the larger framed gentlemen managed to run aground in the middle of the river. Then, after a quick safari walk to finish the morning's activities we jumped into some off-road vehs for a more in-depth tour of the area. After driving for over an hour, we finally spotted an Asian rhinoceros; an endangered species only found in relatively high numbers in this particular part of Nepal. After blinding it with the flashes of 14 cameras, we moved on to the crocodile breeding centre where the Nepalese government is trying to help another species, the Gariel crocodile, survive in its native environment.

Our time in Chitwan ended with safari riding on the back of Asian elephants. Truly one of the most amazing experiences one can have. We were again incredibly fortunate to see a rhinoceros and her cub grazing, as well as many other animals. Before we left we also had a chance to visit the Elephant Breeding Centre and feed the numerous baby elephants that are allowed to roam around the complex. We travelled back to Pokhara that afternoon and prepared to leave for Kathmandu the next day.

A big thank you must go to the exped organiser **Lt Jankiewicz** for organising such a smooth trip, and a special mention to our instructor-cum-cultural attaché **Capt Evans** for ensuring that we experienced the very best of Nepal. The exped offered us a fantastic opportunity to experience first hand another culture, and while the trekking was demanding, the rewards were great. We met some fantastic people who toil in very difficult circumstances, all the while maintaining a smile on their face. A very humbling experience made all the better by being able to see some of the most fantastic animals on earth.



Oi big lad, give us a biscuit!

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XI - *by Capt DDA Reader*

One team of 4 pers were picked from the Sqn to participate in the Royal Signals Trg camp, which has been held annually in Kaprun, Austria. The team consisted of 2 novices; myself as team captain and **Sig Sian Sugden**; one competent skier, **LCpl Richard Turner** and **LCpl Gavin Hall** who had just completed his ski instructor's course. After loading up all the various different skies, ski poles, waxing kit and at least 14 helmets, which it was hoped wouldn't all be required; the mini bus departed Gutersloh for Austria on the Saturday morning prior to the start of the trg. On arrival at Club Kitzsteinhorn in Zell am See we moved into our accn, which during this first week was fairly spacious as not all the teams had arrived. The following evening, we had our initial central brief detailing how the next couple of weeks would be running. Our first contact with the slopes was at 0830hrs on the Kitzsteinhorn glacier the following morning. At up to 3000m, the slopes here could get a bit chilly but as **Sig Sugden** and myself soon found out, running up and down a small patch of snow in the beginners group all morning, you can rapidly start to overheat.

After a morning of free skiing on the different slopes for the more experienced skiers, they were all entered into the first ski off. **LCpl Turner** found himself in Group 5 and **LCpl Hall** in Group 2. During this first week, the novices went from trying to balance on one ski, with difficulty, to reasonably negotiating red runs on the glacier, while trying to bring the skies into a more parallel stance. After watching the video replays though, it was clear that we still had some way to go to reach pro-status.

The second week saw all skiing move to the Schmittenhohen. Zell am See had experienced particularly heavy snow that November and as a result the lower slopes were in use. The advanced groups had moved on to Slalom trg, whilst in the 2 novice groups we were heading towards our first black run. By the time I had reached the bottom of the black run with my thigh muscles burning, the sweat was steaming off me; yes skiing does burn up the calories.

By Week 3, the novice groups had reached the stage where we were let loose on the trg racecourse. By this time, the route resembled a heavily rutted sheet of ice, on which we had to some how cling on and hope we made it down to the finish. By this point the camp had experienced a broken leg, torn ankle ligaments and a good dose of broken wrists and thumbs. The seeding race was held on a Giant Slalom (GS) course at the end of the 3rd week, each competitor having 2 bites at the cherry. This time with the more experienced skier's snow ploughing away the ruts, the conditions were better for those going down last than they had been during trg. The team had one minor fall during the seeding with **LCpl Hall** having to work his way back up to one of the gates. Race week was split into individual and team GS on Monday and Tuesday followed by the Slalom on the final 2 days. The team almost succeeded in completing the races without incident. However after going down the mountain head first and having to work my way back up to my skis, I produced possibly the longest timed run in Corps history. Thanks to sharing the hostel with a group of children, who had brought a wonderful array of viruses with them, the Corps Camp started to suffer unpleasantly with D and V ....it rapidly became a case of he or she with the strongest constitution would prevail!

LCpl Turner smashes through the gates

By evening of Thursday 13th, we had survived the snow, the slopes and the 'runs'. Although we hadn't won any trophies, **LCpl Hall** finished a respectable 11th out of 72 competitors. All 4 of the team had significantly improved with **Sig Sugden** and myself progressing from non-skiers to race skiing and black runs.

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216)

OC **Maj Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Brown**

LANDING POINT COMMANDERS COURSE 19 – 23 NOVEMBER 2007

From 19 to 23 of November, members of the Sqn undertook a Landing Point Commanders Course (LPC) in Merville Bks. The LPC course was instructed by **Cpl Hunter** REME and for the first couple of days involved mandatory lessons, which consisted of learning about various helicopters and their capabilities.

After being mentally stimulated on helicopter loading limits and landing point sizes, we were eventually moved onto a bit of practical work. For this we learnt and practised rigging Land Rover and Pinzgauer vehs ready for lifts.

Day 4 and 5 saw the arrival of a Chinook helicopter from our friends at RAF Odiham. We were split down into Landing Point teams and all got to do the jobs of Landing Point Commander, Marshaller and Rigger.

After the initial confidence of the lads, it soon dawned on us that there was soon to be a machine in excess of 10 tonne hovering dangerously close above our heads. Some of the lads on the course hadn't experienced being under a Chinook before and this was all too evident as **LCpl Thurling** was blown off his feet and landed unceremoniously on his backside!

After a few goes under the Chinook everyone got to grips with the Landing Point drills and by Dday 5 we were all experts!

19 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

OC **Maj Teri Downes**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Fidler**

EXERCISE PANTHER'S CHALLENGE 5 – 7 DECEMBER 07

Ex PANTHER'S CHALLENGE, a Sqn level patrolling ex, took place on the Otterburn Trg Area from the 5 – 7 December with 5 sects from the Sqn patrolling tactically across arduous terrain and undertaking a series of stands along the way. From medical scenarios to a night patrol lane, the ex certainly lived up to the 'challenge' in its title.

After a series of unfortunate injuries had reduced the size of some of the sects on the first night, the remainder of the ex passed smoothly, with all enjoying the live firing scenario run by **SSgt Ady Clarke** with Over Head Fire (OHF) provided by **Cpl Dan Lorentson-Bright**.

For those that made it round, the ex provided quality trg in very demanding conditions; too demanding it seems for 2 Sect, who complained that they were being harassed excessively by the enemy!

EXERCISE MERCURY GLACIER XI – ROYAL SIGNALS CORPS SKI CAMP 24 NOVEMBER – 15 DECEMBER 2007.

On 24 November 2007, **Lt Tony Glover** deployed to Austria with a team of budding winter warriors to participate in the annual Corps Ski Camp.

With 5 skiers and 4 snowboarders of varying abilities, the trip was certainly set to be a learning experience for all.

Staying in the luxurious Hostel Kitzteinhorn, the skiers started their week with a 'ski off' in order to place them in different ability groups, before moving on to work on everything from the basics of a parallel turn to perfecting their technique on the slalom and giant slalom courses as the weeks progressed.

Come race week, a bout of D and V scuppered the team's chances of any serious silverware, but a good time was had by all and some of the novice skiers showed definite potential for the future.

The snowboarders undertook a similar but slightly shorter trg regime, with some going from complete novice to racing in the duel slalom during race week. **LCpl 'Horsey' Horsfall** won the Giant Slalom and Novice Giant Slalom and came 2nd in the Dual Slalom; an impressive feat given his lack of previous experience.

Off the piste, fun was had by all – most notably by **Lt Glover**, whose 'moshing' style on a night out at The Castle in Zell Am See raised a few of even the craziest locals' eyebrows.

LCpl Sara Fisher enjoys some majestic views towards Zell Am See on Ex MERCURY GLACIER

CORPS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS, BLANDFORD CAMP – 30 JANUARY 08.

After some hasty preparation, **Capt Tom O'Neill** and a team comprising **Cpl Brett Verth**, **LCpl Ben Donaldson**, **LCpl Ritchie Plail**, **Sigs 'Slim' Hebditch**, **'Pickers' Pickersgill**, **Ricky Hazelwood** and **'Batch' Batchelor** undertook the long journey to Blandford Camp for the Corps annual Cross Country Championship.

The course consisted of 2 loops around a demanding course totalling just over 6.5 miles, and with 4 top 100 places including **Capt Tom O'Neill** in 19th and **LCpl Ritchie Plail** in 69th, the team took a respectable 4th place in the minor units competition.

EXERCISE NORTHERN SLOPE, 26 JANUARY – 2 FEBRUARY 08 - *by Cpl Lorentsen-Bright*

Eight intrepid skiers deployed to Austria in order to achieve their Basic Skiing Proficiency qualification and we all returned – just.

With **Lt 'Skater Boy' Glover**, **SSgt Ady Clarke**, **Cpl 'Frosty' Frost** and **Cpl Jenny Ingram** already competent skiers it was up to **LCpl 'Ginge' Newton**, **Sig 'Cookie' Cook**, **Sig Lee Lewis** and I to learn the basics.

One of the first challenges was to remain vertical. This proved difficult at first with the face anchor method of stopping being used more than the snow plough.

Improvement came swiftly and before long I was only crashing every 20 secs or so.

LCpl Newton decided to use his face as a break while bum boarding one evening and spent the rest of the week looking like an enormous scab.

All in all it was a fantastic week and with some challenging slopes behind us we all left qualified if not a little bruised.

Enjoying the snow on Ex NORTHERN SLOPE – Lt Tony Glover, SSgt Ady Clarke, Cpl Jenny Ingram, Cpl 'Frosty' Frost, Sig 'Cookey' Cooke and Sig Lee Lewis

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

OC **Maj Andy Coulston**
RSM **WO1(RSM) F Fensom**

EXERCISE SNOW WARRIOR I – 2008 - *by Sig Head*

Ex SNOW WARRIOR 1 took place between 14 and 25 January 2008 in Bavaria, South Germany. We left Normandy Barracks at 0830hrs and arrived at the ski resort at approximately 1700hrs after a long coach journey. As soon as we arrived, the instructors gave us the initial briefings on what to expect from the course which was then followed by the issue of all our clothing and eqpt for the next 10 days. That night we also got placed into our ski groups which consisted of 2 advanced groups and 6 basic groups.

We started our skiing on the Tuesday morning with the 2 advanced groups going to a different resort for the first few days. During our stay at the resort there was plenty to do in the evenings after a days skiing such as playing pool in the games room, going into the local town or relaxing in the resort bar or TV room.

The first 4 days were all alpine downhill skiing but on the 5th day we started doing ski touring. Ski touring is learning how to ski up the mountains in challenging routes and how to cope in the different conditions you could come across if you were caught high in the mountains and had to survive without contact with anyone. The lessons we learnt were how to build snow shelters to stay warm and out of the terrible weather, the actions on what to do if yourself or someone else was caught up in an avalanche and how to use the eqpt they issue you for the quickest and most effective way to find someone that is buried in the snow. We completed 3 days practising ski touring and then moved back onto alpine skiing for the last 3 days.

The easy part of Alpine skiing

During the last 3 days we started to put into practice all the off piste skiing we had done during ski touring and you could see a mass improvement in the quality of skiing down the slopes. Coming into the last day the students had a chance to rent out good quality downhill alpine skis from a local hire shop for the day. From the comments I got, I gathered that they were a big difference in the right way to improve the quality of your skiing.

After the final day on the slopes we headed back to camp for the final debrief and course discussions. On the Friday morning we were on our way back to Normandy Barracks with the majority of people having enjoyed the last 10 days and being interested in participating in skiing again.

SQUADRON BATTLE CAMP

200 Sig Sqn kicked off the New Year with a week long range camp. The aim was to finish all MATTs and to give the more junior members of the Sqn some extra trg to help on an upcoming op tour.

In the first 2 days the Sqn completed the APWT, MATT 6 and also managed to squeeze in the fire team assessment which everyone seemed to enjoy. Days 3 and 4 included Pairs fire, manoeuvre and the Close Quarters Battle Range (CQBR). The background activity on the CQBR was being split from your sect and having to pass through a wooded area with strong enemy presence. Later in the day saw the completion of the MATTs which gave more time to end the week on a high with further sect attacks.

On returning to the camp celebrations were in order for the promotion of **SSM Pete Watson** who will be sadly missed by the Sqn. We wish **Pete** and his family all the best for the future in his new appointment.

SQUADRON HAVE 3 DAYS IN TIN CITY

Fighting in Built Up Areas (FIBUA) trg was carried out before the Christmas break and to some Sqn members on their first tour to Germany, it would have been their first experience of Tin City. Tin City was built as a trg area for troops being deployed to Northern Ireland. I remember going there in 1974 before my first stint in Northern Ireland during the Protestant Strike – such memories of Sennelager!

The day kicked off with a nice early start at 0530hrs at the armoury. After a few hours the tpt arrived to take us to our day's activity. Some people were excited, some were still waking up and some were still asleep! On arrival everyone was raring to go

and after being sorted out into sects, **Cpl Connor** and **Cpl Green** took the troops through a dry run, showing them what they expected would be accomplished over the next 3 days.

After everyone had finished lunch, it was now time to put our trg to test. Sects were tasked to enter the building via the window and clear each floor. This sounds simple enough but to some there were a few embarrassing moments, **Cpl Wilson** found it difficult to get through the mouse holes and **LCpl Green** had a habit of falling down the ladders. After a few more practice runs, it was time for the final sect attack, the scenario was that Tigris Tp were patrolling down Basra City and came into contact from insurgents in a nearby building. The first sect gave covering fire while the other 2 sects tactically made their way to enter the building.

Action in 'Tin City

As the first sect made its way into the room, the enemy which consisted of **Cpl McDuff**, **Cpl Dickinson** and **LCpl Hislop** were surprised by the quick reactions of the sects and were soon under grenade attack. **Sig Head** made a quick retreat out of the room when one of the grenades landed in his lap. Once the 2 sects had cleared the first floor, the 3rd sect made their way into the building to assist. After a few casualty extractions the task was completed and the might of Alpha Tp had successfully cleared the building. After the third day of the ex, everyone was battered and bruised but came away with another experience under their belt.

COMMANDER VISITS 200 SIGNAL SQUADRON

Brig TA Beckett (late PARA) Comd 20 Armd Bde and Paderborn Garrison assumed command in December 2007. Since taking up his appointment, he has been working through a very busy diary arranging visits throughout the Bde.

SSgt Daz Mawson meets the Commander and shows him around the Squadron MT Section

In mid January 200 Sig Sqn set the scene in preparation with the Comd's very tight schedule.
The Comd was met by the OC, **Maj Andy Coulston** and was given a tour around the Sqn HQ and the different Tps, meeting members of the Sqn working on their daily tasks.

52 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (258)

OC	**Maj Tom Crapper**
RSM	**WO1 M D Wilford**

In late November 2006, 258 Sig Sqn, part of 30 Sig Regt, was warned off for ops. At this time, the Sqn was a General Sp Sig Sqn (Cormorant) providing strategic level CIS to the Airborne Task Force (ABTF), Joint Task Force HQ 2 (JTFHQ2) and other Joint Force Elements (JFE) as directed by PJHQ.

The Sqn's remit was to prepare itself to deploy on Op HERRICK 7 as the Close Sp Sig Sqn to HQ Task Force Helmand (TFH), staffed by HQ 52 (Inf) Bde in September 07.

Clearly, this would provide quite a challenge. The Sqn would have to totally re-role in terms of trade groups, skill sets, ORBAT and approach to service provision. It would have to overcome the difficulties presented by significant geographical separation from its HQ.

It would have to complete the cycle of Special to Arm (STA) trg as prescribed by HQ LAND and the full OPTAG series. It would have to ex with the Bde HQ and provide specialist comms trg to its staff and all force elements (including Danish, Estonian and Czech contingents).

It would have to develop new ways of working and lead the way for the virgin Bde staff in terms of ways of working, real life support (RLS) and provision of CIS services and Information Management and Exploitation.

It would have to train its newly formed Tps in 2 very distinct and different ways: one as a highly mobile Radio Tp, deploying all over the Area of Operations (AO) in small dets in sp of all Force Elements (FE) and forward static base locations; the other as a Main Tp, providing RLS and operators to the HQ and small dets to various agencies across Helmand. These included the Joint Provincial Coordination Cell in Lashkar Gah (LKG) town centre and the communicator on board the Nimrod MR2 based out of Oman.

Concurrently, the Sqn was required to Bowmanise and to fulfil all the demands placed upon it as a Regtl Sig Sqn, under which it remained OPCOM until deployment. It was required to do all this without any of its own eqpt.

The Sqn is now just over half way through its tour. The speed at which the AO is changing and developing is keeping the J6 cell (staffed by the Sqn Ops team) busy, whilst the speed at which LKG camp has expanded has kept the Sqn QM (and Camp Commandant) on his toes.

The Sqn chefs are providing a service, which has quickly gained a reputation as the best in theatre, whilst the LAD are busy maintaining the Task Force vehs.

The RQMS has had a challenging time auditing the Task Force's holdings and preparing for the first major inspections of their kind on LKG Camp, as well as processing the hundreds of welfare parcels which have been generously sent out to Helmand over the Christmas period. The Sqn's soldiers have earned an excellent reputation as being effective operators and first-rate soldiers across the spectrum of positions they man for the Task Force.

The Sqn is now looking forward to the end of our tour in April 08 and to reforming in the UK as an independent Sqn. It will still be based in Nuneaton under ADMINCON 30 Sig Regt but will remain OPCOM HQ 52 (Inf) Bde. The Sqn will maintain a small permanent presence in Edinburgh to provide daily sp to the HQ staff and will engage immediately with the Bde's training cycle in preparation for its deployment on Op HERRICK 12 in 2010.

In the meantime, the Sqn is looking forward to a medals parade on the Esplanade in front of Edinburgh Castle in May 08 and to a year of varied activity; from AT in America, to battle camps, to focussed comms trg, to new sporting successes as a minor unit and to further forging its identity as an independent Sqn with a clear focus, which has now cut its teeth.

MAIN TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Andy Bunting**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt PW Griffiths**

Main Tp have had an excellent tour so far, fulfilling a whole host of different roles in theatre. As the Tp directly supporting 52 Inf Bde, many of us are based within the Bde HQ at Lashkar Gah – a fantastic base to be. Everyone has worked extraordinarily hard especially during Op MAR KARADAD, the Bde's taking of Musa Qa'leh.

The majority of the Tp are doing a great job working in the J3 Ops room which is the hub of the HQ. Deployments on the ground are also common place with both **Sgt Houghton** and **Sig Bashford** having deployed with the Comd's TAC, **LCpl Blackburn** and **Sig Masson** both being deployed with 2 YORKS and working on MOBs.

LCpl Parvin has been doing a sterling job in FOB Delhi, which earlier housed **LCpl Singer** and Musa Qa'leh has been inhabited by no less than **SSgt Griffiths**, **Sgt Lutkin, Cpl Thompson** and **Sig Wade** at different stages of the Stabilisation phase.

Sgt Stu Houghton on his way to Musa Qa'leh

RADIO TROOP - *by Cpl Goff*

Tp Comd	**Lt J Cunningham**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Coxon**

Radio Tp has continued to be very busy in its various roles. After an extensive period on the ground the Bde Recce Force (BRF) det has returned to Camp Bastion for a short turn-around before redeploying to Musa Qal'eh District Centre to provide a static Ops room, good luck to **Sgt 'Spick' Lane** and his crew in this endeavour.

Cpl 'Tony' Richards has returned to Camp Tombstone from Musa Qal'eh and is once again acting in a mentoring role whilst

Sgt Lane in the BRF mobile ops room

LCpl 'Stuntman' Sturman, **LCpl Wilkes**, and **Sig 'Ginger' Robinson** man the Ops room at Tombstone.

Congratulations to **Cpl Dave Meaney** and **Caroline** on the birth of their son **Daniel**, by all accounts a right little bruiser!

Congratulations also to **Sig 'Frenchy' France** and his wife for the birth of their son **Jake**. The R&R period is coming to an end and the Tp will shortly be back up to full strength.

With only 7 weeks remaining on the tour, all sights are firmly set on continuing to provide CIS sp to the BGs and ensuring a safe return of Tp pers in order to hand over to 216 Sig Sqn.

The tempo has also gone into overdrive in Camp Bastion with locally employed civilians working 24/7 getting the camp ready for the hand over to 16 AA Bde.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM	**Maj Andy Burdge**
RQMS	**WO2 De De Watts**
SQMS	**SSgt Edd Howard**

SQMS DEPARTMENT

With the Dept's R&R now out the way, apart from **Sgt Lee** who has just left this week, it's been business as usual. With the Board of Officers coming up, it's a hectic time for the lads, we are also preparing for the RIP with 16 AA Bde, which can't come soon enough!

Cpl 'Swilf' McCallum is having a nightmare as always with accn, with the usual complaints that "I can't sleep in there, because of the snoring!" or "I want a room of my own!" yeh right.....and with the RIP approaching it's going to be carnage, bodies everywhere.

Sig Bikash is yet again running with the ISO containers, which is lucky because it's the only trg he does! In an effort to rid the world of the evil that is Pot Noodle, **Sig Bikash** has taken it upon himself to eat every one in Afghanistan. **Cpl McCallum** seems to be carrying **Cpl Christian**, constantly fixing his mistakes, good job he's got big shoulders.

SSgt(SQMS) Edd Howard is well, watching our every move and generally living the dream....also counting down until his EOT, which is approaching rapidly.

QM DEPARTMENT

The QM's Dept has been frantic in their efforts to prepare for the LSI and Board of Officers and also cover their tracks at every turn. Leading this quest is **Cpl Cope**, who after having the worlds longest R&R because he had wind, is now in charge of the "Palming off" department.

MT

LCPL JONES WOUNDED IN ACTION

In early January, **LCpl Jones** and **LCpl Challis** were deployed to Camp Bastion on an essential tyre changing mission. Whilst on this risky task, **LCpl Jones** slightly grazed one of his fingers. After the initial shock and losing 0.5ml of blood, he collapsed in a heap shouting "leave me, save yourselves!" Luckily **LCpl Challis** was there to administer immediate first aid and morphine and then rush the casualty to the Medical Centre.

Well done to both soldiers, the medals are in the post!

VIEW OF A ROYAL SIGNALS OPERATOR IN HELMAND
- by Cpl Thompson

After deploying to Lashkar Gar with Main Tp, we all thought we were destined to spend our entire tour within the confines of the camp. However things swiftly moved on and before long had pushed people out to the Ops Coy, the police station based just outside Lash and even managed to get a 2 man det down to FOB Dwyer. We're also sending a 2 man team to work with the Poppy Eradication Force.

First into the thick of things was **LCpl Blackburn**, who volunteered to deploy on Op PALK WAHEL, providing the SATCOM Link back to Bde for the biggest Op of HERRICK 6. Safely back, she's maintained momentum regularly deploying on

Lcpl Jenny Blackburn and Sig Matt Rew with the Ops Coy

MOGs alongside **Sig Masson**. **Sig Bashford** also deployed on this Op with the Comd's TAC. Shortly after joining them, the Ops Coy got a short notice to move to FOB Arnhem and provided force protection during the months of November and December so that they could build a new Patrol base in the green zone.

Sigs Smith, **Masson** and I provided the main structure to their det, which consisted of manning the forward Ops room, providing SATCOM data and voice links as well as low level Coy and BG HF and VHF. We also took part in their patrols providing the Coy HF net for areas that the VHF did not cover, some of which had some pretty close shaves.

Once our time there was complete and the new Patrol Base handed over to the Marines, it was back in time for Christmas... or maybe not. With just 36hrs to turn my kit around, I was setting off to Musa Qal'eh to replace **SSgt Griffiths**. He along with **Sgt Houghton** and **Sig Wade** had moved north to work with the Military Stabilisation Team (MST) on the Stabilisation phase of Op MAR KARADAD.

Once the town was taken from the Taliban and the people started to return, we were tasked to provide secure comms for the MST. This involved setting up 2 DUJOCS terminals so that secure links up to secret classification could be established within theatre and back to the UK and providing the SATCOM voice net for the Bde Comd's evening update.

For lower grade information to be passed, we assisted the OMLT with their HPW network utilising the PR 117F Harris Radio. With **Sig Wade** back for R&R and **SSgt Griffiths** and **Sgt Houghton** needed back at Lashkar Gah, I was required to take over as the sole Royal Signals representative with the MST.

As well as the Comms aspect, I also helped out with registering locals for work, providing security for Claims Clinics and even looking after a very ill little girl over night, until we got her CASEVACd for treatment at the hospital in BSN. Eventually I handed over to **Sgt Lutkin** and once again it was back to Lash for another quick turnaround but this time it was for my R&R, so a fleeting visit then off to KAF for me.

Whilst back at HQ Task Force Helmand (TFH), I discovered we have another det to man and **LCpl Parvin** is now set up in FOB Delhi with 1RGR. We've also sent **LCpl Henstock** to man the Nimrod Operators job in Oman, living it up in a hotel, some people are just lucky.

With Op MERCURY soon to depart again on a mission to improve comms around Helmand's many FOBs, we move into the final quarter of HERRICK 7. We've not just been here to sp the HQ, it's been good to get out and about, gaining valuable op experience on the specialist eqpt used in theatre.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Steve Clout**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Collins**

GENERAL NEWS

2Lt Richard Smith is promoted to Lt.

EXERCISE JAGUAR – BRUNEI

786 Tp deployed to Brunei in November 07 to participate in Ex JAGUAR which involved a number of tasks to improve and sustain the comms infrastructure at HQ Brunei Garrison.

Two parties of 12 soldiers deployed, supported by an advance party of **SSgt Bill Billiard**, **Sgt Mat Bevan**, **Sgt (Acting FoS) Steve Wadsworth** and **LCpl Andy Batten**.
The Tp started work immediately on 2 priority tasks – re-wire and provision of new Cat5 wiring in the CLO building, required complete 4 days after arrival and 1.5km of 100 pair cable between Medicina and Tuker Lines.

The external work was made particularly challenging by the local weather conditions with frequent downpours of rain, which meant cable pits filled with water and some congested and heavily-silted ducts.

During the heaviest downpour on Remembrance Sunday which included a brief pause to conduct a 2 minute silence, the cabling team were assisted by **Lt Richard Smith**, **SSgt Bill Billiard** and **Sgt Mat Bevan** - photographic proof does exist, including a shot of 2 Sigs watching an officer and 2 SSgts getting their hands dirty. (See Below!)

Sig Reid watches Lt Smith, SSgt Billiard and SSgt Helm pulling cable

The Tp also completed a number of other projects including additional Cat5, installation testing, overhead work and a fibre pull. The Tp completed all assigned tasks and a number of additional tasks to sp future development in the Garrison area (including the move of 7 Flt AAC from 'Scout Base'.

Heavy rainfull and a high water level led to many scenes like this one

The Tp also found time to conduct a Mil Swim Test and fit in some R&R. The whole Tp were given the experience of jungle helicopter flying with a 30 min aerial tour from 7 Flt AAC, including a look at a Landing Point used for jungle warfare trg exs. The Tp also visited Bandar Seri Begawan (the capital) for a look at The Empire Hotel & Country Club – an enormous 6* hotel – and were able to enjoy an excellent meal in a private dining room, overlooking the South China Sea. A number of soldiers also spent the weekend on an organised Jungle Tour, including rafting down a jungle river and completing a strenuous dawn canopy climb.

Overall this was a successful deployment for 786 Tp with some excellent work delivered for Brunei Garrison. Our thanks to SO3 G6, **Capt Matt Nuttall**, OC Brunei Sig Tp, **Capt (QGO) Purna Gurung** and the rest of Brunei Sig Tp for their sp and hospitality during the deployment.

EXERCISE FALKLAND SOUND

857 Tp's annual deployment in November 2007 was a split camp to both Ascension and Falkland Islands in support of JCUFI.

Falklands Deployment

Following a recce by **Sgt Richie Squance** over a week in June, 857 Tp was tasked by **Capt (TOT) Chris Gill** to undertake 3 pieces of work: a 1km, 16 core single mode fibre link between 2 airfield buildings, a cable survey of a number of buildings and an infrastructure survey across the estate.

Despite being summer, the weather was unseasonably cold and windy. During the fibre pull **Sgt Picket**, **Sgt Spasic**, **LCpl M Harris** and **LCpl Tomblin** were forced to wrap up warm and keep the brews coming while they worked. The second project of cable surveys was probably the shortest and warmest but proved difficult for **Sgt Lawrence** and **Sig Cheung** who were attempting to undertake this task while working within busy offices. The third project, the infrastructure survey was far more low-tech. However, it proved to be the longest task. **SSgt Ticehurst**, **Sgt Pearce** and **LCpl House** surveyed over 50 buildings and corridors, for the info to be loaded on to CAD.

Sgt Murnane, LCpl Welch, Sig Perry, LCpl Harris, LCpl House, Sgt Spasic and Sgt Pearce preparing to pull the fibre through the ducting

During the Tp day off a lecture was given on the battle for Goose Green and the Tp visited the site and walked the route of the assault. In the afternoon **Sgt Murnane**, lead the team on a walk down to Bertha's Beach to visit the penguins.

On one evening, the Tp cast caution to the wind and in trepidation went horse riding for the first time. This was enjoyed so much that further equation adventures were sought. So much so, that when England was playing Croatia, the team opted for more horse riding!

Cpl Millea, on Linda! It was difficult to know who was the most scared!

Overall the Tp deployed a total of 17 soldiers of all ranks and 1 officer over a series of staggered 2 week periods from 7 November until 27 November. It was an excellent camp that produced great work and was enjoyed by all.

Ascension Island

Further elements of 857 Tp deployed to Ascension Island on Ex WIDEAWAKE. A recce had been completed some weeks earlier

by Pathfinder Planner, **LCpl Pat Coyle** and his accomplice **Sgt Gary Jones** and the Tp was duly allocated 3 tasks on arrival. The first was to overhaul a small but dated building, previously a Special Operations Room, but now required as normal offices. This task, completed by **Cpl Gary Harris**, **LCpls Pat Coyle**, **'Bobby' Sands** and **Zac Griffiths**, involved the provision of new trunking, re-wiring throughout to newly provided voice sockets and the relocation of a number of existing Distribution Points. **WO2 Alistair Carruthers** and **SSM John Collins** provided the essential Admin & Stores sp.

The second task run in parallel by **Cpl 'Macca' McCrone** and **Sig 'Nutty' Almond** was the refurbishment of the majority of the Island's Airhead cable chambers, to provide steel bearers to ensure that the underground cables were correctly protected and secured. This task was carried out under the constant threat of the intense equatorial sunshine!

The final task employed the entire Team and was to verify cable and circuit records for the Travellers Hill PBX . This involved tapping out each cable pair of the complex cable distribution system from the Main Distribution Frame to their final destinations. This task produced an accurate set of records for future use by both Cable & Wireless and JCUFI.

The team having completed the refurbishment of the Special Operations Room pay their respects to some of its former occupants

Despite a packed program, the team managed to squeeze in some mil trg with a navigation ex around the sub-tropical Green Mountain.

OTHER UNITS

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (CYPRUS)

CO **Lt Col C McIntosh**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Fleming**

The Unit is currently looking forward to an even busier month than usual, with preparations for the Firmin Sword of Peace Parade proceeding apace under the RSM. Defence Sect is planning a field ex to put us through our mil paces and a skiing package to Troodos is in the offing when the snow gets deeper.

Increasing numbers of lycra-clad perverts are to be seen cycling around the area, as the realisation sinks in that the Cyprus Cycle Challenge 2008 is increasingly nigh. Organised by **Capt Whillis**, **WO1(FofS) Arundel** and **Sgt Ally Way** (who is likely to become everyone's best mate as IC Sp and therefore the bloke who can grant access to the jack wagon when the ride gets too tough), the ride will take place over 4 days in late Spring. The route covers about 500km and climbs more than 5000m in the Troodos Mountains and Drousela Heights. As in the 11 previous years of its existence, it promises to be deeply unpleasant, yet quite memorable. Full details will emerge in August's *Wire*, if any participants live to tell the tale.

1 SQUADRON OVERVIEW - *by LCpl Weston*

Christmas has been and gone and 1 Sqn is as busy as ever working to fulfil the op role of JSSU (Cyprus). We still found time for some festivities and upheld the proud sporting traditions of the Sqn.

Despite languishing in 3rd place in the Coomber Cup Orienteering competition (see below), the Sqn team recently challenged the local civilian side from Bitsa. In a fast paced match, the Sqn won 2 – 1 with goals from **SAC Ben Mears** and **Sgt Carl Hoyle**.

The Sqn Christmas bash was a thoroughly convivial affair, starting with a good meal in Vrysoulles followed by a few drinks. Being quite a dispersed sqn, it was good to get out with people we don't often get to socialise with.

JT Watson organised a 'Day at the Races' in Nicosia, which saw a good turnout with about 30 turning up to watch the horses. Bets were won and lost, with **LCpl Jamie Gollings** and **JT Watson** among those walking away with smiles on their faces.

My sect welcomed our new WO, **WO1 Joyce** RN, and bade farewell to **WO1 Harrison** who is swapping one sunny berth for another in Naples. **Cpl '747' Hughes** finally set foot in Iraq, allowing **Cpl 'Cockney' Cogdell** to get back to the missus and take charge of the wedding preparations. Also exchanging posts were **Sgt Ian Robson** and **Sgt Owen Gudge**, with **Sgt Robson** moving up the mountain to Troodos Station. **Cpl Paul Cardall** and **LCpl Nick Byam** have also joined 1 Sqn. We look forward to introducing them to the Cypriot way of life and promise them it will get warmer!

Finally, congratulations to **Cpl Jonno Fielding**, who has been selected for promotion to Sgt.

2 SQUADRON OVERVIEW - *by Sgt Petch*

A very busy period again for the Sqn, with the following arrivals, departures and promotions: **SAC 'Owen' Compton** takes over from **Cpl Dave Ketly**; **Cpl Jim Ross** unfortunately leaves the unit and the Army but at least there is a chance for us all now on the log challenge at the pig roast. Congratulations to **WO2(FofS) 'Duncs' Chamberlain** on promotion to WO1, which is however a major loss to the Sqn. We would also like to say goodbye to little man **SAC 'Ewan' McGuigan** – thanks for all your hard work over the last 30 months – and last but not least, **SAC Mark Stuart** who will be missed in the Syscon tea bar.

Congratulations to **Sgt 'Petchy' Petch** and **LCpl Delaney** who have both been promoted.

2 Sqn's Christmas function was a huge success. It kicked off in Constantinos Beach Hotel, with the meal served up in great buffet style. At the end it was time for the raffle with prizes ranging from

PS3s to DVD players. The lucky winner of the PS3 was **SAC Mike Jeal**; **Cpl Steve Pullan** was less impressed with his extremely small bottle of Jameson's. The last prize was the best, in the form of an auction to be RSM for the day. The bidding was fraught but in the end **Cpl Galway** outbid **SAC Compton**, raising funds for the local primary school. The cherry on top was **WO2(SSM) Oz Rowley** volunteering to cover **Cpl Galway's** guard shift on Christmas Day.

DHEKELIA DASH - *by Cpl Galway*

The 41st Dhekelia Dash took place on 17 November 2007 in Area 2, Dhekelia. The race is a relay with 15 x 1 mile legs. Over 800 runners took part in the event; some to have fun, some to break records, but all to raise money for British and Cypriot charities.

The first runners of the day were in the primary school category. Ayios Nikolaos Primary, the Unit's team, finished 4th of 7 teams. By now the temperature was hitting 30°C and as the kids were passing their beanbags to each other everyone noticed how flushed their cheeks were. It dawned on the rest of us that this would be a tough day.

Next to start were the Ladies and Fun Runners. JSSU were represented by 2 ladies' teams, with the CAMEO Ladies finishing 2nd behind a very strong 2 RRF team. For the Fun Runners, the Troodos Trailblazers from Golf Section, 1 Sqn beat all 9 other teams in their category for a great victory. Well done guys.

The final grouping included the Open, Military and Veteran categories. Ay Nik Vets showed that they still have it by finishing in a record veterans' time of 1 hr 32 mins and 59 secs, beating 5 other teams in their category including JSSU (Cyprus) Officers who came in 2nd. Well done to both teams.

With only one team left to represent JSSU (Cyprus) the competition got serious and it fell to the team to bring home the glory in not only the mil category but the fastest time overall. After 6 legs, JSSU (Cyprus) had a lead of 15 secs, which was then lost and regained with great work from **Sgt Reece Marsden** and **Flt Lt Bob Hobbs**. **Cpl Jonno Fielding**, **LPT Vic Reeves**, **Sgt 'Petchy' Petch**, **Sgt Jase Clayton** and **SAC Johnny Horne** gave a 10 sec lead into the last leg, which was won with a second to spare by **Cpl Dave Galway** under sustained pressure from the tireless Gurkhas of 10 Tp Regt QOGLR. The time for the course was a record 1 hr 22 mins and 25 secs. Weeks of trg had paid off. JSSU (Cyprus) has never before won the title of fastest time, so the celebrations went on into the early hours.

JSSU (Cyprus) First team: **SAC Best**, **Cpl Kirk Donaldson**, **Cpl Craig Betteridge**, **Sgt Fraser McCallum**, **WO2 Bo McGlone**, **WO2 Glen Franklin**, **Sgt Reece Marsden**, **Flt Lt Bob Hobbs**, **Cpl Jonno Fielding**, **LPT Vic Reeves**, **Sgt Petchy Petch**, **Sgt Jase Clayton**, **SAC Johnny Horne**, **Cpl Dave Galway**.

The Dhekelia Dash – competitors from all of the JSSU (Cyprus) teams

COOMBER CUP MOUNTAIN BIKING - *by Sgt Petch*

At the peak of Troodos Mountain the unit's best mountain bikers got together for a gruelling challenge – 5 miles across the Hog's Back Trail in December. Each team of 3 had to relay around the trail in the fastest time and with some extremely fit cyclists present, the competition was fierce.

2 Sqn's winning team comprised **WO2(FofS) 'Duncs' Chamberlain**, **Sgt Fraser McCallum** and the team leader **Sgt JP Thomas** who proved to be the fastest over the distance. 2 Sqn's second team: **Capt Steve Robinson**, **WO1(FofS) 'Arry' Arundel** and **WO2 Glen Franklin** put in an amazing performance for a 2nd place finish.

COOMBER CUP ORIENTEERING - *by LCpl Robson*

January witnessed the latest instalment of the Unit's inter-Sqn sports competition, the Coomber Cup Orienteering event. Members of the unit ran around the bondhu like lemmings with maps, falling foul of precipices, spiky vegetation and deceptive compasses. One of the competitors commented that 'orienteering is like a treasure hunt, without treasure only self-satisfaction but it would be a lot better if chocolate was involved!' which set the tone for the day's activities. In many ways chocolate may have improved the result, for the time difference ranged from the fastest at 30 mins to the considerably greater time that it took the 116th competitor to finish...

The quickest on the course was **LCpl Robson**, HQ Sqn, which was why the author was spammed to write this article. He was closely followed by **Capt Robinson**, 2 Sqn, then by **Sgt Jones**, 1 Sqn, with only a minute separating the top 3.

From the female category, **Cpl Beck** finished at 44 mins with **SAC Sarah Robson** at 46 mins. The 3rd in this category was the Adjt, **Capt Sally Green**, in 54 mins, who had been seen running around the Turkish side of the island for most of the morning.The Unit 2IC, **Sqn Ldr Thorley**, congratulated the CO on his 8th position and implored the Adjt not to get lost again.

The final results for the competition were taken from the average time for the first 25 runners from each Squadron.

1st	HQ Sqn (45.36 mins)
2nd	2 Sqn (49.00 mins)
3rd	1 Sqn (50.68 minutes)

Congratulations go to all the runners as not one failed to return. It was clearly a good idea to schedule the competition before lunchtime. We now look forward to the night navex in March, when casualties will probably not be so light.

AWARD OF THE FIRMIN SWORD OF PEACE

The Firmin Sword of Peace is a Forces-wide commendation awarded to the unit that has best promoted links with its local community during the previous 12 months. JSSU (Cyprus) won the award for work undertaken from January – December 2006 for numerous examples of charity and community work.

Two events that highlighted this were the Ayios Nikolaos Station Fete and the annual music festival. Both organised by serving pers, these provided perfect opportunities for people from the military, expatriate, Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to come together and share common interests. Additionally, sport has played a key role in strengthening existing ties between JSSU (Cyprus) and its neighbouring communities. A children's football league, again co-ordinated and run

by members of the unit, saw children and their parents from Service backgrounds fully integrate with their Cypriot counterparts. Similar events of this kind have also been run at the Unit's detached sites, both the Episkopi SGS and Akrotiri SLS.

In addition to building on the work of previous years, real effort was placed into new initiatives. Two examples were *Silver Child*, a charitable project which raised about £6000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital and local Forces' children and a ladies cycle challenge, organised solely by non-mil members of the Unit that resulted in a £2000 charity donation. Not only did these prove to be immensely successful in terms of the charity funds raised, but they also demonstrated the *esprit de corps* of the whole community.

Notably, these accomplishments were achieved against a demanding 24 hr strategic op commitment by both civilians and mil pers in this joint unit.

The Unit intends to hold a parade to mark the presentation of the Sword of Peace, which will take place in early March 2008.

JOINT SERVICES SIGNALS WING (DIGBY)

CO **Wg Cdr TL Quigley** RAF
USM **WO2(SSM) J Sowden**

1 SQUADRON

OC **Maj Southam** Int Corps
2IC **Ft Lt Johnston-Davies** RAF

Congratulations go to **SSgt(YofS (EW)) Paul 'Biff' Randle** on his selection for promotion to WO2. Please make your way to the bar.

1 SQUADRON VISITS THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM
- by Cpl M Stephenson

Individuals from JSSW(D) were asked to organise a Force Development Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), which a number of Royal Signals pers from JNCO to Officers attended.

Created in 1997, the NMA is a living tribute that will forever acknowledge the personal sacrifices made by the armed and civil services of this country.

On Tuesday 5 February, we departed RAF Digby with weather less than appealing and knowing that approximately one third of the NMA had been submerged in 2 ft of water the previous week, the stress levels rose. Thankfully by the time we arrived in Lichfield, it was dry but very windy – windy to the point that apart from the narrowbacks, many people were almost blown over during the Last Post at the Armed Forces Memorial (AFM).

On arrival at the NMA there was just enough time to get a quick brew before we all headed en masse into the chapel for the daily Service of Remembrance. We were greeted by the tour guide who explained the overriding theme of the Arboretum, the AFM and the chapel and the significance of everything that constitutes these. We were then briefed on the origins and symbolism of the 2 minute silence prior to watching the ceremony of the Last Post, 2 minute silence and Reveille.

This is the only place that pays respect to those lost with the 2 minute silence 360 days a year.

The 27 attendees then split down into 2 groups and set off on a guided tour of the Arboretum. The guides were very knowledgeable and proceeded to regale us with the history and significance of the individual memorials. It was interesting to learn about different conflicts that are sometimes overshadowed by the World Wars, such as Borneo and Korea: The numbers of casualties and scale of suffering inflicted upon service pers, through various diseases, malnutrition and some extremely hideous forms of torture, serve as a reminder of just how lucky we are.

After a short break for lunch, we headed off down 'The Beat' towards one of the Arboretum's newest plots, 'Shot at Dawn'. This site is a memorial to the 307 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were executed for desertion or cowardice. Today it is recognised that several of these soldiers were underage when they volunteered and many of them were suffering from shell shock or post-traumatic stress, which is only a recently-acknowledged condition.

The memorial has a single statue blindfolded which depicts **Pte Herbert Burden**. One hundred and thirty posts have been driven into the ground to the rear of the statue, in the shape of a Greek theatre which symbolises tragedy. In front of the statue stand 6 large fir trees representing 6 men in the firing squad. It is a very depressing thought that so many individuals, mentally and emotionally depleted from long periods on the frontline, suffered this fate, even though in some cases, their superior officers defended their cases.

At the NMA there is also a newly erected Armed Forces Memorial which was depicted in the **Dan Snow** documentary 'In Living Memory'.

The reason behind the construction of the new memorial is that it is widely accepted that there is insufficient recognition of those men and women in our Armed Forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country since WW2.

The AFM is not a traditional 'war memorial' that only remembers those killed in conflict. It also remembers those killed on duty and those killed as a direct result of terrorist activity. It commemorates 16,000 individuals; with enough blank spaces on the walls to double this figure over the next few decades – a sobering thought.

If you have not already been, we would strongly suggest that you pay a visit.

2 SQUADRON

OC **Capt Thomspon**
2IC **Flt Lt Wyatt** RAF

2 Sqn says goodbye and good luck to **Sqn Ldr Gray** on his deployment. The mantle of comd now moves to **Capt Thompson**. Goodbye to **LCpl Mayes** on his discharge to civilian life and a warm welcome is extended to **Sgt Howarth** posted in from Cyprus.

2 SQUADRON CROSS COUNTRY

On 30 January 2008, members of 2 Sqn undertook the Corps cross country held at Blandford. After a long drive and stopping for a KFC/Burger King on the way (good cross country food) they arrived at Blandford for the race. The gruelling 6½ mile route was muddy and slippery and mainly uphill. The unit ran as individuals not as a team and the results were:

LCpl Farley in 44 mins,
Cpl Gill in 50 mins
LCpl Stafford in 54 mins.

FALKLANDS ISLANDS DETATCHMENT - *by Cpl Mitchell*

I recently returned from the Falkland Islands (FI) where I had been on detachment with JSSU (FI) for 4 months. The FI are full of wildlife ranging form whales, dolphins and sea lions to the obvious sheep and penguins.

The job was varied and challenging and used a wide variety of eqpt and skills. During the 4 monthly ex held in FI, I took a major role in initiating the ex by taking to the skies in a C130 Hercules. We flew outbound before turning back and pretended to be a foreign aircraft. On route, I was given the chance to fly the aircraft and did so.

Not long into piloting the aircraft, Mount Pleasant airport (the garrison in FI) detected us on radar. We used a linguist on board so they couldn't identify us, which resulted in them scrambling F3 Tornados.

The 2 Tornados sat on our wing tips and forced us to land at MPA before questioning all the crew and passengers, as if we were a real foreign aircraft. We then went into a week long ex in full CEFO.

During the tour in FI all pers have to undertake mil skills trg. This was a week long ex, learning basic mil skills such as camouflage and concealment, admin in the field, zeroing a weapon at 25m and how to use a radio.

During my tour I was promoted to Cpl, which I celebrated in the capital city, Port Stanley. There are a range of hotels, shops and a museum. The locals are all really friendly and will do almost anything to help you. If you are given the opportunity to visit the Falkland Islands I recommend you do so.

EXERCISE DIGBY DANGLE

Exped OIC - **Capt 'Tomo' Thompson**

In a far away land called the White Coast lies the small fishing village of Benidorm, a quaint little place reminiscent of Royston Vasey and full of replicas of **Peter Kay's** The Phoenix Club, where all that is bad about Brits on holiday gets condensed.

If you stand on the beach in Benidorm and look over your shoulder, in the distance you will see a very, very large piece of rock, the Puig Campana. This 4200ft sentinel stands guard over the other side of the Costa Blanca, probably the best rock climbing destination in Europe in winter.

Eleven lucky people from JSSW(D) had saved for months to raise the sum of £70 each to take part in Ex DIGBY DANGLE. This was a princely sum to escape the dreary Lincolnshire weather and run the gauntlet of whatever **Capt Thompson**, the mountain ogre, had planned for them.

On Tuesday 22 January, somebody had devised a series of Japanese endurance tests to get in the way of the exped getting to the small mountain village of Finestrat.

First, an MT driver who decided the best way to East Midlands Airport was straight through the middle of Nottingham city centre at rush hour. We arrived at the check-in desk after it had closed. Luckily we deployed **WO1 Mick Davies**, JSSU(V) on the charm offensive and all was sorted. Late but OK.

Until Test 2 that was, the Group 4 Security cerebral test was encountered. There were 2 lanes through the security scanners. There were 2 people carrying ropes. One gets through. The other doesn't. We point out the discrepancy. We get told to forfeit both ropes. We asked why. "In case you use the climbing rope to tie up the crew or the passengers". Yes, they were serious.

Despite assistance from BMI Baby and Leicestershire Constabulary, we saw our rope disappear in to the confiscated items bin. "Board now or miss the flight" we were told.

Eleven would-be 'terrorists-with-a-rope' chose to board. In attempting to take the plane and passengers hostage, we had prepared **Sgt Steve Mearns** to follow the cabin crew safety brief with one of our own, showing the passengers how to adopt the "Help I'm very slowly being tied up against my will" position. As it was, we forfeited that entertainment and instead watched **CT Mike Frankish's** luggage disappear across the tarmac in the back of the luggage cart, accompanied by a very familiar rope.

A short 2½ hr flight from a rainy cold Britain, across snow covered Pyrenees to a sun kissed Costa Brava led us to the car hire desk. Somehow they managed to confuse 2 bookings that had been made in isolation, mix up the payments, cross over the vehs and issue the wrong keys.

A little more queuing for the day put that right and we started our road trip with an estate car and Uncle Willy's Love Bus.

Capt Thompson had attempted to get enough climbing instructors to facilitate the awarding of Proficiency Qualifications. On the day, only one instructor came out of the rockwork. **Cpl Pete Crossland**, of RAF Mountain Rescue infamy, and he led the climbing instruction for the week.

The dress sense of **Doug Scott** meets the banter of **Peter Kay** meets a very technically competent climber, great instructor, raconteur, and magnet for a very special kind of Benidorm "Lady".

The exped was based in Finestrat at the foot of the mighty Puig in The Orange House. For those of you that remember an Army exped in the 90s to Lowes Gully going wrong, the climbing leader from that exped, who was subsequently exonerated of any blame, **Rich Mayfield**, has bought and developed a house that is now the epicentre of a world wide climbing enterprise.

We arrived, we cracked opened the beers. We stared. All around us was sun kissed rock. Miles and miles of the stuff and a 3 legged dog.

Because of the lack of climbing instructors, the group would split daily with 2 or 3 going off with **Capt Thompson** to learn the art of scrambling on the Castillet Ridge, while the rest went climbing.

The first day started with the whole group going to Sierra de Toix near the town of Calpe to learn basic safety and skills. The drive involved asking directions from a man, who we thought was French, speaking German, living in Spain.

We deployed our native tri-linguist **Capt Warren Howard** who helpfully, after deliberation, deduced that the man liked **Ann Summers**. We found the crag some time later. Rock climbing in the UK in winter is normally done in a specialist environment called "the indoor wall". At Toix we stared at hundreds of metres of perfect limestone, and down at villa, land and a turquoise sea.

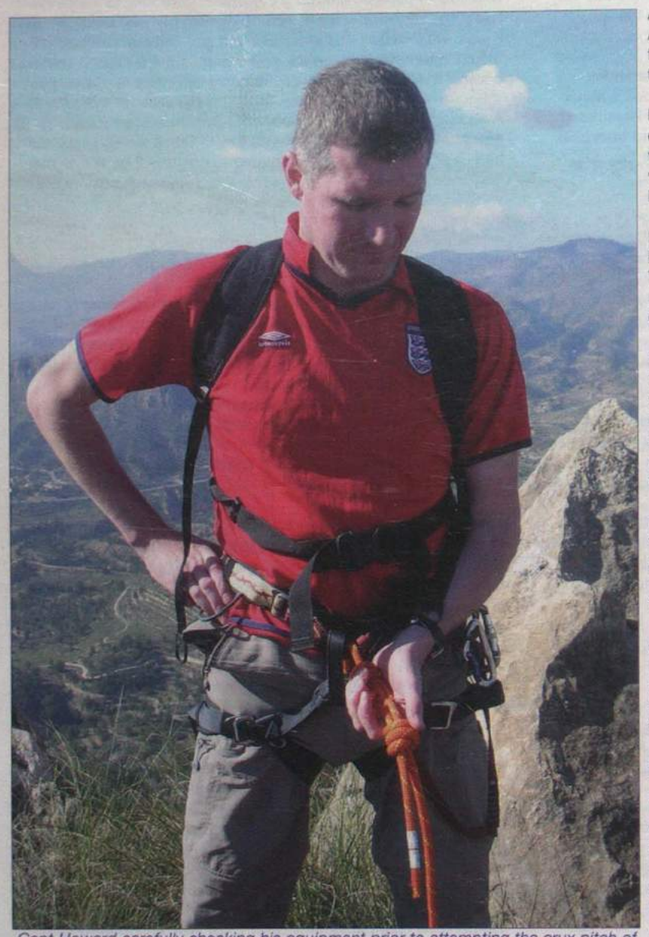
As well as really good weather, cheap flights and superb climbing, the Costa Brava remains one of the few places in Europe where CILOR, the money given in lieu of rations, actually buys decent quality food.

Sgt Sara 'Doris' Catterall was the appointed chef cum treasurer cum loads of other jobs, but on the nights that the team ate out in the wide choice of local restaurants, a few Euros was all that was need to supplement the CILOR. Really good food at really silly prices.

After the skills day, the technical instruction and difficulty level of the climbing increased and a small group also went scrambling. The Castillet Ridge is one of, if not the finest technical mountain ridge outside of the Dolomites.

It is 8 miles long and the precarious positions, ridiculous exposure and insanely narrow ridge combine to make a mountain day that has left its print on the minds and underwear of all who ventured on to it. No guide books exist for the ridge.

It is technically difficult to lead but at all times the sun shone and anyway between friends, what is a 500ft vertical drop either side of a 40cm wide bit of unstable limestone. Bring it on!



Capt Howard carefully checking his equipment prior to attempting the crux pitch of the Castillet Ridge

Two days of climbing at Toix, and the shredded hands were in need of a rest. What better way than to go for a day walk along the Sierra Helda ridge, from Altea to the quiet fishing hamlet of Benidorm. A great walk with our old friend 'Senor San Miguel' to meet us at the end.

On Saturday the climbing went up a notch when **Pete** taught the group to lead climb. This involves climbers being responsible for carrying and placing the safety protection for themselves in the crag.

This then lead to all of the climbers undertaking a multi-pitch climb, where they climbed upwards for the length of the rope, before securing to the crag and then repeating the process upwards. A steep learning curve in all senses of the term.

It could be considered traditional in the Armed Forces to go to the local hostelry on a Saturday night and partake in a small refreshment before settling in for the night.

After a day of arduous climbing, Team Digby decided to Dangle in to the aforementioned traditional fishing village for said refreshment. Benidorm is different to anywhere any of us had ever been or seen before, bar Royston Vasey and The Phoenix Club of course. This paragraph has been shortened to protect the innocent.

A short walk on the Sunday was followed by RAF v Army volleyball on the Cala Finestrat beach. Bizarrely the temperature for us was about 17 degrees warmer than home, hence we played wearing only shorts.

For the resident Spaniards and ex-pats, it was the depths of winter and some 20 odd degrees colder than their summer. They watched us from afar wearing jumpers, jackets, coats and scarves, blinded by our whiteness.

From the planning stages of the trip, **Capt Thompson** had been keen to attempt a descent of Hell's Gorge. The Baranc de l'Infern lies a long way from anywhere, up in the Ebo Valley. Several other people in The Orange House had tried to find it but given up.

It was assuming mythical proportions and the sketch map that **Rich Mayfield** gave us, helped only to make it harder to find. But find it we did, and after a 90 min descent from the trail head we found ourselves in a bone dry, very deep river gorge and a magical world of lowers, abseiling, via ferrata and bizarre limestone features.

It was a truly awesome physical feature but the time taken to find it, descend into it and then descend the gorge itself, left us with darkness falling and a choice of turning left or right – and this with a sketch map that was less than helpful.

We turned right. **Capt Thompson** did a bit of soloing up a 50 ft ravine and then we navigated by a combination of nose, stars and distant taverna lights back to the descent point. A further 90 mins uphill in the dark left us with an hr long drive back.

Pizzas in a taverna in Finestrat arrived at 0035hrs on Tuesday morning. A traditional "long" mountain day was had by all. The fitness, technical ability, nerve and endurance of every body on the team had been tested to the max that day. Proper AT was had by all.

All good things must come to an end and so it was Molly Malone's Irish Bar on the beach that was chosen for breakfast on the last day. The return leg went without a hiccup and we shivered in to our coats at East Midlands airport some 17 degrees colder a few hours later.

Our thanks go to the Accounts, PEd, MT and FD pers at RAF Digby who made this exped possible. The Costa Blanca is literally 2½ hrs away and offers a huge range of challenging AT in a cheap, friendly location with a warm, sunny, winter climate. The Orange House was a superb base.

The word Benidorm still sends a shiver up my spine. I hope never again get to see grown men throwing their boxer shorts at a balding short chap attempting to impersonate **Freddie Mercury** in front of several hundred pensioners and a beached whale from Carlisle. Not in this lifetime.

Although the trip could not award Joint Service AT Qualifications at the time, the instructors have recommended all of the participants as suitable for instructor trg and e-mails are already being exchanged planning expeds, courses and climbing days.

You do not need any AT qualifications to organise an exped. Ambition and imagination are key, and the process is surprisingly easy. The team on DIGBY DANGLE got tested, dangled, frightened, awe-inspired, sun-tanned and enthused all for £70 per person.

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Dennis Weir MBE**
PSAWO **WO1 John Farrell**

OPERATIONS

There has been significant operational activity within JSSU(V) since we last appeared in the columns of *The Wire*. **WO1(YofS (EW)) Mark Jordan** and **WO2 Steve Miller,** Int Corps have both completed highly successful tours in Afghanistan and Iraq respectively and **WO1(YofS(EW)) Jock Robertson** and **WO2 Bob Wright** Int Corps have recently deployed to the same two theatres. Meanwhile **CPO Spider Kelly** RNR is well into his tour in Afghanistan and **WO1 Ted Roberts** Int Corps will be departing for Iraq very shortly. All of JSSU(V) are immensely proud of the contribution which these unit members have made and continue to make to UK ops.

NORMANDY BATTLEFIELD TOUR

During the long weekend 14 – 17 September, almost 40 members of JSSU(V) travelled from Digby via Chicksands to Normandy to conduct a tour of the sites of the D-Day landings. Under the professional guidance of **Maj Martin Ashley-Taylor,** we were given the chance to see for ourselves the challenges that faced the Allied Forces on 6 June 1944. Visits to Pegasus Bridge, the Merville Battery, Pointe du Hoc and finally to SWORD and OMAHA beaches left none of us in any doubt as to the enormity of the task and the level of bravery which ensured its success. Appropriately, we completed our 2 day tour with a visit to the British Cemetery in Bayeux, where an honour party consisting of our youngest soldier, **Sgt Claire Warburton,** escorted by **WO Bob Rhodes** RNR and **WO Tim Hutchinson** RAuxAF, laid a wreath in memory of our fallen comrades from WW2.

Maj Martin Ashley-Taylor describes the action at SWORD beach

Sgt Claire Warburton lays a wreath at Bayeux

ANNUAL UNIT DINNER

The traditional JSSU(V) annual unit formal dinner took place in the RAF Digby WOs and Sgts Mess during our October trg weekend. Once again, the dinner was an enormous success, not least because of the quality of the meal presented and the bonhomie generated by the presence of so many past and present unit members.

Congratulations go to **WO2 Spud Turner** Int Corps, who was promoted during the course of the evening's proceedings and to **Capts Chris Lowish** and **Harry Butland** Int Corps, together with **WO1(YofS (EW)) Mark Gould,** who were the joint winners of the 'John Berry Trophy' in recognition of their outstanding contribution to our technical trg programme over the last year.

UNIT CHRISTMAS PARTY

"WO1 Mark Jordan and WO2 Steve Miller with their well deserved champagne

The Legionnaires' Club in Sleaford was once again the venue for our annual Christmas Dinner and Dance, attended by in excess of 50 Unit members and partners.

What is always a good night was made extra special this year, as we were able to welcome **WO1 Mark Jordan** and **WO2 Steve Miller** home from their op deployments.

It is hoped that they enjoyed the bubbly, purchased for them by the OC and the Trg Officer.

A final note goes to **WO2 Ian Dudley** RNR for all his efforts in organising the party.

THE FUTURE

By the time these notes appear in the pages of *The Wire*, we will be well into our 2008 trg programme. Initially we can look forward to some good challenging and productive trg at RAF Digby and later in the year we will be deploying in two groups to either Denmark or Cyprus.

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

OC **Maj AS Johnson**
USM **WO2(SSM) Tresidder**

BATTLE CAMP WIRE NOTES

The soldiers of ISS CCU seldom have the opportunity to carry out any realistic and valuable mil trg. In their day to day routine, they are employed on a permanent basis providing the infrastructure sp to British Forces Cyprus. Whether it is the Inst Techs who are installing, maintaining and repairing the copper and fibre cabling or the CS Operators who maintain the Cyprus Emergency Radio System, the men and women posted here are first and foremost tradesmen.

After several unsuccessful attempts to run a unit battle camp the opportunity to commit to a full comprehensive package and the guarantee of maximum participation finally came around in January of this year. The package consisting of 2 phases held over 10 days and in a number of different locations was organised by **Lt Dusty Miller**, **WO2(USM) Steve Tresidder** and in large by **SSgt Kips Fisher**. The trg utilised some of the many units based in Cyprus as well as the kind of terrain more akin to current theatres of operation.

The first stage of the battle camp held in Dhekelia, involved the refreshing of the basic soldier skills learnt in basic trg and teaching some new skills more appropriate to contemporary warfare. The lessons were a mixture of classroom based and practical. Many instructors were used throughout this stage sharing their knowledge and experience, none more so than **Cpl Rob Heap**. For those of you who do not know, and there can't be many, he used to be in the Inf and was able to pass on the skills he has learnt along the way.

On top of the basic skills, there were lessons in veh anti-ambush drills which proved popular and saw the emerging leaders among the junior soldiers starting to show their abilities. A range day again proved popular with many firing the pistol, GPMG and LMG for the first time, which was evident in particular by **LCpl Ritchie Barlow**, whose response to firing the GPMG was unprintable in this publication. As if all this was not enough, the obligatory PT sessions formed the remainder of the first stage. It is still unclear if **Sig Jamie Kerr** has started to appreciate the value of a good team building ex such as the log race but on the day he was least impressed.

Battle Camp

The second stage of the battle camp saw the deployment of the troops to the trg areas of Episkopi. The aim of this phase was to test the lessons taught earlier and also to give the troops the chance to learn from some of the harsh realities of being deployed away from the comfort zone.

After receiving deployment orders in a hangar in Akrotiri, the sects prepared for the off.

The initial phase involved sailing around the coast by landing craft to land under fire at Melandra Beach. From here they cleared the area as a Pl and secured a temporary HLS, from where they were transported by helicopter to the more 'hostile' area of northern Episkopi. In this location the Pl set up a secure compound based around a Pl House scenario and conducted patrols in order to dominate and infiltrate the local area.

Every 8 hours saw a rotation of the sects, from Ops/Defence sect, through QRF to patrols which allowed all the soldiers the opportunity to fill at least one command appointment. A task was given every rotation and along with defending the Pl House, proved to very demanding, mentally as well as physically. Morale remained high throughout even if tiredness was creeping in. One of the aspects of the ex was to see a large emphasis placed on the initiative of the troops and there proved to be plenty in abundance. It was good to see some of the many items that the Cypriots leave lying around being used as defence stores.

During this stage, the sects were shadowed by their own DS and valuable lessons were passed on by the 3 Cpls, **Dino Simpson**, **Rob Heap** and **Tam Rennie**. Other people without whom the ex would not have been the success it was were the enemy, marshalled by **SSgt Ian Farrow**, until he took a spectacular dive, and our own comedy duo **SSgt Fisher** and **WO2(USM) Tresidder**.

The ex finished with a large convoy ambush which saw the destruction of many authentic looking enemy and was celebrated in true Cyprus style, a BBQ laid on by the chefs from 2RRF. Overall the battle camp has given the unit many opportunities, not only for the troops taking part but also for the management to plan and stage such an event. It has been a great success and the next one is already in the back of our minds as to when and how.

AKROTIRI TROOP

Tp OC **Capt Paul Williams**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony D'or**

Despite the whinging and moaning and also the high level of sick chits arriving at the Tp SSgt's office, this year's battle camp went ahead and what a time the Tp had. **LCpl 'Julian' Grieves** was as enthusiastic as ever. Prior to deploying, the Tp had a kit check to ensure that every one had the correct eqpt and didn't take anything onto the ex that they did not require. **LCpl Grieves** lack of experience really showed with his choice of wash kit and "nice to haves".

Deployment day arrived and the guys were transported off to Dhekelia for the first phase of the ex. After the initial shock of what was going to happen in the next week or so, the guys settled into the trg lessons and arduous PT sessions. After the initial package, it was time to deploy on Phase 2 of the battle camp.

Deployment into the field by landing craft and also helicopters added more excitement to the insertion of the troops. Over the next couple of days various tasks were conducted including patrols, recces and their main effort of defending the comms site located on the Lima trg area in Episkopi.

Overall the guys from Akrotiri Tp enjoyed the experience and also gained a lot of knowledge from the lessons conducted throughout the ex.

Despite rumours that Cyprus is "slipper city", the work load has been vast in the past few months and does not seem to be getting any smaller as the year progresses. Currently the Tp is re-wiring Air Ops and is also involved with the restructuring of RAF Akrotiri Station into its new role as a Forward Operating Base (FOB).

The station command structure is for ever changing and with this goes various comms requirements and changes. As ever, we have many visits from many units on ex, most recently was a small contingent from 30 Sig Regt. And in the latter part of the year we will have a large scale ex conducted in and around the station as PJHQ visit the island to conduct Ex JOINT ADVENTURE.

Recently the Unit had a visit from the new Director General of ISS, **AVM Allan**. After visiting the various depts in Episkopi, **AVM Allan** ventured to Akrotiri to see what role the Inst Techs performed as part of their day to day duties in and around the station. After a brief by **SSgt Tony D'or** and **Sgt Steve Cooper** on the role of the Inst Tech in Akrotiri and also present comms projects, **AVM Allan** was escorted around the station and shown recently completed major comms projects and also ongoing projects that the Tp are heading up.

A brief stop at one of the network eqpt rooms to visit a fibre optic installation gave **AVM Allan** a chance to chat to some of the Inst Techs from the Tp. **Sig Ackrill** and **Cpl Joughin** conducted a demonstration on how to splice a fibre optic cable and also briefed **AVM Allan** on their current project.

Overall, it has been a very busy couple of months in Akrotiri. Good luck to all the old pers that have moved on and a big hello and welcome to all of the new arrivals that have recently been posted in.

EPISKOPI TROOP

Tp OC **Lt Dusty Miller**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ian Farrow**

It's been a chaotic and busy period within the lines of Episkopi Tp. Workloads have massively increased due to storms and contractors cutting through underground cables. A project led by **Cpl 'Gaz' Coy** is also still ongoing to re-route cabling around the areas affected by the new Z-type accn that is being built.

A visit from the Director General, **AVM Bob Allan** saw the Tp put on demos to show the trade skills used by Inst Techs during day to day taskings on Island. The visit was deemed a success and **AVM Allan** left with a greater understanding of the role performed by our Tp.

Sig Reynolds leaves the Tp and is posted on promotion to LCpl to 10 Sig Regt, we wish him all the best. The new arrival of straight out the factory, **Sig Daisy Dougherty** brought humour as she was welcomed to the Tp with a structured trip around the hierarchy brandishing a fire extinguisher and envelope containing a note stating; 'Give me all ur money or I'll squirt u!'

Congratulations to our Tp OC, **2Lt 'Dusty' Miller** who was promoted and **Sigs Cross**, **Randall**, **Reynolds** and **Watt** who came off the Sig to LCpl board. I hope the cereal boxes were discarded in the appropriate fashion. **SSgt Ian Farrow's** 'changing rooms' mission to re-vamp our Tp lines continues, as it has now become a beach bar with add-on BBQ veranda. It has been emotional.

DHEKELIA TROOP

Tp OC **Capt Chris Moody**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Glynn Fisher**

January has been an active start to the year here in sunny Dhekelia. There has been a big change around in pers with **Capt Peers**, **Cpl 'Geordie' Pearce**, **Sig Best** and **Sig Powell** all being posted out.

However this led to a month of leavings dos and arrivals drinks which included bowling, quizzes and good times at the Bitsa. Fresh faces into the Tp include our new OC Tp from 22 Sig Regt, **Capt Moody**, in systems new arrivals include **Sig Evans** and **Cpl Marsh** and our new IS Engr **Sgt Sutcliffe**.

Our bowling day out was won by **Sig 'Patch' Phillips** with the first loser being **Cpl Murney**. Competitiveness was rife as **Cpl 'Moobs' Heap** demonstrated plenty of determination. **Cpl Heap** was just showing the Tp what **Cpl Heap** does best. Bowling was followed by a marathon quiz organised by **SSgt(FofS) Floyd** and **Cpl Murney**. This was where **Cpl Bate** really came into his sector but was unable to prevent his team from losing to **Sig Goodluck**, **Cpl 'Tam' Rennie** and **SSgt 'Kips' Fisher**.

This past month has seen 4 Tp members depart on course with both **Sig 'Chesney' Rogers** and **Sig Matthews** on a cushy week in Norway skiing. However **Sig Matthews** will be straight onto his leadership course on completion of his skiing course. **LCpl Vance** completed his PSPO course and will soon be doing his BCDT refresher. **Cpl Murney** has also recently completed his Microsoft course.

Demonstrating the skills of the Installation Technicians to AVM Allan

This month our troop was visited by **AVM Allan**, which enabled our Tp to display our role in Cyprus. The operators did the range incident which was carried out by **Cpl Lewis** with some first-rate acting skills from the Inst Techs. **Cpl Bate** must be mentioned for his performance. The Inst Techs gave a good presentation in which both **Sig Marsh** and **Cpl Foster** gave a clear account of the Inst Techs duties.

In recent weeks **Sgt Stewart** has risen to 9th position in the Island's cross country competition, **Sgt Sankey** has displayed superb goalkeeping skills after taking over the reigns after **Capt Peer's** departure, **Cpl Brewington** is involved in strenuous revision for his FofS selection, **Cpl Caddy** has returned from his tour of Iraq and the biggest news is **LCpl Sturdy** has got a girlfriend.

ARMY RECRUITING TEAM - 19

LIFE IN AN ARMY RECRUITING TEAM - *by Cpl Grant*

After hearing a few rumors about the formation of Army Recruiting Teams (ARTs), I approached my RCMO for more information.

I was directed to the Corps Recruiting Team and it wasn't long before I found out that I would be required to submit a PD19 form through my RCMO and apply for an interview with the recruiters at Blandford.

I took part in a 2 day selection board, consisting of briefings about the new ART concept and information about the types of places and things we would be doing.

The second day was a little more different as we were put through our paces, giving briefings of our own and undertaking interviews to find out if we were suited to join an ART. I was selected and was soon posted to the West Midlands to join ART 19.

There are 36 ARTs around the country and 1 Technical/Logistical Team in each region (10 Tech/Log in total), representing the REME, R SIGNALS, RE and RLC, where the remaining combat teams represent the Inf, RAC and RA.

The biggest difference between the ARTs and the old Regtl Recruiting Teams is that the ART recruits for the Army (Regular and Territorial) as a whole and not an individual cap badge.

There are a number of activities we do as part of the ART including Residential Insight Courses, Personal Development Activities and the usual shows but instead of traveling the whole length of the UK to attend a show like before, we now take on only the shows in our ARTs AO, i.e. the West Midlands.

When I arrived at the ART it was quite hectic and no one really knew what to expect. The whole ART undertook a 2 week long trg package, covering everything from the dos and don'ts to the best way to address a year group of school children and even some salesmanship, because after all that's what we are here to do, sell the Army. Other trg that we all needed was on the different types of recruiting assets such as all the mobile climbing walls, as well as getting to grips with loads of different command tasks.

Since being on the ART I have been kept busy. Over the summer it was non stop, working long hours without many breaks in between courses but then other times has been really quiet giving us time to sort out our stores, get ready for the next big rush, play sport and administer ourselves.

There has been time to fit in 3 weeks block leave, mainly when the schools are on summer holidays and I've only just returned from completing my Class 1 at Blandford, which shows there is plenty of scope to still get away on courses.

All in all I have really enjoyed my time on the team and would fully recommend it to any one else.

SPORT

FOOTBALL REFEREE

- by SSgt Dan Steele

In September 1997, I qualified as an Army Class 3 referee, not realising that one day I would become an ambassador – not only for football but for the Corps and the whole of the British Army.

SSgt Dan Steele

From first qualifying to achieving FIFA status has taken me 9 years in total – my first match (43 Fd Sqn RE v 46 NI Wkshps REME at the Maze prison) seems like a distant memory! I have officiated Minor Unit, Major Unit, Corps and Army level (representing the Army 4 times at the USA Cup tournament held annually in Minnesota).

In 1999 I was voted the British Army's Referee of the Year and was awarded the prestigious Dobson Trophy.

Following all my experience in the Army FA, I decided in 1999 to go "Civvy" and began officiating for the Mid-Ulster league. This was quickly followed by several promotions and the opportunity to officiate at Irish League level.

I have officiated at matches at all levels and standards of football – from matches played on the most uneven pitches you could imagine to matches with irate managers shouting all sorts at the officials.

One of the funniest occasions happened when I was at Glenavon v Newry Town.

It was around Halloween and one of the supporters threw a banger, which landed very close to me – I thought that my cover had been blown, the IRA had come off ceasefire and I had been shot! Everyone found my reaction so funny that I turned around and took a bow to my audience.

Since being awarded my FIFA badge I have officiated at Internationals, Champions League and UEFA level: all unbelievable experiences for me. I have travelled to various European Countries and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

I could not have got to where I am today without help from lots of people (too many to name individually) but special thanks must go to my various bosses who have supported me all the way and the Corps which has allowed me to serve within Northern Ireland.

My hopes for the future are simple. I hope my FIFA badge gives me the opportunity to represent the Corps and the Army in UEFA Champions League and International football – and to show others that serving in the Army is no hindrance to achieving your dream in football.

EXERCISE ICE DRAGON

ARMY MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION – 50th YEAR ICE CLIMBING EXPEDITION TO THE CANADIAN ROCKIES – EXERCISE ICE CLIMB DRAGON

In December, 2 Royal Signals soldiers travelled to Canada to climb some of the world's best water ice.

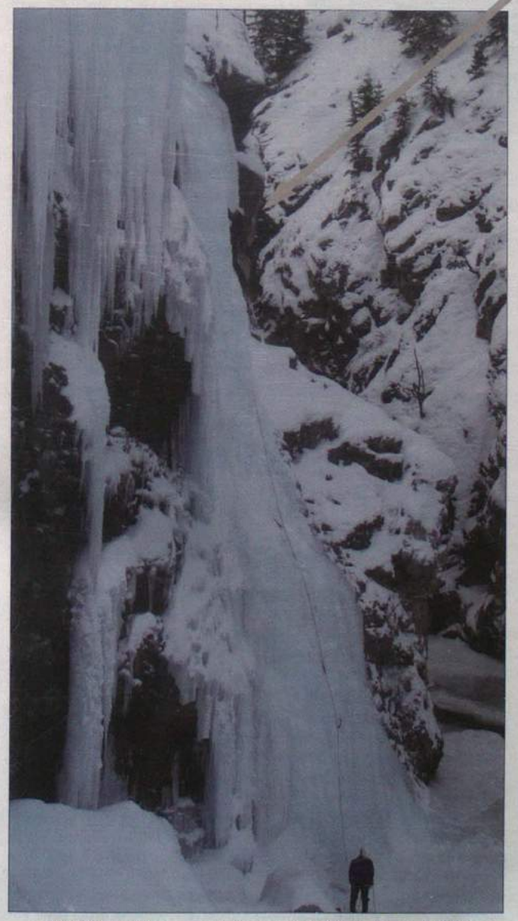
Maj Tarquin Shipley (BOWTAG(N)) and **SSgt Jase White** (16 Sig Regt) had joined a 9 man expedition from the Army Mountaineering Association.

With a wide range of experience from competent ice climbers to novices it was always going to be a challenge.

As it was early in the winter season, the climbs were 'thin' and this provided entertainment in both the climbing and arranging protection.

The Rockies have a wide variety of climbs, ranging from the basic to multi-day test-pieces.

The highlight of the exped was the Weeping Wall – a 600 ft vertical wall of ice, the width of a football pitch followed by a headtorch 5 abseil descent (interesting with 2 head torches between 3 climbers) back to the bottom which left everybody in their 'stretch zone'.



Maj Shipley running out of energy on "Pure Energy" W14

SSgt White led a particularly difficult pitch which saw him deploy every technique he had learned in the 2 weeks and dig into his mental reserves – but such is the making of epics.

SSgt White on the steep stuff!

If you are interested joining the AMA then look no further than www.armynet.mod.uk

"BATTLE BACK" AND MILITARY ADAPTIVE SKIING

- by Lt Col Fred Hargreaves

On the first Sunday of 2008, 11 BASI-qualified Army and Air Force Alpine Ski Instructors gathered in the small Bavarian village of Wertach, together with their 3 BASI trainers, to conduct a 'first of its kind' course, initiated by the author.

The Adaptive Ski Instructor qualification was the goal but for these 11 and it was even more poignant as it would enable them to take Servicemen and women, injured in the line of duty, skiing with their comrades.
Inspired by a similar programme called Wounded Warrior

Military Adaptive Skiing Instructors Course – January 2008

(www.woundedwarriorproject.org), set up by the Americans in 2003 to support the US Armed Forces who were severely injured during the war on terrorism, the British military are now implementing plans to encourage their wounded to participate in AT – challenging outdoor trg in specified adventurous activities, involving the controlled exposure to risk, to develop leadership, teamwork, physical fitness, moral and physical courage, ultimately enhancing their personal attributes and skills which are vital to success on the battlefield – through a programme called "Battle Back".

When first faced with the reality of a traumatic disability, many individuals experience a loss of confidence, depression, and a belief that their active lives have ended. The sudden change in their physical ability makes them vulnerable to psychological and emotional stress which can alienate them from their friends and family.

The use of sport and outdoor activities has a proven track record to aid successful physical and psychological rehabilitation, providing the foundation for the development of a positive self-image and outlook on life.

Ultimately, Battle Back aspires to create a 'one stop shop' for all disabled AT and sport, co-ordinating physical outdoor opportunities which were available to wounded soldiers, sailors and airmen before they were injured.

With over 400 wounded pers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan last year alone, the time has never been more appropriate for the Army, Air Force and Navy to improve the aftercare available to their wounded

And so back to Wertach and the first activity to be delivered under Battle Back – Adaptive Skiing. Here the ever-present and knowledgeable trainers: **Fi Young**, **Cath Sibbald** and **Jerry Craig** delivered the first ever 'fully military' Adaptive Ski Instructor Course.

Many of the instructors had a little experience of adaptive skiing through monthly attendance at various ski slopes in the UK, which proved to be essential throughout the course by having familiarised them with a number of disabilities and adaptive eqpt.

The course consists of 6 disciplines: Mono-ski, Bi-ski, 3-Track, 4-Track, Sensory Impaired, and Learning Difficulties.

Learning to mono-ski is probably the greatest technical challenge and the most painful – falls are known as 'slammers' for good reason; although skiing a red run 'blind' is probably the most frightening element.

The over-riding insight on completion of the course is the understanding that irrespective of the level of disability, one can achieve some form of exhilaration and feeling of 'freedom' from the restrictions of one's disability.

Exposure to the world of the disabled made the instructors realise just how fortunate they are, and how much of their daily lives are taken for granted.

The next stage of military adaptive skiing takes place in March 2008 when 9 amputees and 3 spinally injured Servicemen and women deploy to Bavaria for 10 days.

SSgt Daz Chamberlain 'post-slammer'

Here the newly qualified instructors will put into practice much of what they have been taught.

Importantly for the military, the disabled students will be living and skiing alongside some 150 of their able-bodied colleagues, further aiding their re-integration back into the military family, as well as highlighting just how much can be achieved following significant traumatic injury.

Along with the author, **Sgt Mick Brennan** of 30 Sig Regt will also deploy, aiming to develop his skills under the tutelage of the British Disabled Ski Team Development Officer, **Dave Chugg**.

Looking to the future, the military are already supporting members of the British Disabled Ski Team, providing race trg opportunities at existing Army race camps, with the potential for the more talented disabled students to become involved.

There is the possibility of an adaptive ski touring exped, as well as nascent plans to create further opportunities for their wounded to participate across the range of AT activities.

In conclusion, the adaptive course has given the military instructors a unique opportunity to put something truly worthwhile back into the AT system in sp of their wounded Servicemen and women.

Thanks must go to Disability Snowsport UK and the 3 Trainers – **Fi**, **Cath** and **Jerry** – who were truly excellent, and will see the fruits of their labour again in March.

The author in a mono-ski

The addition of a further 11 adaptive instructors will undoubtedly raise the profile of adaptive skiing across the military community and also aid local ski slopes throughout the next year and beyond.

The course has undoubtedly given all instructors an additional dimension to their understanding of skiing and cannot be commended highly enough.

The rewards of 'traditional' ski instruction are magnified many times over when teaching a disabled student to both overcome their disability as well as learn a new, and sometimes frightening, technical skill.

SWIMMING

- by Maj Pete Griffiths

The 19th Inter-Corps Swimming and Water Polo Championships were contested at Aldershot on 5 – 6 December 07. As in previous years, we first conducted the Internal Corps Championships which was held at *HMS Heron*, part of RNAS Yeovilton. From this competition, individuals were selected to remain for a 1 week trg camp and then to represent the Corps at the Inter-Corps championships.

INTERNAL CORPS COMPETITION – *HMS HERON* ON 27 NOVEMBER 07

The Internal Corps Competition was held on Tuesday 27 November at *RNAS Yeovilton* and was contested between BAG, UK and ITO. As in previous years, the swimming was very close. UK was victorious with ITO a close 2nd and BAG 3rd. The Water Polo competition confounded all of the pundits this year. Prior to the start, the UK team looked odds on favourites to retain the trophy they had won last year but ITO and BAG would seem had forgotten to read the script and in some fast and furious matches ITO ran out the clear winners beating BAG 6 – 4 and UK 7 – 4. BAG was second beating UK 7 – 4. Prizes for the competition were very kindly presented by **Brig J Terrington ADC**.

The standard of swimming and water polo was exceptionally high this year and the competition for team places was particularly tough. Those pers fortunate (or possibly unfortunate) enough to be selected then remained for a one week trg camp to prepare for the Inter-Corps. Again this year we utilised the swimming pool facilities at *RNAS Yeovilton* for the trg camp. Luckily, we kept the same trainers with **Cpl Helen Chamberlain** training our swimmers and **Mr Mick Flaherty** continuing the development of our water polo players both male and female. With a good trg week behind us, we moved to Aldershot on Tuesday 4 December for a 'look' at the pool, where the Inter-Corps was being hosted. A gentle 1 hr session under **Helen** and **Mick** and then off to Clayton Barracks for feeding and accn.

INTER-CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS

On Day 1, all heats for the swimming were completed and the league games for the water polo. All our swimmers qualified for the finals being held on Day 2. In the water polo our B team lost 2 of their 3 games drawing with the PT Corps in the 3rd. In one of the games against the REME, they should have beaten the opposition but poor finishing proved their downfall and they lost 3 – 1 with **LCpl Nukes Nukatabu** scoring their only goal. They lost 8 – 1 to the RE (A) team (who our A team would meet in the final) with **Sig James Booth** scoring their only goal. The A team won all of their games, 7 – 0 against RE (B) team with **Sig Adam Hanson** scoring 3 and **Cpl Ollie Smith**, **SSgt Robbie Love**, **Capt Ben Psaila** and **Cpl Shaun Peart** all scoring one. 5 – 1 against the Medics team with **Cpl Smith**, **SSgt Andy Carnegie**, **SSgt Ollie Olver**, **SSgt Steve White** and **LCpl Tom Hunt** all contributing one goal. 11 – 0 against the Intelligence Corps with notable scores from **SSgt Love** putting 3 in the net and **Capt Psaila** and **Sig Hanson** scoring 2 each. Finally the A team played a mixed team and ran out 11 – 0 winners.

On Day 2 we had all the finals. It commenced with the Semi-Finals and Finals of the male and female water polo.

FEMALE WATER POLO

The female water polo had 4 entries Royal Signals, Royal Engineers, AGC and a combined Int/RLC team. After 2 close semi-finals, the ladies final was held between Royal Signals and Royal Engineers. This year the standard of ladies water polo was very high and both teams boasted a combination of fast swimmers and quality players. In the first quarter it was the Sappers who scored first 1 – 0 before **Sig Zoe Phythian** pulled one back for the Corps and the quarter ended 1 – 1. The second quarter was a reversal of the first with **Sig Phythian** scoring first, only for the Sappers to pull one back 2 – 2. In the third quarter **Cpl Stacey Fayers** scored first to make it 3 – 2 then the Engineers again pegged it back 3 – 3 before the Corps scored twice 5 – 3. This was to remain the final score. This was an excellent game of water polo and had everyone on the edge of their seats right to the end.

MALE WATER POLO

The male team played the REME in their semi-final. We anticipated it would not be an easy game as the REME have qualified for the final for the last 5 years and are our old enemies. However, on this occasion and with a depleted REME side, the Corps ran out clear winners and stood on the abyss of their 8th consecutive championship win. In the final we met the RE (A) team who had a much stronger team than in previous years, so a good final was on the cards. The first quarter finished 3 – 0 to Royal Signals with **SSgt Love** scoring twice, **SSgt White** scoring one and **Maj Pete Griffiths** claiming 2 penalty saves. In the second quarter the Sappers renewed their efforts but **SSgt Love** scored again making it 4 – 0 before RE scored, 4 – 1. **Sig Hanson** replied for Royal Signals 5 – 1 and RE pulled another back. Finally **Capt Psaila** scored to end the quarter 6 – 2. In the third quarter, the Sappers opened the scoring 6 – 3 before **Sgt**

Craig Chilvers and **Sig Hanson** scored one each to end the quarter 8 – 3. Into the last quarter 8 – 3 down the Engineers had nothing to lose and threw everything at us. They managed to score twice 8 – 5 before another goal from **SSgt Love** finished the game at 9 – 5.

This was an excellent game of water polo played to a high standard by all concerned and with the loss of some key players, next year the RE will certainly be a team for the Corps to watch out for.

The Corps Water Polo Team Inter Corps Champions

Into the swimming and the individual Championships were fiercely contested by all competitors. In the female events notable achievements were **LCpl Sarah Jaffe** winning the 100m and 50m Backstroke.

The ladies finished runners up overall in the individual events. In the male individual events, although we did not win one race, the men were 3rd overall. Notable swims were **Sig Luke Meadows** 100m and 50m Free Style and **Sig James Booth** 50m Butterfly both finished 2nd in their respective races.

The Ladies water polo and Relay Swimming Team Champions

In the female sprint relays we did not lose a race and won the team event overall. The 4 x 50m freestyle relay team of **Capts Cath Jardine**, **Lou Halstead** and **Laura Fernand** and **Cpl Stacey Fayers** recorded 2 mins 5 secs.

The 4 x 50m medley relay consisting of **Capt Halstead**, **2Lt Sue Morris**, **LCpl Sarah Jaffe** and **Sig Zoe Pythian** recorded a time of 2 mins 21 secs, which was a new championship record. The 4 x 50m Breaststroke team of **Capt Jardine, 2Lt Morris, LCpl Jaffe** and **Sig Pythian** also won in a new championship record time.

In the male sprint relays, we also won the event overall with superb swims from our 4 x 50m breaststroke team of **WO2 Nige Kenyon**, **Sgt Craig Chilvers**, **Cpl Sean Peart** and **Sig Mark Graham** who won the event in a new championship record time of 2 mins 24secs.

The Corps swimming and water polo teams with silverware

Also, the 4 x 50m medley relay team of **Cpl Ollie Smith**, **Cpl Tony Davies**, **Sig Mark Graham** and **Sig Luke Meadows** won in a new championship record time of 2 mins and 2 secs. Winning 4 of the 6 titles on offer and finishing as runners up in one and third in the other was an excellent result. I would like to extend my thanks to units for releasing their Officers and Soldiers, without their sp, we would not enjoy the same level of success. As always, all individuals within the Squad would like to thank **Mr Mick Flaherty** for coaching the water polo teams and **Cpl Helen Chamberlain** who coached and selected the swimming teams.

My thanks go to all individuals for their effort over a very hard week. My special thanks go to **Lt Col Tim Langford** the former Secretary and more recently President of Corps Swimming and Water polo who in April this year retires from the Army. I personally have had the pleasure of playing water polo with **Col Tim** for a great many years and I think possibly there are only the 2 of us left serving, who can claim to have played in the 70s for the Corps.

Over the last 15 years that **Col Tim** has been Secretary and President, he has been unrelenting in his efforts to take Royal Signals swimming and water polo to new levels, winning 8 consecutive Inter-Corps Competitions and has been the driving force behind the Corps tours to California 2003 and Australia 2005. 2007 would have seen the Corps go to New Zealand but for op commitments. All of the Royal Signals swimming and water polo teams wish **Col Tim** and his family all the very best in the future. Many thanks for his efforts and we look forward to playing polo with him or against him whatever the future might bring.

Finally the Inter-Corps in 2008 will be contested at Aldershot in November with the internal Competition being contested hopefully at RNAS Yeovilton.

The water polo will again include a female tournament where we would welcome some new talent. Anyone interested in representing the Corps should contact **Maj Pete Griffiths** on 94641-3810.

POSTSCRIPT BY LT COL TIM LANGFORD

I thought it appropriate to thank all members of the swimming and water polo teams for the stunning gifts you presented me at the Inter-Corps in Aldershot. I will cherish the "big yellow Mikasa ball" and it now has pride of place in my home. As Griff would say it was emotional.....my final year with the teams after 35 years almost, brought a tear to my eyes!

I wish everyone success in the future and hope you maintain the family ethos within the teams, which has been paramount to our outstanding successes over the last 10 years. I am always available if there any future tours planned!

TUG OF WAR

SEASON REPORT 2007 - *by WO2 Tim Tatler RLC*

11 Sig Regt had an excellent season in 2007, which started in February with the daily ritual of circuit trg, rope work and 'sandbag' carrying 3 lunchtimes a week. This continued through March where the team took part in the Dorset County Trg League, participating against the local farmers and established clubs. These were held each Sunday in March, where the Regt ended up a creditable 4th place.

The Regt gained sponsorship from 'Sewards' the local Vauxhall Dealer who paid for the strip in return for wearing their logo. This was down to the shrewd "wheeling and dealing" by the Coach **WO2 Tim Tatler**.

Trg intensified and the Regt then entered the 4 Div and REME Championships which were held alongside each other at the Oval in Tidworth. The Regt not only walked away as the Div Champions but the Garrison LAD also won the REME title.

The main focus for the month of May was always to be the Morrison Cup held at Blandford on the 23 May. The Regt were considered by the other competitors to be the favourites, so the pressure was on both the Male and Female teams to perform! And they didn't disappoint the large crowd of spectators.

As the competition developed, it became apparent that 21 Sig Regt were out to try and upset the odds as they beat 1 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt to book a place in the final. This was also true in the Female competition and the finals were decided as follows:

Male

640Kg	11 Sig Regt *v* 21 Sig Regt
680Kg	11 Sig Regt *v* 21 Sig Regt

Female

520Kg	11 Sig Regt *v* 21 Sig Regt
560Kg	11 Sig Regt *v* 21 Sig Regt

The finals ended with 11 Sig Regt winning all 4 Finals, which meant that the Regt had not lost an end all day in both competitions (an outstanding effort!)

Two days later, the Team competed in the Herts County Show, where they met 40 Regt RA in the final and came Runners-Up.

On returning to Blandford, the Coach received a late invite to compete at the annual MacMillan Cancer Support competition in London at the House of Lords. This competition is held on indoor mats on the Green directly opposite the House of Lords.

The Competition is laid on annually by Taylor Woodrow for the House of Lords to compete against the House of Commons. The event is made bigger as the Armed Services supply 4 teams, from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Royal Marines, as well as Taylor Woodrow itself. The event takes place with a star studded audience of celebrities, well known journalists and politicians. Each team needs a sponsor who backs it with £1500; our sponsors were Alliance Boots.

The competition went extremely well and although it was a long day, the Regt were the eventual winners. The trophy was presented by **Lady Brennan of Bibury**.

The Team returned to Blandford with their sights firmly set on the Army Finals. Trg stepped up a level. The Gunner Competition was to take place 3 days prior to the Army Finals so this would give us an indication of how far we had progressed. The Gunners' is an Open Competition which took place at Larkhill on the 3 July and with a slightly depleted team, due to postings and trg commitments, we came away with 2 well fought, Runners-Up trophies.

The team returned from a disappointing day, regrouped and hit the gantry till the hands bled and the body ached. We worked on the basics in order to produce the goods at the Army Finals, which were always going to be difficult as we knew 40 Regt RA were the team to beat!

The Amy finals were competed for at Aldershot on Saturday 6 July and included 40 Regt RA, 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, 21 Sig Regt, 24 Tpt and Mov Regt and RSME. The Regt had an excellent day competing in all weights 560, 600, 640 and 680kgs, getting Runners-Up in all 4 competitions.

A number of the team were then selected to represent the Army at the Inter-Services to be held at RAF Cosford 10 days later. These were **WO2 Tench**, **SSgt Davis**, **SSgt Paterson**, **Sgt Brown** and **LCpl Chadwick**. Teams Army A and B proved far too strong for the RAF and walked away with all the weight trophies..

As a result of this competition, a team was selected along to compete as Combined Services at the National Tug-of-War Competition at Malvern, Worcestershire. This proved to be like playing Chelsea with a pub team and showed everyone how high the level is in civilian competitions. This was an extremely long day starting with the weigh in at 0600hrs and the last pull at 1900hrs with 10 – 15 teams in each weight.

The Combined Services Team then went on to compete in the Triangular competition with the National Police team and the Civil Service teams. Members of the Regt who were selected included **Maj Holland** RA, **WO2 Tatler** RLC, **Sgt Brown**, **Sig Ibbertson** along with **WO1 Smith** and **Sig Mawhinney** from 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt.

The Combine Service team walked away with Gold and two Silvers, an excellent result against well established teams from the Police and Civil Service.

The final competition for the Regt was to be at the Braemar Gathering in Scotland, where the Team was determined to match the runners-up place of 2005 and winning the Plate in 2006. The team trained daily for 2 hrs which increased our strength and fitness following a summer leave period. However, things didn't go to plan.

After faltering in the early stages however, the team dug deeper than ever to force their way into the Plate final once again! This is where things finally came together and 11 Sig Regt won the plate for a second year. Although, very deflated and disappointed at not making the Main Final, this was a outstanding achievement on the day.

Overall 11 Sig Regt won 14 trophies throughout a very busy season. **Sig Ibbertson** (a Phase 2 soldier) was selected and won a "Gold" medal in his very first season; this also went towards him winning the Regtl Sports Person of the Year.

The team throughout the season changed constantly and the Coach never had the same team for any of the competitions. However through hard work, dedication, teamwork and selfless commitment, they proved that it all pays off in the end!!!

The Regtl Team continued with the Indoor Season and the Regt put together a full squad including 10 Gurkha soldiers for the

Army Finals in Aldershot. Unfortunately this competition, which had 5 teams entered the previous day, was cancelled as we were the only Team left. This was very disappointing as Team Army were entered in the National Competition 3 days later, therefore 11 Sig Regt had to go forward to represent the Army in Birmingham.

This was put together by **WO2 Tatler** and **SSgt Davis** to ensure that both Male and Female Teams competed at as many weights as possible. The Female teams combined with girls from SEME Bordon to compete and win 2 Silver Medals. The Male team competed very hard against well established teams and enjoyed the experience?

HOCKEY

- by Lt Col D G Proctor, Chairman RSHC and Brian Mower Sec RSHC

We have missed an edition of *The Wire* and so with a few events behind us in January and February, we have enough to return with some news and pictures and a few WngO of future events.

January 17 saw the Corps Seniors descend on the Aldershot arena to be hosted by the RLC. The Seniors started first and were down by 2 early goals. However a open play goal by **Capt Dale Taft** and short corner by **Capt John Hooker** finished the half 2 – 2.

In the second period we converted 4 open play goals, 2 from **Dale Taft,** and one each from **Maj Tim Wood** and **Cpl Greg Boot.**

A final, short corner goal came from **John Hooker**. The RLC replied with a further 2 goals leaving the score 7 – 4. That result was impressive given that **SSgt(YOS) Scouse Lloyd** had taken up as goalkeeper at no notice.

Unfortunately that first game had also taken 6 of the over 35s, who could then not quite maintain the momentum for the Veterans *v* RLC match following. A close 5 – 4 result provided great entertainment in a game that ended in lashing rain and wind. Goals came from **Richard Beaney** (2), **Lt Col Matt Hanson** and **Maj Tim Wood**

On Wednesday 13 February, we went to play the traditional matches against RMAS. Sadly, commitments devastated the RSHC Ladies squad so a friendly mixed match started the event.

The Corps gracefully lost in the circumstances. The Senior match was a see-saw event of end to end goals and close shaves. A 3 – 3 half time score was a good reflection of the play, with 2 short corner goals from **Cpl Del Farr** and a 'wobbly' penalty stroke from **Sgt Marcus Murcott.**

The second half looked like ending 5 – 5 after a further corner from **Del Farr** and an open play goal from **Cpl John Howe**. Unfortunately, the Umpire's (me!) watch stuck and the very last touch of the game saw the ball slip past **Cpl Dan Cattermole**; result lost 6 – 5.

On Saturday 16, the Veterans returned to RMAS to play a Commandants XI. Goals from **SSgt Mark Collins** and **Maj Tim Woods** (3) were not quite enough.

Excellent play by Academy staff, particularly **Capt Jez Walters** RA, son of **Col Cliff Walters** late R SIGNALS, and a regular Army player, proved too strong and they finished worthy winners at 6 – 4. That could have been far worse had it not been for the excellent exploits in goal of **Taff Davies.**

The 11 only Corps Veterans prior to playing RMAS Commandant's XI

STOP PRESS

As this goes to CD to get it to the Editor, the Seniors' match against the REME at Arborfield on Wednesday 20 February was a 4 – 1 win to the opposition. Apparently a very good game but we got stuck in second gear!

The Corps Seniors prior to the RMAS match

WHAT'S NEXT?

As this is the April edition, we should have participated in further Inter-Corps matches, the R SIGNALS Inter-Unit event at Blandford on the 17/18 April, and the Inter-Corps at Aldershot on the 23-25 April. Reports to follow.

In the future we have the R SIGNALS Past *v* Present on the RSA Weekend at Blandford 28 June 08, and the CO Gibraltar Regt has kindly agreed to host a tour to Gibraltar for the Men and Ladies at the beginning of September 08.

ORIENTEERING

The Army Individual and Inter-Corps Team Championships took place on 8/9 December 2007. Just when others were starting to enjoy the build up to Christmas, 18 members of the Corps gathered in Colchester to run in the competition.

Some of the usual faces were unavailable for selection (**Tom Jeffries**, **David Macklin**, **Des McGuckian**, **Tom Burke**, **Mark Bentley** and **Stacey Lyon**) and others were performing below par for valid reasons (**Mel Rayner** - 4½ months pregnant, **Andy Dobson** – out of practice due to commitments on FofS course, **Sgt Richie Hill** – sprained his ankle 4 weeks before the event!) – but we entered teams in all 4 categories (Men's Long Course, Men's Short Course, Ladies and U25s) and had high hopes of picking up at least one of the prizes.

The night event was held at Middlewick Ranges near Colchester. The area was open and flat and proved to be quite fast and furious. Some of the Corps team members had competed in a number of night trg events prior to the Championships and were hoping that this would pay dividends.

The Corps teams were in good order after the night event with the Ladies leading by 4 mins 21 secs and the Men's Short only trailing by 3 mins 40 secs.

The U25s ran as individuals to gain some valuable night experience and although the Men's Long Course team didn't have the best night in the woods, they were still in touch with the prizes. It was all still to play for on the day event at Friday Wood.

The day event at Friday Wood had a few more contours thrown in and a good smattering of brambles and woodland but was still generally a fast area producing some quick times over all the courses.

With the final results published, the Ladies had extended their overnight lead and won by 17 mins 57 secs. Unfortunately, the Men's teams were not able to make inroads to their overnight deficit.

That said, there were some strong individual performances; **Maj Rhid Jones** snatching the day time honours from **Cpl Jamie Ranson**, **Sgt Richie Hill** on his debut for the Corps leading the way for the Short Course team on the night event, **Cpl Steph Bogart** pipped **Maj Mel Rayner** on the night event. Top honours of the Corps U25s went to **Sig Brookes** of 11 Sig Regt.

WO1 Mark Emmerson finishing the Long Course

Final Results (Combined Individual Placings in brackets):

Ladies Event:

1. Royal Signals (**Maj Mel Rayner** (3), **Cpl Steph Bogart** (4), **Capt Sarah Clifford** (7), **Lt Col Sarah Street** (8) in a field of 25 runners)
2. RLC
3. AGC

Men's Long Course Event

1. REME
2. RE
3. RA
6. Royal Signals (**Cpl Jamie Ranson** (9), **Maj Rhid Jones** (12), **WO1 Mark Emmerson** (24), **Cpl Padam Darlami** (33), **Maj Simon Ing** (34), **SSgt Andy Dobson** (35) in a field of 46 runners)

Men's Short Course Event:

1. AAC
2. APTC (A)
3. APTC (B)
4. Royal Signals (**Sgt Mark Ebanks** (9), **Cpl Andy Price** (13), **Sgt Richie Hill** (16), **SSgt Colin Holcombe** (29) in a field of 45 runners)

The winning Ladies Team – Capt Sarah Clifford, Maj Mel Rayner, Cpl Steph Bogart and Lt Col Sarah Streete

ROYAL SIGNALS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2007/08

The Corps Individual and Unit Team Championships will take place at Hankley Common and Longmoor 9/10 April 08.

Details have been distributed to all units and are on the 'Events' page of the British Army Orienteering Club website www.baoc.org.uk

If you haven't entered yet and are able to run individuals or a team in the competition please contact **Maj Mel Rayner** on 07884 173851.

Defending Champions are:

Major Unit:	11 Sig Regt
Minor Unit:	JSU Corsham
Ladies:	Royal Signals Upavon
Men:	**Cpl Jamie Ranson**
Ladies:	**Maj Mel Rayner**

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Mr Peter Cuckow
Tel: 01258 482090

Maj(Retd) Ian Greig
Tel: 01258 482082

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood

Association Office
RHQ Royal Signals
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8RH
www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals

Welfare Secretary
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Tel (civ) 01258 48 2089
Email: welfare@royalsignals.mod.uk

Membership Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2090
Tel (civ) 01258 482090
Email: rsa@royalsignals.mod.uk

General Secretary and Treasurer: Lt Col (Retd) CP Conlon
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

Branch news. Ill health has forced **John Ackerely** to stand down as Secretary of the Harrogate Branch. **Derek Fowler** is the new Secretary and can be contacted at derejak@btinternet.com Tel: 01423-819467. **Cathy Gwinnell** is the new Secretary of the **Cornwall Branch** and can be contacted at; rosyo6202@aol.com Tel: 01841-540636. Having started the branch in 1999, **Elgan Davies** has stood down as Chairman of the **West Wales Branch**. His wife **Linda** has handed over as Secretary to **Bert Colderick**. **Bert** can be contact at; Bertcolderick@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01792-232687.

Reunion 2008. Details of the 2008 Reunion at Blandford, including order forms for meals and car passes, can be downloaded from the RSA website; www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa click "Reunion 2008". Returns should be with Assn HQ by 13 June 2008.

New Members. A warm welcome is extended to the following recently enrolled Life Members;

Rank/Name	*Service*	*Branch/Unit*
SSgt Joyce Michie	1977-92	Aberdeen Branch
Capt Lynn Bertram	1988-date	Aberdeen Branch
Maj Linda Smith	1983-date	Aberdeen Branch
Cpl Graham Greenwood	1955-57	
Cpl Derek Woolcott	1965-78	
Sig Ernest Wilkinson	1958-60	
LCpl Kevin Waters	1980-89	
Sig Lesley Rankin(Chambers)	1991-96	
Cpl Dennis Ball	1945-53	
Sgt John Bryant BEM	1968-07	
SSgt George Myerscough	1970-92	
Maj Rollo Rumford	1962-97	
LCpl Nik Bersford	1989-96	
Sgt Darren Bartleet	1984-08	
LCpl George Johnson	1983-04	
Cpl Steve Christie	1980-92	
LCpl Andy Ravenscroft	2000-07	
Cpl Charles Bell	1985-96	
LCpl Alan Popowicz	1981-93	
Sig Mick Bush	1972-78	
Sig Roy Westlake	1946-48	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Cpl Doug McDonald	1949-54	
Sgt Steve Johnston	1997-date	11 Sig Regt
Sgt Ginge Davies	1990-date	11 Sig Regt
Sig Derek Anderson	1996-01	
LCpl Dave Wynne	1991-01	
Sig Tony Price	1956-58	
Sig David Stealey	1981-87	
Sig Frank Woodward	1953-56	
Sgt Shane Larkin	1975-88	
Sig Tim Blake	1977-89	
Cpl Dave Harris	1980-94	
Cpl Kenneth Barkas	1969-91	
Sig Brian Tewkesbury	1964-71	
Sig Albert Kenny	1955-57	
Sig David Partridge	1952-54	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
WO2 Nicholas Baines	2000-08	
SSgt John Whalley	2003-date	Gib DE&S
Sig Yvonne Lyman	1991-95	
WO1 Ian Stringer	1977-00	
LCpl Daniel Millan	1981-92	Sale Branch
Maj Sally Donovan	1988-08	14 Sig Regt(EW)
Cpl Paul Cooper	1977-82	
Sgt Stuart Herrington	1965-87	
Lt George Owen	1938-46	
SSgt Barry Egan	1972-97	
Cpl Keith Graham	1979-91	
WO1 Craig Bruce BEM	1984-date	HQ SOinC(A)
Sig Andrew Longsden	1985-86	
LCpl Gavin Wilson	1997-04	
Cpl Ted Kilpin	1965-80	
Sig Neil Dickinson	1988-97	
Sig Norman Pearce	1963-65	West London Branch
Sig Maria Dennehy	2002-07	
Sig Brian Watkinson	1953-55	Chesterfield Branch
Sgt Bernard Bush	1959-68	
Cpl Mark Dickinson	2000-08	
LCpl Colin Carvell	1978-87	
Sig Paddy Howman	1990-93	
Sig Ken Kenway	1953-57	
Sgt Len Cooper	1941-45	
Sgt Linda Grace	1980-94	Middlesbrough Branch
Cpl Colin Davies	1982-93	Beverley Ex Boys Assn
Cpl David Francis	1958-70	Beverley Ex Boys Assn
Sig Arthur Whitehead	1953-55	Huddersfield Branch
LCpl Harry Young	1971-85	Newcastle Branch
Cpl Andy Robertson	1974-82	
Cpl Dave Barrick	1959-65	
Sig Ken Symons	1958-60	
Sig Edward Cole	1955-57	
LCpl Tracy Cook	2001-date	Preston & Blackburn Br
Capt Gary Greaves	1983-date	102 Log Bde Sig Sqn
Sig Duane Smith	1985-99	
SSgt Trevor Payne	1972-90	
Sgt Ray Nutbeam	1981-94	
LCpl Leslie Jenvey	1947-48	

LCpl John Twohigg	1976-86	
Sgt Richard Sykes	1981-94	
Sig Keith Foster	1970-73	
Sig Peter Bryant	1948-50	Cotswolds Branch
LCpl Roger Morris	1980-84	
Sig Cliff Williamson	1956-59	
Sgt Tony Hulme	1974-97	Cambridge Branch
Sgt Peter Sacre	1980-97	Cambridge Branch
Pte Min Sacre	1980-86	Cambridge Branch

DONATIONS

John Bryant	£10.00
42 Sig Regt Officers Club	£203.00
Reading Branch RSA	£180.00
Malcolm Kirk	£75.00
Mr J Riley	£15.00
David Phillips	£15.00
Certa Cito Lodge	£30.00
Glossop & District Royal Signals OCA	£25.00
Poole Branch RSA	£100.00
FW Natolie	£14.52
Mrs M L Britt	£25.00
P A Drummond	£9.25
Jean and **Derrick Grice**	£100.00
Maj Gen Badcock in memory of **Jack Dienst**	£10.00
P Fender in memory of **Jack Dienst**	£10.00
Tony Unsworth	£100.00
Tayside & Fife Branch RSA	£36.00
Mrs P Light in memory of her husband **Ivan**	£100.00
Mr R Waldron	£10.00
Lincoln Branch RSA	£50.00
Kenneth Symons	£10.00
Cheques totalling in memory of **Jack Dienst**	£315.00
Exmouth Branch RSA	£100.00
Huddersfield Branch RSA	£150.00

DORSET BRANCH

Chairman **G Grover**
Secretary **D Walker**

MAJ GEN A YEOMAN CB RECEIVES THE PINGAT JASA MALAYSIA COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

Believe it or not there are occasions when even the Secretary of a Branch does not mind putting pen to paper. This occasion has occurred because **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman CB**, now retired and a highly respected and important member of the Dorset Branch, was one of the recipients of the Pingat Jasa Malaysian Commemorative Medal.

The Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) is a commemorative medal which the Government of Malaysia wished to award to all eligible British citizens for their service in Malaya and Malaysia between 31 August 1957 and 12 August 1966. The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals recommended that an exception be made to 2 long-established Rules governing the acceptance and wearing of foreign awards, to enable the Malaysian Government to present the PJM. **Her Majesty the Queen** was graciously pleased to approve the recommendation.

It has been long standing government policy that non-British medals will not be approved for events or service. However, Her Majesty's Government welcomes and believes it is important to recognise the generous gesture by the King and Government of Malaysia and their wish to acknowledge the service given by veterans and others in the years immediately after Malaysian independence. The exception recommended reflects this and our strong and important relationship with Malaysia.

The presentation took place in the Pavilion in Weymouth, Dorset on 6 November 2007 and started at 1030hrs. **Maj Gen Yeoman** was presented with his medal by **Col Md Tajri Alwi** of the Malaysian Army, who is the Defence Advisor in the Malaysian High Commission in London.

Maj Gen Yeoman receives his Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

Maj Gen Yeoman CB was born and educated in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He joined the Army entering the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1952 and was commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals in February 1954. His first appointment as 2Lt was to 1 Commonwealth Bde Sig Sqn in Korea and during this tour he had a 4 month exchange tour with an Australian Sig Regt in Japan. He then served for 2 years in the Singapore District Sig Regt in Malaya and Singapore, during which time he held the appointment of ADC to HE the Governor.

He returned to the UK in 1958 to 7 Trg Regt Royal Signals in Catterick and after 6 months was posted on an emergency tour to Cyprus with 1 Gds Bde Sig Sqn during the EOKA troubles. In 1959 as a Capt, he was posted to the School of Signals for 3 years as a student and subsequently as an instructor. In 1963 he attended Staff College at Camberley. Between 1964 and 1974 he had 4 tours in Ist British Corps in Germany – these punctuated by a posting to Canada as a Maj. He also served as Staff Captain in HQ 11 Inf Bde, commanded 12 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn as a Maj, was Lt Col at 36 and commanded 2 Div HQ & Sig Regt and held a staff appointment in HQ Ist British Corps.

In 1974 he served as a staff officer in the MOD in the rank of Col. This was followed by a dual appointment as Col AQ HQ Land Forces Cyprus and Comd Episkopi Garrison. In 1979 as Brig, he was Comd Trg Group Royal Signals and Catterick Garrison and this was followed by an appointment as ACOS in HQ 1st British Corps. **Maj Gen Yeoman** was appointed Comd Comms BAOR on 16 April 1984. It was during this appointment that he was awarded with the CB in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 1987, as a result of his important part in the introduction of Ptarmigan.

In 1987 he became the Hon Col of 37 (Wessex & Welsh) Sig Regt (V) and remained so for 7 years.
Upon retirement he became the Director of the Army Sports Control Board, an appointment he held for 8 years. He has the honour to have the Army Rugby League Challenge Cup to be named after him, was also made a Life Vice President of the Army Rugby Union and has many more sporting distinctions to his name.

He was Colonel Commandant Royal Signals from 1987 – 93 and was the Chairman of the Royal Signals Association between 1995 and 2000. The most important thing of all that I have yet failed to mention is that he was the President of the Dorset Branch of the Royal Signals Association from November 1988 until November 1995, retiring because he took up the appointment as Chairman

of the Royal Signals Association. We obviously had not given him enough grief and so he took up the position as our President once again in November 2002 until finally retiring in February 2007.

Returning to the Presentation. During that morning 180 presentations were made to ex-service personnel from many different Corps and Regts, some posthumously. In addition to **Maj Gen Yeoman**, there were another 4 ex-Royal Signals members. These were **Lt Col (Retd) Pat Soward** (Air Formation Sig Regt Assn), **Mr Frank Webber** (Dorset Branch), **Mr Terry Linsdell** (Exmouth Branch) and **Mr Terry Poingdestre** (RHQ Branch). The morning of Presentations was really very well organised and thanks should go to one man in particular by the name of **Mike Warren**, an ex Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He has made it his responsibility to organise Presentation Days for the PJM all over the UK. He has a couple of problems in that at the moment there are no more medals available but that should be rectified soon, and in addition, there is no funding for these Presentation Days to take place, other than through donations. He is hoping however that he can continue in his efforts and that things could start moving again soon. He said that so far (as at November 2007) they had managed to present 6,000 medals. However up until then, there had been 21,000 successful applications received for the medal. Good luck **Mike** with the remaining 15,000 of which, incidentally I am one.

EDINBURGH BRANCH

Chairman **Capt Jeff Jephcote**
Secretary **Capt Graham Gaw**

Due to other commitments, the 2007 Christmas Dinner was held a little late this year. It was held on 18 Jan 2008 in the North British Hotel, Princes Street, Edinburgh and 21 members and guests enjoyed an excellent meal, followed by a couple of stories from **Mr Archie Walker-Brown**. **Archie** a sprightly 92 year old told us of the time he served with **"Monty" Montgomerie** and how he saw the Polish Bear at work.

Archie Walker-Brown giving his speech

The Chairman, **Capt Jeff Jephcote**, gave a brief speech reminding everyone that the AGM will be on 13 March 2008 followed by a buffet. He also thanked **Col ACC Lapsley QVRM TD DL** and his wife **Ruth** for attending the function.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Chairman **Bobby Taylor**
Secretary **Chris Dennis**

IRISH GUARDS MARCH THROUGH CITY - *by Steve Brisk*

It was cold, wet and blustery on Saturday 2nd February 2008 but the weather brightened up somewhat for the main event of the day.

On the centenary of the Regt on 1 April 2000, the City of Liverpool had honoured the Irish Guards by bestowing them with the Freedom of Liverpool. Following a tour of duty in Iraq, more than 200 Irish Guardsmen marched through the City Centre. Members and friends from the RSA Liverpool Branch had joined hundreds of well wishers and supporters. The traffic was halted as spectators applauded the marching troops to show their support and to offer a "Scouse" welcome.

Lt Col Michael O'Dwyer, CO of 1st Bn Irish Guards, said: "It is a great honour for the Irish Guards to exercise our Freedom of Liverpool in this historic and memorable year for Liverpool. It is made all the more special because of the tremendous support given to the Bn from the people of Liverpool during our tour in Iraq. This is an ideal way for us to say thank you."

Following a service at the Anglican Cathedral, the Bn marched along Lime Street with an "Eyes Left" at St George's Hall. The Irish Guards, wearing the Queen's and Regtl colours were joined by MP for Halton and Veterans Minister, **Derek Twigg**. Also on parade were Cadets of the affiliated Army Cadets and members of the Irish Guards Association. Among the marchers were 3 brothers from Netherley, Liverpool, **Mick Hogan**, 37, **James,** 32 and **Peter**, 26.

On arrival at St John's Memorial Gardens, **Maj Gen Sir Sebastian Roberts** late of the Irish Guards, unveiled a new tablet stone memorial for fallen comrades before a civic reception was then held at St George's Hall. Liverpool's Lord Mayor, **Cllr Paul Clark**, said: "I'm delighted the Irish Guards marched past St George's Hall and that they are now able to honour all those who have lost their lives at the new memorial stone. The Irish Guards have very close links to Liverpool and I'm proud to welcome the men who have represented this country in Iraq to try and help create a safer and more just world. They have a very tough but essential role. I think I speak on behalf of everyone in the city in thanking them for their brave and selfless work."

Irish Guards new memorial stone in St George's Garden

On 1st April 1900, under Queen Victoria's direction, Army Order 77 came into effect, raising the Irish Guards, affectionately known as "The Micks". Many of the original recruits came from the Irish community living in Liverpool. After the parade; it was only right and proper for friends and members of the RSA to join members of the Irish Guards Association in Dr Duncan's for a well earned dram or two.

Yet again another good time was had by all.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

Chairman **R Taylor**
Secretary **H Ferguson**

The end of the 2007 season began with the Remembrance Parade at St.Peter's Square on the 11th November. We managed to muster about 23 members and were led by our President, **Maj Chris Reynolds Jones TD**,.who travelled from deepest Essex to be with the Branch, and Chairman **Ron Taylor**. We were lucky

enough to have a typical Manchester morning; sunny and mild and to put the cherry on the cake we had a surprise visit by **Joe Jennings.**

Later that month, some Branch members attended the MADLEA Christmas Party at Ardwick Barracks. This was very well attended and among the guests were members of Broughton House Ex-Servicemen's Home and Manchester's Lord Mayor.

Our Christmas Party took place on December 1 at the Hough End Centre and our Guests of Honour were the Master himself, **Gen Sir Sam** and **Lady Anne Cowan** who circulated among the guests prior to dining and thereafter enjoyed themselves on the dance floor. After the toasts, **Sir Sam** gave a very interesting talk on his and **Lady Anne's** travels in the Himalayas, including some facts about **Norgay Tensing's** origins which most of us did not know. The Guests of Honour were presented with a print of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' as a memento of their visit by **Ron Taylor** and **Harry Ferguson** and the ladies on the top table were presented with bouquets.

Our thanks go to the Committee and wives and all who worked hard to make the evening such a success and last but not least, the 2 young Sigs from 42 Sig Sqn for their immaculate turnout as 'Stickmen' for the evening.

Sick parade as I write— —
Marian Taylor in hospital, **Muriel Hearldon** recovering from several heart attacks and **Jackie Murphy** making a slow but steady recovery after neurosurgery. May they all have a trouble free 2008.

MIDDLESBOROUGH BRANCH

Chairman **Audrey Grainge**
Secretary **Richard Grainge**

The past year as gone so quickly and our Branch is continuing to grow steadily but we would welcome more new members. We held a successful Dinner in March at the Bluebell Hotel. The AGM in April went smoothly and all the officers held their posts. The evening ended with a pie and pea supper.

We had a trip to Skipton for the Medieval Pageant but the weather wasn't kind to us. It was wet windy and very cold causing most of the exhibits to pack up and go home early. The outing ended at the pub for a meal and a drink. In June we visited Cragside gardens and house; the weather was great and we ended the day with a pub meal in Ponteland. We held our usual Christmas Draw and Social with lots of games and quizzes and an excellent supper provided by the members. Our Standard Bearer continues to do a sterling job out and about at parades and funerals.

The visit to Cragside

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

Maj (Retd) Noel Johnston, President of the NI Branch celebrated his 80th birthday on 19 December 2007. Typical of his dedication, **Noel** managed to attend our Branch meeting that same evening! He joined the RSA in 1956 and has served in every office, often more than once! To all the members on the Branch Committee, **Noel** represents a steady hand on the tiller, combining knowledge, wisdom and loyalty. We wish **Noel** and his wife **Doris** a better year than the past one, which was seriously marred by **Doris's** continuing ill health.

Our most verbose and loyal member **Jim Weir** gave a magnanimous vote of thanks to Hon Sec **Ian** and Branch Treasurer **Debbie Wolfe**, who provided the buffet supper, enjoyed by a bigger than average attendance in December. **Edgar McCall,** still recovering from a serious illness, provided a surprise for his wife **Jean** with a beautiful bouquet of flowers to thank her for all the love and care she gave him during the year.

Mr David Twigg, SSAFA NI Branch Chairman was the guest speaker at the meeting on 16 January 2008. **David** gave an enlightening talk about the origins and work of that splendid organisation, an eye-opener for many of those present. Their motto "One Day's Service, a Lifetime of Support" left a lasting image with many of us. At this meeting, **Maj (Retd) Teddy Russell** ex-302 Sqn and 40 Sig Regt was welcomed back into the fold.

Branch membership has become a concern as some members with infirmities are unable to travel on winter evenings. Ways to improve attendance are being examined. It was especially noticed when the numbers were down on Remembrance Day but it didn't stop 80 year-old **John McMahon**, ex RIF and RUR marching to the church service.

The Branch AGM was held on Wednesday 20 February. Member **Mark Harrison** was welcomed back by the Hon Sec after a period of absence. **Capt Wolfe** then declared all offices to be vacant and the Branch President, **Maj (Retd) Noel Johnston** took the chair. Most officers were re-elected into their previous posts with the exception of ex-RSM **John Loveday** who has suffered long-term health problems. Associate Member **Carron Patterson** was elected to the position of Auditor 1. **Lt Col (Retd) Jim Brown** then appraised members about the campaign for a UK Defence Medal for all HM Forces who served a reasonable engagement. MPs are being deluged with letters of support.

As always, we issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, regular or TA and ex-members of ATS/WRAC who served with Royal Signals to join us at Clonaver TAC, Belfast on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

WEST LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Maj (Retd) RL Miller TD**
Secretary **Mr E Murphy**

There were 20 standard bearers at the funeral of **Harry Ruff**, our own Branch Standard Bearer, whose death we record with great sadness. In 1949 **Harry**, a Londoner, joined the Corps as a Despatch Rider on National Service which he followed by 4 years in a unit of the Territorial Army. Until his retirement **Harry** worked for 21 years for Esso.

He joined the West London Branch and carried our Standard for 22 years. **Harry** also joined the British Legion and it was there

that, after the death of his first wife **Cath**, who had give him great support in the Branch, he met **Sheila**, a fellow Standard Bearer. They were married in 1999, in which year Harry won the Standard Bearers Competition at the Annual Association Reunion in Blandford.

Harry Ruff winning the Standard Bearers Competition at Blandford in 1999

He carried our Standard at many local parades, proudly representing our Corps at both military and civil functions. His readiness to help and his cheerful disposition will be greatly missed by his many friends.

Since going to press in the last issue, we held out Christmas party, on which occasion the Ladies Section again did us proudly with the refreshments.

WEST WALES BRANCH

Chairman **Mr Gwyn Phillips**
Secretary **Mr Bert Colderick**

Our 2008 AGM took place on 14 February at the Royal Naval Association Club, Llanelli and the following members were elected to serve as Branch officials for the forthcoming year. Chairman – **Gwyn Phillips**. Vice Chairman – **Gwyn Daniel**. Secretary and Treasurer – **Bert Colderick**. Social Secretary – **Derek Baker**. Standard Bearer – **Gerry Dean**. Our President, **Jim Jarman** remains unchanged.

Our new Chairman paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman **Elgan Davies**, who was one of the founding members of the Branch and Chairman since its formation, ably assisted by his wife **Linda**, the outgoing Secretary. He recognised both for their tireless work for the benefit of the Branch and its members since its formation on 21 May 1999.

As we are a relatively young Branch and always looking out for new members, we would like to invite any currently serving or retired Corps members living and or working in the South West Wales area, who wish to maintain or renew their association with the Corps to come and join us. A warm welcome will be extended to all.

Each year a Ladies Night Dinner is held, as well as an Anniversary lunch together with any other social events that are organised by the Social Secretary to foster comradeship within the Branch. Monthly meetings are held throughout the year at the Royal Naval Association Club, Llanelli except for August and December.

Any signallers interested in joining us please contact the Secretary on 01792 232687.

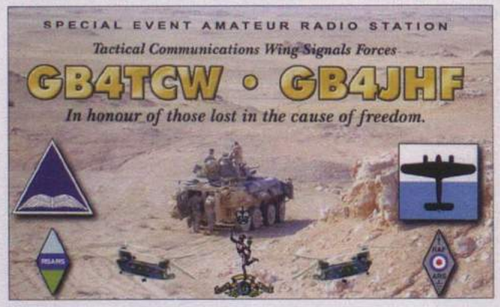
AIR FORMATION SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

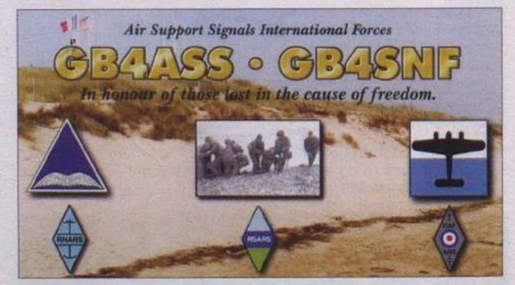
MORSE CODE IS NOT DEAD

For near on 20 years, the Amateur Radio fraternity within the Royal Signals Association and outside have been active with a number of Special and Special (Special) Event stations from various locations in the UK and from other very exotic locations worldwide, to mark historic occasions.

It is thought that the Service readers of *The Wire* and others may like to know that Morse Code (CW) is still very active throughout the world and not so dead as some may think. It can still be heard and seen by paying a visit to the Royal Signals Amateur Radio G4RS "Shack" with the "aerial farm" at Cole Block, Blandford Camp which supports these events together with RAFARS and RNARS.

From 2 – 8 June 2008 inclusive, the Special Event Station GB4LRG (Long Range Desert Group) with GB2ASS (Air Support Signals) can be seen and heard over the Amateur Bands world wide from the Trg Wing 21 Sig Regt, Colerne, Wilts with Air Formation Signals Association Team Members by kind permission of the CO, our President **Lt Col DA Craft** with support from all Regtl personnel.





THE 60s 16ers REUNION CLUB ASSOCIATION

Chairman **Syd Wilson**
Secretary **Gordon Harper**

Our last Reunion (the 12th) was held at the Atlantic Hotel in Newquay, Cornwall in October 2007. Once again it was extremely well supported with close to 100 members attending. As usual it was held from the Friday until the Monday. Again it was quite a mixture of events and occasionally we were serious and sensible, but most of the time (even with one of the original COs in attendance) it was rather manic!

Friday given up to meeting old acquaintances, Saturday was a formal dinner followed by entertainment and the Sunday evening was the grand farewell with fancy dress in the theme of a country and western night. On behalf of the membership, our chairman **Syd Wilson** would like to thank **Noreen** and **Dixie Dixon** who put the reunion together for the second time, a task that is becoming more and more formidable every year.

The 2008 Reunion is to be held from the 26th – 29th September at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate. As a reminder to all who served in Krefeld (16 Sig Regt) in the 1960s, our set-up goes from strength to strength with just about an equal membership of men and women (WRAC), so anyone interested in joining us either give me a call on 01302 844246 or better still look on our web site www.the-60s-16ers.com and see more of what we are about.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	*Served Years*	*Died*
Alliss - Sig WA Alliss	*1939/47*	*c??/??/2005*
Barsby - Sig SF Barsby	*????/08*	*03/03/2008*
Bennett- WO2 TA Bennett	*1939/46*	*24/11/2007*
Booth- Lt Col JB Booth MBE	*1949/75*	*02/02/2008*
Booth-Jones - Lt Col CE Booth-Jones	*1939/61*	*16/01/2008*
Bushnell- WO2 D Bushnell	*1947/67*	*15/01/2008*
Cahill- Cpl E Cahill	*1951/56*	*??/01/2008*
Chick - MA Chick	*1951/53*	*01/02/2008*
Clark- Cpl WE Clark	*1956/79*	*24/01/2008*
Collingwood-Gittins - Maj D Collingwood-Gittins	*1946/68*	*24/01/2008*
Coombes- Sig SW Coombes	*1939/45*	*14/12/2007*
Crampton-Barden - Maj AE Crampton-Barden	*1938/42*	*??/??/2007*
Craven - Sig HE Craven	*1950/52*	*31/12/2004*
Darricotte - Capt ED Darricotte	*1934/47*	*05/02/2008*
Denham - SSgt GK Denham	*1943/47*	*10/02/2008*
Dienst - Sig JF Dienst	*1940/46*	*??/01/2008*
Fenney- Sig RE Fenney	*1938/46*	*25/02/2008*
Furniaux- Cpl G Furniaux	*1947/49*	*05/01/2008*
Graham - J Graham	*1961/??*	*20/12/2007*
Hodgson - WO1 PJ Hodgson	*1957/81*	*??/09/2007*
Houston - Sig HAR Houston	*1938/46*	*20/02/2008*
Ireland - Sig BNL Ireland	*1951/53*	*01/02/2008*
Kenny - Sgt M Kenny	*1966/89*	*11/12/2007*
Kitson - WO1 R Kitson	*1939/46*	*??/10/2007*
Laine - Lt Col RD Laine	*1937/78*	*02/02/2008*
Lane- Maj N Lane	*1938/79*	*13/02/2008*
Laycock - Cpl H Laycock	*1973/74*	*??/02/2008*
Liddell - LCpl A Liddell	*1947/49*	*??/02/2008*
Light - Sgt IC Light	*1950/86*	*28/01/2008*
Lloyd- Maj B Lloyd	*1941/??*	*11/12/2007*
Lovell- Lt Col A Lovell TD	*1962/94*	*23/01/2008*
Machin- Maj D Machin	*1930/42*	*02/02/2008*
McHugh- Sgt R McHugh	*1966/93*	*??/10/2007*
Mills - LCpl GW Mills	*1957/59*	*31/12/2007*
Oliver- Capt RE Oliver BEM	*????/??*	*18/01/2008*
Omer - Lt WJ Omer	*1945/48*	*17/10/2007*
Paine - WO2 J Paine	*1969/06*	*??/12/2007*
Paterson- Lt Col JRT Paterson	*1942/72*	*06/01/2008*
Peasey- Sig G Peasey	*1951/53*	*25/06/2005*
Ruckley- Sig HI Ruckley	*1942/45*	*04/01/2008*
Ruff - Sig HA Ruff	*1949/55*	*31/12/2007*
Shape - LCpl DJ Shape	*1939/46*	*??/02/2008*
Simner-Sig G Simner	*1952/54*	*c14/01/2008*
Smith - JA Smith	*????/??*	*??/??/????*
Stockdale - WO1 F Stockdale	*1937/68*	*22/02/2008*
Tilley - Sig AG Tilley MBE	*1940/46*	*26/01/2008*
Trueman - WO2 A Trueman	*1937/46*	*25/12/2007*
Venus - SSgt B Venus	*????/??*	*29/01/2008*
Whittleton - Cpl JR Whittleton	*1945/48*	*04/04/2007*
Wood - Col R Wood OBE TD	*1947/77*	*??/??/200?*
Wright- Cpl C Wright	*1985/98*	*??/02/2008*

OBITUARIES

PATERSON – Lt Col James Robert Thomson Paterson died on 6 January 2008

Jimmy Paterson was born on 11 September 1923 in Bromsgrove of Scottish parents. He was educated at the Merchant Tailors' School and commissioned into Royal Signals on 9 June 1943. In February 1944, after initial trg courses, he joined he joined 5th Special Wireless Group (5SWG) in Surrey under command of 21st Army Group. At the time he joined, some units were already involved in Op FORTITUDE, a deception plan to deceive the German High Command into believing that the main force would land on the Pas de Calais. He immediately became engrossed in the technicalities of radio deception. 5SWG formed part of R Force, an organisation tasked with tactical deception that included special field units of RE equipped with dummy tanks and guns and a light scout car company of the RAC for sonic deception. He played a full part in the deception ops that continued after the Normandy landings and the break out and the fall of Brussels. In early October he joined a specially formed detachment destined for Italy, moving by road to Marseilles, through the south of France which was by that time free of German occupation. Landing at Naples he spent the winter of 1944 monitoring Allied wireless traffic in ops on the Gothic Line but winter had clamped down on the Apennines and he recalled struggling to get heavy LCVs up mountain passes in cold, wet conditions. At the end of hostilities he saw service in India up to partition.

Jimmy was granted a Regular Commission and was soon posted to the School of Signals in Catterick, where he was highly regarded as an inspiring instructor in radio comms, greatly influencing successful careers for many brother officers. During a spell on the Director of Signals Staff from 1949, he met **Joan** and they were married in February 1950. A series of appointments and postings followed, including the staff course at the Royal Military College of Science and various overseas stations such as Germany, Libya, Cyprus and then back in Catterick again. Their eldest son, **David**, who was born in 1952, sadly died of leukaemia aged eleven. **Nicholas**, now an art master at Haileybury, was born in Watford in 1954 and **Christopher** in Libya in 1960.

In 1966, **Jimmy** was promoted Lt Col to raise and later command 31 (City of London) Sig Regt (V) on its formation in April 1967. The Regt was formed from volunteer yeomanry and signal units in the London area (notably the Middlesex Yeomanry and Kensington Regts) thrown up in the course of the drastic restructuring of the Reserve Army in 1966. These included the former Army Phantom Sig Regt TA (Princess Louise's Kensington Regt), the exploits of which Jimmy had become familiar during his wartime service 20 years previously. Through his leadership skills, tact and enthusiasm he moulded together a cohesive and professionally competent Sig Regt. The successful foundation of this new unit provided a sound basis for the flourishing Regt that continues today. After a final tour of duty at the School of Signals in Blandford he retired from the Army in 1972 and took up employment in London with an American firm, Technology for Communications, 2 years of which were spent in the United States with Joan, where by this time **Christopher** was starting a career in advertising.

He finally retired in 1988 and moved with **Joan** to live in Sherborne. Characteristically he quickly found activities with

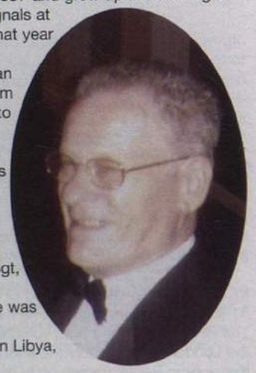
which to occupy himself. For 3 years he was a member of the Project Management and Fundraising Team formed at the School of Signals with the aim of planning, funding and building a new Royal Signals Museum. Jimmy set about this task with his usual energy and enthusiasm and initiated several imaginative schemes for fund raising. One of these was to produce and sell Royal Signals Commemorative Stamp Covers. He carried out detailed research, travelling many miles tracking down and interviewing suitable signatories for these. For example, the Crimean War covers were signed personally by Lord Raglan, the great great grandson of the Comd of the British Expeditionary Force in the Crimean War. These covers raised a considerable sum for the project.

He joined the Sherborne branch of the Royal British Legion and was Chairman from 1996 – 98, after which he chaired the Welfare Committee for many years. He was a most caring and practical Chairman and took upon himself the major part of the work, visiting and where necessary, providing financial and other support to ex-Service men and women in need and their families in the area. He also played a major part in the annual Poppy Appeal and he and Joan always ran a stall at the fund-raising bazaars. In addition, he chaired the Sherborne Voluntary Ambulance Committee and was himself one of the drivers until his eyesight deteriorated about 3 years ago. In summary, with his other activities and some golf, his retirement was every bit as full of action as his Army and business careers had been.

Jimmy was a loving husband and father. His was a quiet and private nature, with a keen sense of humour and a shrewd ability to get to the heart of any matter with a totally optimistic outlook. He bore his recent physical ailments stoically and with absolutely no self-pity, planning an early return home from hospital when he died. He leaves a widow **Joan**, two sons, **Nicholas** and **Christopher** and his wife together with their daughter **Sophie** to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

THORBURN – Sgt George Thorburn died 4 December 2007

George Thorburn was born in 1937 and grew up in Edinburgh. He joined the Royal Corps of Signals at Selby on 6 July 1954 and later that year moved to 6 (Boys) Trg Regt at Beverley. He trained as a Lineman and served with 11 Armd Div from 1955 – 59. He then transferred to 16 Sig Regt until 1962 when he joined 638 Sig Tp at RAF Tangmere. In 1965 **George** was posted to 7 Armd Bde. He served in Cyprus with 261 Sig Sqn from 1970 to 1973 after which he joined 7 Sig Regt until 1975. He attained the rank of Sgt, ending up with 21 Sig Regt at Laarbruck. During his service he was a Special Forces member for approximately 5 years, serving in Libya, Aden and Borneo.



After his army service **George** returned to Edinburgh where he joined the Police Force and he eventually settled in Norfolk. He was keen and well respected member of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (Buffs).

George's funeral took place at Kings Lynn Crematorium on 14 December and he was given a memorable "send off" by his fellow Buffs. Over 70 of them attended the funeral, with members of the Order travelling from all over East Anglia. For those who have never seen a Buffs farewell, it is a truly impressive ceremony and one of which **George** would have been proud.

George had a very large family, 6 of whom carried his coffin. His son, **Ian** read a very poignant poem. The hymn Amazing Grace was included in the service and **George's** life history was related including details of his Army service and his love of the Corps. **John Hill** and **Shammy Craig** attended to represent the Beverley Ex-Boys Association.

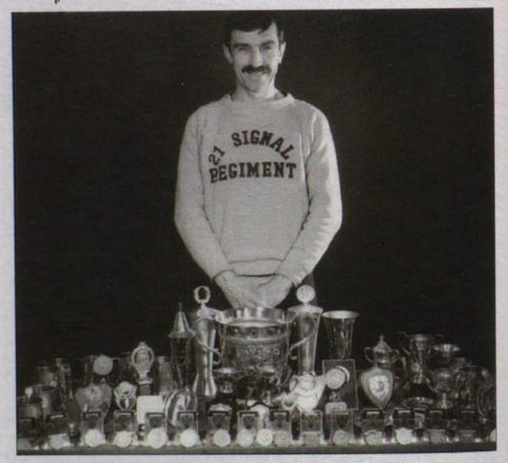
George will be very sadly missed and we offer our deepest sympathy to his wife, **Maria**, and his family.

VENUS – SSgt W (Bill) Venus BEM died on 29 January 2008.

For those of you who knew him, **Bill Venus** died on 29th January 2008. After living and adjusting to Parkinson's Disease for 9 years, he was rushed to hospital on 1 August 2007 with pneumonia. He was subsequently also diagnosed with advanced stages of Motor Neurone Disease and after a long and courageous struggle he died peacefully in hospital surrounded by his devoted family.

Born on 21 October 1939 in Gateshead, County Durham, **Bill** had worked in the coalmines for 7 years before joining the Army as a Comcen Operator, a background which makes his later athletics successes all the more remarkable. He was happily married to his wife **Enid** for 48 years and she was to prove a rock for his future military and athletics career, as well as producing a healthy family of 5 children. His service took him to units in Bulford, Herford, Lippstadt, Wildenrath and Verden, where he unfailingly won the respect and friendship of everyone with whom he had dealings. **Bill** served a full career in the Corps and was perhaps its most distinguished long distance runner. He won the Army Cross-Country Championships no fewer than 9 times, became the German national champion over 20km and was a prominent member of the all-conquering 21 Sig Regt athletics team who won the Army Team Athletics Championships 6 times in succession in the early 1970s.

Although possessed of a wonderful natural talent, **Bill's** successes were no less due to hard work and a dedicated regime, which saw him running over 100 miles a week, committed to training every day, in all climates and conditions. Although initially a self-starter, he was to prove a dedicated and inspirational team player and it was at 21 Sig Regt that he was able to realise one of his hitherto unfulfilled great ambitions, to be part of a winning cross-country team. All of his team mates benefited from his example, although they may have voiced their mixed views on early Sunday mornings where a knock on the door summoned them out for their 10 mile training run!



Bill had a wonderfully dry and penetrating sense of humour. To a rather anxious Athletics Officer, who expressed concern about the team's likely performance against an impressive opposition in the approaching 5000m team race, he simply asked: "Do you want me to lap them?" Athletics Officer put in his place! He and his colleagues certainly had a formative effect on the outlook and makeup of those young officers who were fortunate enough to have them under command and many of us had cause to be grateful for the insights and experience this afforded.

On retirement from the Army, and with **Enid's** full support, **Bill** realised another burning ambition; to compete in elite veteran distance running meetings in the USA. While he was there he was proactive in coaching and helping to develop the careers of other athletes, namely **Greta Weitz** and **Pricilla Welch**. He produced some outstanding performance times such as the New York Marathon 1982 – 2:22:44, the London Marathon 1984 – 2:22:49 and he still holds the UK All Time fastest Half Marathon for his performance at the Great North Run 1986 – 65:40 (source http://www.athleticsdata.com/athletes/profile.aspx?athleteid=59384)

Sadly, an injury to his Achilles Heel meant that he returned to UK and finally started to slow his pace down. Settling down in Exmouth, Devon, he joined the Environment Agency as Ground Water Protection Officer which fully involved him in local affairs and conservation of the water courses in the region. He readily established a firm circle of friends, most of whom only discovered his athletics achievements at his funeral service! **Bill's** final years were taken up by a valiant and typically courageous struggle against illness, but even in this uphill stage in what was to be his final course, his sense of humour stayed with him to the end. His funeral saw many of his old Corps friends and colleagues mourn the passing of one of the great 'black and white' figures in Corps history, and as many that couldn't be there were thoughtful enough to send treasured memories and messages in cards and letters. He was one of nature's gentlemen, slow to anger, quick to praise and encourage and by personal example, a towering Geordie influence on others. 'Howay the Lads', he will be proudly remembered.

LAING – Lt Col Robin (Robbie) Laing died 3 February 2008.

Robin was born in Fulham in 1922. He went to Wallingbrook Boarding School until the age of 14 when he joined Army Boys Service. He became a Royal Signals Apprentice Tradesman, and was trained as a DR and Signals Fitter. He went into man's service at 18 and in 1941 was posted to the Plymouth Sig Sect at Crownhill. He was nicknamed **Robbie** and remained so for the rest of his service. In 1942 he attended an NCO's training course at Harrogate, was retained as an instructor and promoted Cpl. In 1943 he volunteered for Airborne Forces and trained as a parachutist. He joined 6 AB Div Sigs, serving with them in Normandy and at the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, where he was promoted Sgt. On the day of his 22nd birthday in 1944, **Robbie** flew by glider and fought in the Battle of the Rhine Crossing. He later took part in the advance across Germany to the Baltic, where the Allies met up with the Russians and the war in Europe ended.

Robbie returned with 6 AB Div to England in 1945 and prepared for war in the Far East. However, when this war also came to an end after the Japanese surrender, 6 AB Div was shipped instead to Palestine. Later that year **Robbie** was a Rear Link Sgt with a Gunner Regt at Ramat David. Still in Palestine in 1946, he commanded an Independent Sig Tp, attached The Kings Own Hussars. **Robbie** was Mentioned in Dispatches. In November 1946 he went on UK leave and married **Doreen**.

6 AB Div returned to England in 1948 and was disbanded. Amidst the reformation of British Airborne units, **Robbie** was posted to 16 Para Bde Sig Sqn, which formed at Schleswig-Holstein in Germany. He returned with them to England in 1950. In 1951, 16 Para Bde was sent to Cyprus on board the aircraft carriers *HMS Triumph* and *HMS Warrior*. The Bde was to prepare for ops against Persia, which was threatening to seize the oil fields. However, the situation was resolved diplomatically and the Bde went instead to the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt. During this time **Robbie** was promoted WO2(SSM) of 16 Para Bde Sig Sqn. When the Bde returned to England in 1955, **Robbie** was sent as an instructor to RMA Sandhurst. In 1957 he was promoted WO1(RSM), and posted to the Officer Training Wing, Catterick. In 1959 he moved to the School of Signals, Catterick. This was followed with postings to 10 Sig Regt in Krefeld 1960 and to 1 Sig Regt in Verden 1962. From the latter, **Robbie** was commissioned Lt (QM), and sent to 49 Sig Regt TA in York. In 1965 he was promoted Capt, and joined 216 Para Sig Sqn in Aldershot, as AO and then Adjt. In 1970 he finally left the Paras on promotion to Maj, when he was posted as QM (T) SWS for 18 Sig Regt in Singapore. In 1972 he joined the Project Engineering and Planning Staff in London, and subsequently moved to Blandford. There, in 1974, he was promoted Lt Col as QM (T), School of Signals. In 1978, having completed 42 years in Royal Signals, man and boy, **Robbie** retired to live firstlin Farnborough, Hants and then ultimately Chudleigh, Devon.

Doreen died in March 1993. **Robbie** passed away peacefully in his sleep on 3 February 2008, aged 86. They are survived by their children, **Douglas**, **Gail** and **Robert**, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

MEMORIES OF A DISTINGUISHED OLD COMRADE - ROBBIE LAING - *by Airborne Signals Old Comrades Association*

Al Hogg - "I arrived in the Sqn after 'P' Coy, 18 years old, married with a baby and was sent to live in a caravan in Hawley Lane. **Robbie** moved heaven and earth to get me fixed up with a married quarter. I was certainly not entitled to such but he managed to get me one and it made a massive difference to our married life. There were many similar good works that he did for families in the Sqn, often unnoticed and generally without thanks, as we were all too full of ourselves at the time."

Dick Hamilton - "As the Admin Officer of 216, with a chest full of war and campaign medals, **Robbie** appeared to be a rather gruff old veteran. However underneath the ferocious eyebrows, beyond the bluster and behind the rant, you could catch glimpses of an officer who really cared for his men. Undoubtedly his life-blood was "maroon" in colour, and for this reason the "Toms" referred to him as Mr Airborne."

Bill Robins - "**Robbie** was one of the warmest human beings I ever met. In a way it was strange to meet someone so warm hearted in such a hard edged world as the Para Bde. He really cared about each soldier and his family; there is plenty of evidence for that."

Geordie Wilson - "I ordered a blue track suit from **Robbie** when he was Admin Officer but when the stores arrived, we found that **Robbie** had ordered a dark blue tank-suit." **Geordie** comments further, "How **Robbie** thought I would get through the morning road-run in a boiler-suit, I've no idea!"

Ray Duffy - "There was a time when amusing cartoons and messages, portraying the hierarchy in a bad light, appeared daily on the Sqn notice-board outside SHQ. **Robbie** pulled his hair out trying to discover who was committing sacrilege in a place reserved for official orders and notices. He changed the lock on the notice-board several times but the cartoons still appeared! Eventually, **Robbie** thought he would be clever. He bought and fitted a special combination lock that could not be picked. To his horror, the very next day the illegal cartoons appeared once more.

Robbie never clicked that each night, when all was quiet, the whole notice-board was being unscrewed from the wall, the cartoons pinned-up, and the board was then screwed back onto the wall! However, what sticks out in my mind about **Robbie** was his insistence on everyone being qualified two ranks ahead. By getting everyone qualified, most of the Sqn personnel progressed quickly through the ranks, and their service in 216 did not stand against their career in the Corps. Then there was **Robbie's** habit of checking everyone's shirt collar for collar bones, and bows in the back of berets - for this alone he became a part of AB Signals history."

Jimmy Campbell - "I was playing football and had to go up to **Robbie's** office straight after, to answer for a now-forgotten misdemeanour. I was wearing shorts, and he noticed the long scar on my leg. He asked me how it happened, and I told him I had broken my leg in multiple places when I was 4 and the surgeons ultimately had to operate to line-up the various bits of my femur. To my puzzlement he was delighted and could hardly stop himself from laughing. He said that was great news as he was visiting a young person in hospital, who had broken his leg, and was extremely depressed about the prospects of not being able to play football again or carrying out strenuous activities. **Robbie** said, "I shall tell him about your experience, and the fact that you've passed 'P' Company, and are playing football again." He then added, "I won't tell him you're a bad soldier!"

Bob Mills - "**Peter Whitehead** and I were in the Battery Shop for an inspection by **Robbie**. After a quick look around, **Robbie** said "No better than it should be." Then he climbed onto a table, then onto a chair on top of the table, and pointed out "There's dust in the eves!"

Ted Dudding - '**Daddy Laing**', "a man from an era gone, but never forgotten. A man of integrity and affection, who taught so many of us about the basics of life in the Army. What to do, and how to do it - with respect, trust and loyalty. A great teacher and father figure, whom we will always remember."

Craig Treeby - "Thank you, **Robbie**, for acting as such a rock to all of us who passed through your hands and for being such a fine example of an airborne soldier. At this your final parade, as you fall out to join the great Maroon Machine in the sky, we salute you, Mr Airborne."

RIP **Robbie Laing**

LANE – Maj (QM) Norman Lane died 14 February 2008

Norman was born in Goole in 1924 and from an early age was interested in wireless. He persuaded his father (a 1914-18 KOYLI), to take him to Pontefract to enlist in the Corps and he started at Catterick in June 1938 aged 14½ . War came the next year and **Norman** was too young to serve actively but was kept busy in various postings at home and gained a reputation as an Army swimmer. He was a highly skilled Morse operator, qualifying as an Operator Wireless and Line.

The war dragged on and **Norman** was missing out on the adventure, so he volunteered for "special duties" as soon as he was old enough. He didn't have any idea what he was in for until he was accepted into the Special Operations Executive. He carried out the full spectrum of "cloak and dagger" training, together with advanced communications training, before qualifying as a parachutist at what is now Manchester Airport.

He went to Algeria in September 1943 and from there took part in 3 missions into occupied Europe – once into Greece and twice into Northern Italy. There were many tense moments. An Italian partisan was killed standing next to him when the Germans ambushed the team. Fortunately the rest got away. However, life in occupied territory also had lighter moments. **Norman** went AWOL for a few days, which in the middle of a war and behind enemy lines was of considerable concern to his team leader. It was nothing really serious; **Norman** had been invited to attend the wedding of a partisan friend in Milan and a very jolly affair it was too!

1945 brought victory, but except for a few short leaves at home, **Norman** embarked on a series of tours of duty that would be the envy of a Lonely Planet traveller today. He went to India in 1945 and left there just before Independence in 1947. Then it was Egypt for a year, before joining the British Military Mission in Ethiopia. While there he had an almost unreal existence. Besides his normal duties, he became a jockey for **Emperor Haile Selassie** ("Highly Delighted" as **Norman** called him) and looked after a cheetah.

Life became serious again in May 1951 when he went to Korea as RQMS of 1st Commonwealth Div Sig Regt. He remained there until January 1953, enduring two bitter Korean winters. **Norman** proved adept at obtaining the stores the unit needed and if he couldn't get them by fair and official means, that didn't stop him getting them by any other way necessary. His unofficial efforts avoided detection (or a blind eye was turned) as he was Mentioned In Despatches. Typically he never mentioned to anyone in his family what this award was really for and they still do not know.

Having been abroad almost continuously for 10 years, **Norman** came home in 1953 to Northern Command in York and in 1955 moved to London as a PSI with the TA. There he met and married **Edna** and his daughter, **Deborah**, was born.

In 1957 he went to Famagusta, Cyprus and son **Clive** was born there. He remained in Cyprus until 1962 in a number of appointments, including as the temporary RSM of 4th Air Formation Sig Regt. **Norman** and the Adjt had too much to drink one night and decided that the obsolete Beaufighter on the Regtl flag needed updating. So they had the outline of a jet fighter stitched on the flag. Needless to say the CO didn't see the need for modernisation when he saw the flag up the pole next morning .....and to this day the Beaufighter remains on Air Support unit flags.

In 1962 **Norman** was appointed RSM of 8 Sig Regt in Catterick. The following August he had the honour of starting a major parade there as RSM and coming back on later as a newly commissioned officer. A few years were spent in Edinburgh, but the lure of the sun took him to Malta in 1965 where, amongst other things, he helped deliver an American neighbour's baby. In 1968 he moved to Osnabruck and this was a particularly busy time. The Sqn Comd (later **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman**) recalls that they went through the introduction of the AFV 430 series of vehs, secure radio and BRUIN almost simultaneously.

In 1971, **Norman** began a period of unknown stability when he took over as QM at the School in Blandford. A few years later he secured the same position in 30 Sig Regt and retired from there in January 1979. He hated fuss - even on his last day in the Army after 40½ years service, he just left his office, kicked his hat down the corridor and drove off into retirement. He worked for Lockheed in Saudi Arabia until 1982.

In early retirement **Norman** was an active member of the Royal Signals Association in Blandford and Poole and was also fully involved with the Museum, where he made lots of corrections to captions in the display cases. He didn't miss much!

Norman was immensely proud of his children's achievements and later found great delight in his grandchildren. He loved his garden and when his own became too much, he simply took over direction of his children's! A keen golfer until his mid-70s, **Norman** played 3 times a week at Ashley Wood and he also enjoyed shooting around Blandford.

As he aged he didn't let much get him down. Even during his final illness he maintained the robust sense of humour that got him through many tight corners in the past. He would have been touched by the many old friends who attended his funeral on 25 February 2008, but would also have been wondering what all the fuss was about.

CORRESPONDENCE

From: WO2(USM) CT Vickers
jcufiusm@mountpleasant.mod.uk
Ext 94130 6521

I am currently serving in the Falkland Islands as the Unit Sergeant Major of JCUFI (Joint Communications Unit Falkland Islands).

As part of our 25th Remembrance Parades we held a small service on Mount Pleasant where we have a Memorial to **Maj M Forge** and **SSgt J Baker** both Royal Signals and **SSgt C Griffin** and **LCpl S Cockton** AAC.

We were honoured to host 3 veterans from the war. We picked them up from Stanley and arranged for a wreath for them to lay at the Memorial. As this was my first time in the Falklands, I was somewhat bemused at the fact that a lot of Royal Signals veterans did not realise that we had this memorial.

As a unit we would like to advertise this Memorial more and we would be only to happy to host any future visits. We can arrange pick ups, accommodation and transport for their stay and any other visits to any other memorials they wish to visit.

I would appreciate if you could somehow let the serving and ex Royal Signals know that we are looking after our guys and we are only to pleased for them to get in contact. If you want any more details on this please contact me on the details above.

I have one more favour to ask. We have come across an article on a **Gary Paul Green**, a young soldier serving in the Royal Signals who was serving in the FI in November 1986. He had been part of the original task force at the age of 17 and had been sent to liberate the Falklands in 1982. He survived but lost his life on a subsequent posting back to the Falklands when he was 22. These are the only details I have at hand for **Gary**. I would like to get more details if possible from anyone who can help

Yours...

From: **Maj (Retd) Ian L Dudding**

Dear Sir,

I have opened a Web Site in regard to "603 Signal Troop RAF Masirah in 1972", where I served as a Cpl on a 9 month unaccompanied tour.

It portrays in photographs, the personalities, the social, and sporting events of 603 Signal Troop and its soldiers during this period.

I served in the Corps from 24 February 1964, signing on in King's Lynn, Norfolk and completing my training at Catterick, prior to completing my 40 years service. I retired as a Regular Officer (QM) at 32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment in 2001 and took up the post of PSAO 81 Sig Sqn (TA) in Corsham. I retired from that post and the Corps on 3 July 2003.

I am not sure if the site can be linked to a Corps site or mentioned in *The Wire*? There may well be older soldiers, or those researching those times, that would be interested?

The site can be found at:
www.pongosinrafmasirah1972.co.uk

Please let me know if this historic site of a Cpl's life in the Corps on RAF Masirah in 1972 is of use or could be linked somehow?

Regards,

From: **Greg Tyler** greg@tyler27.fsnet.co.uk or
Greg@soaringteam.com
Phone 01293 527708
Mob: 07990520526

Can I please submit the following photo and text for inclusion in the wire?

This photo of 1 Tp was taken at my Passing Out Parade on 16 March 1979 at Helles Barracks (I'm in the rear row 3rd from right).

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the event and I am looking to contact as many of the other members of the Tp and trg staff as possible to try to arrange a reunion for early next year. The details will follow depending on the response.

The names are as follows: Back row (l to r) **I Good, P Taylor, M Lockyer, M Taylor, G Williams, A Lawry, B Wood, D Rickard, M Langton, C Ward, A Marshall, G Tyler, A Finch, G Meir**
Centre row (l to r) **Cpl D Matthews, D Gill, P Booth, P Davies, P Wright, M Kelly, J Lyon, M Gribbin, P Preston, L Linnett, M Davies, A Ingram, Cpl T Slater**

Front row (l to r) **J Fradley, W Davies, E Douglas, R Gault, Cpl B Hutchinson, SSgt (SSI) R Crook, Maj P Todd BEM, Lt P Smith, Sgt J Mountcastle, R Dempsey, R Jones, A McConnachie, P Marshall.**

Please contact me using any of the details above

Yours...

From: **Roelf Bruinsma** [mailto:roelfbruinsma@casema.nl]

I would like to bring to the attention of your readers to a group of photos I recently took of Roetgen Detachment, 3 Sqn, 21 Sig Regt.

The site was in the North Eiffel region of Germany near to the village of Lammersdorf. It is now derelict but the I think the photos show enough of the site to bring back the memories.

The web link to these photos is
http://picasaweb.google.com/RoelfBruinsma/RoetgenDet .

I served at Roetgen from 1985 to 1989 and the FofS at the time was **SSgt Bob Pullan**. I now live in the Netherlands and if anybody would like to make contact with me, my email address is Roelfbruinsma@gmal.com

Yours...

From: **E M Macdonald** [mailto:hiq07emm@sheffield.ac.uk]
C/o The Curator, Broadsworth Hall,
Broadsworth, South Yorks, DN5 7XJ

My name is **Eleanor Macdonald** and I am carrying out research on behalf of English Heritage for a proposed exhibition on the theme of "The Country House and War" at Brodsworth Hall, a country house near Doncaster. I am currently focusing on Brodsworth Hall during World War II and have been looking into the role that the house played during the war.

We know that the house was requisitioned by the Army and that various regiments were stationed there but unfortunately we have very little information about who exactly was here and what their role was. We are therefore undertaking a general search for any information relevant to Brodsworth Hall during this period.

From local oral history evidence, we understand that one, or more, regiments or squadrons from the Royal Signals was at Brodsworth, but we have no further information. We are eager to expand our knowledge on this period by getting in touch with any veterans that may have been stationed at Brodsworth who have memories of the house at that time. Many thanks.

Yours...

LOST COMMUNICATIONS

Heather Holmes is trying to trace the whereabouts of **Maj Andy S Williams**, who was a friend of her brother, the late **David Naden**. **Andy** is a member of the RSA, but they have lost touch with him after he changed address. Anyone who can help is asked to contact **Heather** at; heather.naden@tinyworld.co.uk

---

We are trying to contact anyone that served in:

4 Squadron, 2 L of C Sig Regt, Bielefield, Germany. BFPO 39 between 1957- 1959

Ray (Pat) Patrick -
54 Summerfields
West Hunsbury
Northampton
NN4 9YN

Tel: 01604 760075

Dennis (Red) Redford
14 Lawnford
Hadfield, Glossop
Derbyshire
SK8 2EG

Tel: 01457 866793

REUNIONS

260 SIGNAL SQUADRON (SAM) REUNION

The next reunion will be held at Bannockburn, Scotland from the 18th to the 20th April 2008.
Any ex members of the Sqn who wish to attend and require more details please contact the secretary **Geoff Scott** Tel 01422 373075

SULTAN OF OMAN'S ARMED FORCES REUNION 1975 – 2007

Did you serve in the Oman? A reunion of those who served in the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces between 1975 and 2007 is taking place in Hull, East Yorkshire, on Saturday 17 May 2008.

The annual get-together is organised by former **WO1(YofS) Jason Wood** who completed loan service in Northern Oman Bde between 1985-1987 and can be contacted on iringmybell@yahoo.co.uk.

Please contact **Jason** on 01482 650773 or the venue on 01482 343043 for further details.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

Sgt Gale is the Yachts Manager for the Corps' 3 offshore yachts based in Gosport. He is the Chief Instructor and Senior Adventurous Training Instructor for all Royal Signals Yacht Club (RSYC) courses and the prime point of contact for all ranks in regards to Corps Offshore Adventurous Sail Training. This post demands a motivated self-confident manager with a gift to balance a plethora of intricate tasks and the initiative to react appropriately at any time of the day or night, throughout the year to potentially life threatening situations – on or off the water. **Sgt Gale** manages this with consummate ease. He is well ensconced in the role and is acknowledged as one of the very best in the Army.

Sgt 'Windy' Gale started sailing 17 years ago when he joined the Army. Since that first day on a yacht aged 18 at Antigua Race Week, he has not looked back. Dedicating hours of his personal time to climb the qualification ladder, all he does is for the benefit of others. With a natural flair for leadership and a hugely successful earthy and unique teaching style, he has influenced and inspired many. A modest, easy going, diligent and hugely determined sailor, he always leads by example and strives for perfection.

Throughout what has now become a hectic training, racing and charter season stretching from March until November, he maintains a level head and professional demeanour. For many years he has been a full member of the RSYC Offshore Committee and can be relied upon to offer sound advice, debate options and execute the agreed plan. His attention to detail can not be faulted. And his ability to spot weaknesses within plans and thus manage the risk away is a characteristic feature. His insight has prevented many situations from developing into potential disasters. Nothing is too much for him. Even the long winter closed season sees him industriously engaged on the maintenance of the yachts and providing assistance to others.

Those of us in touch with his professional work at a managerial and a director level have been astounded by his success in achieving stretch objectives set him. It is true to say that he now has a wealth of experience "in post" and that therefore one may expect his to know his stuff. However I am always pleased to witness his attention to detail, continued enthusiasm and high personal and professional standards. **Sgt Gale** is amongst the very best of our tradition of Sergeants and is more capable than many holding higher ranks in the Army. Soldiers and officers, dependants and officials, customers and suppliers, fellow instructors and students alike all have received first-rate assistance from him.

2005 to 2007 offered significant new challenges for **Sgt Gale** with the preparations for and co-skippering of the Corps' yacht in Mercury Challenge – the Royal Signals' most challenging AT expedition in living memory and a Round the World High Risk and Remote Expedition never ever attempted previously by Service crews on a Challenge 67 yacht.

Windy has been part of the backbone of the Mercury Challenge team. Instrumental in the preparation of yacht *Adventure* for sea, and one of the 2 Royal Signals Skippers for the expedition, his in depth knowledge and initiative directly contributed to the success of the expedition. He was always at the heart of any activity.

When one of the crew severely injured his knee during gale force winds in the Indian Ocean, he put his medical training to vital use. During the crucial operation, he put in 14 stitches, and nursed the casualty during the following 3 weeks at sea preventing infection. He was highly commended by professional doctors on return to land.

Windy was also First Mate in the notorious Sydney Hobart Yacht Race when yacht *Adventure* rescued 8 Australian sailors from their life-raft when their yacht got damaged and later sank after a night of heavy seas.

As the only Senior Non Commissioned Officer qualified as a Challenge 67 Skipper, his first voyage in this capacity was in the most desolate ocean in the world, the Southern Ocean. He led his team during the 6000 nautical miles around Cape Horn with confidence, skill and panache.

He then went onto Skipper the Antigua Race Week crew and the final leg home to the UK. Training the military crew for the close, competitive inshore racing of race week was an immense challenge, but against all odds he led the team to a highly commendable 7th out of 18 in Class and 11th out of 30 in Fleet.

Sgt 'Windy' Gale has given everything to the sport of sailing and Mercury Challenge, and he has been an inspiration to everyone who comes into contact with him.

For his dedication and professionalism in pursuit of excellence in Army sailing, **Sgt 'Windy' Gale** was made an MBE in the New Years' Honours list and awarded the Army Sailing Association "Barry Trophy".

Sgt Windy Gale receives the Barry Trophy from the Commodore of the Army Sailing Association

A TROOP COMMANDER IN JCUFI - *by 2Lt Stuart Thomas*

2Lt Stuart Thomas, 8000 miles from home

Many Royal Signals soldiers and officers have passed through the Joint Communication Unit Falkland Islands (JCUFI) down the years and on arrival it was nice to see a couple of familiar faces from 3 Div Sig Regt.

Technically we are no longer called JCUFI but have changed to DES ISS ISD SAI; a name that hardly rolls of the tongue, however I am sure as long as there is a Royal Signals presence in the unit the name will live on.

Having said that, I thought about **Lt Goslin's** article last month where he stated along the lines of "long live OC C Tp"; well sorry old chap, C Tp lasted only a matter of weeks after your departure. Following the customary annual re-org, I am now OC Eng Sp Tp, which by all accounts does sound better.

Thus I am the resident Royal Signals Tp Comd and have 4 sects under my command; Arial Maintenance Section (AMS) who are a small but merry band of RAF Riggers, Communications Maintenance Installation Section (CMIS) who are 10 of the finest Royal Signals Inst Techs, then there is Systems Control (SysCon) and the Forward Repair Team (FRT) who provide the 1st and 2nd line sp on various comms systems on the Islands, including the mountain top sites and are sourced from both the RAF and the Army.

Change seems to be the general theme so far and another stalwart of the unit is undergoing a transformation, the unit bar, 'Sharkies'. **Sgt Lamonby** and **LCpl Mesmer** are co-ordinating the refurbishment, which has included the complete demolition of the bar earlier this week.

Refurbishment of 'Sharkies' Bar

With a tight budget, a new bar has been built by the local chippies in return for 7 crates of lager, the local currency of choice. Already a new sound system has been installed and work will continue over the next few weeks, with the entire unit giving up some of their free time to help. When finished, Sharkies will have an aquatic theme. The bar will represent the hull of a ship set against the background of a picturesque beach setting, interspersed with of course a number of ... sharks. I look forward to ringing the bell when the USM reads this article.

Naming no names, people have had to ring the bell recently for asking whether elephants actually live on Elephant Island, trying to drive off in a Land Rover without starting it and getting stuck whilst hanging out of a window. A pirate themed evening will take place on 1 March to mark the grand opening, oh arrgh I hear you say.

Last month many of the Tp partook in JCUFI's first international football match, against Stanley FC. Despite playing the first half against the fierce Atlantic wind, we finished the half 0 – 0, all set to play with the wind in the second half it mysteriously died down and the match finished all square at 1 – 1, which was a fair result for both sides.

The OC challenged the Tp/Flt Cmdr's to outdo each other in the March and Shoot, and whilst nowhere near as challenging as the Kiwi Trophy the foursome of myself, **Sgt Green**, **Cpl Ranson** and **Sig Fazakerly** claimed the bragging rights over Ops Flt.

I took on the role of auctioneer for a charity rank auction and here I came crashing down to earth as I realised my true value, the winning bid to take over my role as Tp Comd for the day came from **LCpl Featherstone** at a whole £7. The Ops Officer went for £10, the 2IC £57 and the USM went for £70. I can only suggest that as I auctioned myself first, everyone was just warming up! Not wanting to challenge the preconceptions of what an officer does on a daily basis, **LCpl Featherstone**, promoted to Lt for the day, was treated to an hour on the golf simulator, tea and toast, a silver service lunch, Cake Friday and of course a nice early finish. I would just like to state for the record that this is not what I do every day – we only do Cake Friday once a week!

One of the more poignant moments of the tour was Remembrance Day, the 25th since the conflict and I suspect the last time that many veterans will visit the Falklands. We held a memorial service at Pleasant Peak to remember **Maj Mike Forge** and **SSgt Joe Baker** of 205 Sig Sqn and **SSgt Chris Griffin** and **LCpl Simon Cockton** of the AAC who were tragically killed on 6 June 1982 when their Gazelle helicopter was engaged by *HMS Cardiff*, who had no record of British air activity that morning and thought it might be an Argentinean Hercules or SF Helicopter.

Remembrance Day Falkland Islands

Those people who return from the Falkland Islands with a negative outlook, have clearly not taken advantage of the unique wildlife and history that is here. Berthas Beach is only a matter of minutes from MPA, where you can see Gentoo, Magallenic and occasionally King Penguins, along with porpoises and dolphins.

There are many other penguin colonies on the Islands, along with seals and if you are lucky, killer whales; which are all within easy reach on the regular W&R trips. The Falkland Islands is also awash with such vivid reminders of its history, from the WW1 guns near Stanley, the mizzen mast of the SS Great Britain and the numerous memorials. Those I have visited so far include: 2 Para at Goose Green, the Argentinean war grave, San Carlos cemetery, 2 Scots Guards at Mt Tumbledown and the liberation monument in Stanley. There are many, many more.

I am now at the half way point in my 6 month tour, that's 3 months for the mathematically challenged and am eagerly anticipating the remaining time I have left. The tour has flown by thus far and is one I would highly recommend to any Tp Comd. I don't say that just because I don't have a replacement lined up yet (hint, hint, any volunteers?). I will be writing again at the end of my tour, so look out for part 2 in the coming months.

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RACE THE SUN 2008

WHAT?
RACE THE SUN is a multi-leg, multi-discipline dawn-till-dusk relay endurance competition. The event comprises 15 legs; disciplines include canoeing, mountain biking, swimming, a forced march, running, cycling and culminating with a stretcher race. Each team can enter up to 2 individuals per leg, with the fastest time counting. The stretcher race requires a team of 6 individuals. A team member can compete in more than one leg, but cannot repeat the same discipline.

Summary of Legs:

Leg 1: Run (0.5km)/Paddle (6km)
Leg 2: River Run (12km)
Leg 3: Run (7km)/Cycle (20km)
Leg 4: Hill Run (10km)
Leg 5: Forced March (12.5km)
Leg 6: Moor Run (10km)
Leg 7: Half Marathon (21km)
Leg 8: Mountain Bike (18km)
Leg 9: Fell Run (9km)
Leg 10: Orienteering (7km)
Leg 11: Forest Run (9km)
Leg 12: Cycle Orienteering (28-30km)
Leg 13: Swim (900m)
Leg 14: Cycle (24km)/Run (6km)
Leg 15: Stretcher Race (3km) (Team of 6)

WHEN? 15 May 2008

WHERE? The event starts and ends at Imphal Baracks, York, covering some 200kmsof North Yorkshire countryside in between.

WHO? The event, hosted by 2 Sig Regt, York, is open to all major and minor units from all 3 Services.

Further details and an application form can be obtained on the 2 Sig Regt Homepage on ArmyNET. Point of Contact: **Capt Shaun Wilson** on 01904 665899/94777 5899

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Mitsubishi Brüggen 10 2008

For further details contact

Maj John Fradley on Elmpt Mil 94868 4736

Capt Jim Watt on Elmpt Mil 94868 4782,

WO2 Chris Stuart on Elmpt Mil 94868 4738,

Mr Peter Sproten on Elmpt Mil 94868 3689 or

Mr Willy Luys on Elmpt Mil 94868 2422

Civilian Tel No. (0049) 2163 97 2422 / 3689

Saturday 19th April 2008
Race Starts at 1400hrs

Open to all military and civilian members of NATO nations
En Atletiekverenigingen - Alle Leichtathletikvereine

The Closing date for applications is 4 April 2008
For further information and to download application forms, please visit:

www.bruggenten.co.uk

Javelin Barracks, Elmpt

THE Wire

June 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

IMPERIAL
WAR MUSEUM
HEN·VIII·REGE·FVNDATVM·CIVIVM·LARGITAS·PERFECIT

THE wire

June 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

WO Trevor Bealey, SSgt Simon Link, Capt Andy Lambert, Sgt Steve Burchall, Sig Rhianna Evans posting in front of the Royal Crecent on Bath

TA 100

In 1907 Parliament passed legislation which saw the consolidation of the yeomanry and volunteers into the Territorial Force. The first units were stood up on 1st April 1908, and this date is accepted as the birth of what we know today as the Territorial Army (TA).

Events to celebrate this centenary year commenced on 1 April and there are more national and regional events planned through to November. TA100 is honoured that **Her Majesty The Queen** has graciously agreed to be the Patron and to begin the celebration sent a birthday card and message of thanks and congratulation to every member of the TA.

The TA plays a vital role in preserving the United Kingdom in peace and prosperity, in which business can thrive and individuals are free to enjoy a wealth of opportunities, a high standard of living and a good quality of life. Today the Army depends upon the reliability and versatility of the TA to meet its Mission; after a century of service, the TA is more capable and more in demand than ever before.

The TA plays a role as critical to overall military effectiveness as at any point in its history. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how the Regular Army could meet its present commitments without the combat capacity and professional support provided by Territorial soldiers. This fact underpins what is called the "One Army" philosophy, under which TA soldiers are trained, equipped and supported on exactly the same terms as their Regular colleagues and deployed, side by side, in the same theatres of operations.

The TA has changed dramatically over the past 100 years. Its current utility and professionalism has earned the respect of Regular Army colleagues where it counts, in operational environments. In this centenary year, 1500 Territorial soldiers will be deployed on operations, which accounts for 8% of deployed Army capability. Reservists account for 25% of the nation's total defence capacity and over 15,000 Territorials have served on current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TA 100 presents an opportunity for the TA to showcase what the modern Territorials do, raising awareness of the contribution they make in both their military and civilian lives. It is an opportunity for the nation to recognise and thank Territorials past and present for their commitment to Service, and the contribution they have made and continue to make to security, democracy and the prosperity of the nation.

The following statement IN SUPPORT OF TA 100 was made by **Gen Sir Richard Dannatt KCB CBE MC ADC Gen,** Chief of the General Staff:

"The Territorial Army has been a fundamental part of the British Army since its formation as the Territorial Force in 1908. During the past 6 years in particular, members of the Territorial Army have made considerable personal sacrifices and have provided indispensable support to current operations.

This participation has been at a level seldom seen throughout its distinguished past. It is, therefore, especially appropriate that we mark this significant milestone in the history of the Territorial Army by celebrating the first centenary in a fitting manner."

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Established in 1920

The Wire

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Please refer to *Guidelines for Contributors*. **http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/thewire/**

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All enquiries regarding subscriptions and despatch of *The Wire* should be made to: 01258 482087 or 94371 2087 (mil) Remittances should be made payable to Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

EDITORIAL

It is very satisfying to record that in the year of TA 100, there have been submissions for this edition of The Wire from every TA Regiment in the Corps. The wider contribution of the TA is acknowledged in the feature opposite but on a parochial level, as Editor, I am grateful for their regular, high quality contributions to *The Wire*. It would be a much poorer Corps magazine without our TA colleagues.

I must apologise to 38 Sig Regt, whose article has been split by the inclusion of a double page insert on the 'Update on Royal Signals Trade Review". This is an important section for all ranks to read and it is hoped that giving it prime position will attract more readers.

Finally, the Editor wishes to apologise to **Maj Gen Alan Yeoman CB** for the impression given in the Dorset Branch RSA report in the April edition. The short biography in the article has been interpreted by some as an obituary and **Maj Gen Yeoman** has contacted me to confirm that he is very much alive.

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FRONT COVER

Following the photo in the April edition, there is now a 'Jimmy' in position at the National Memorial Arboretum waiting to be unveiled on 20 May. Photos of that in the August edition.

BACK COVER

A plug for Mercury's March from Plymouth to London in September this year to raise money for "Help for Heroes".

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

Name and Rank	Unit to which posted
FEBRUARY 2008	
Capt PA Leach	HQ SOinC(A)
MARCH 2008	
Capt JZ Haines	16 Sig Regt
Capt G Low	30 Sig Regt
Capt TJW Masi	RHQ HQ SOinC(A)
Cpl NM Pallis	Display Team
LCpl AW Huber	Display Team
APRIL 2008	
Maj DW Craig	HQ Arrc
Maj TP Crane	G6 CBM HQ Land
Maj CF Hymas	30 Sig Regt
Maj R Patrickson	Royal School of Signals
Maj GL Richards	Royal School of Signals
A/Maj M Rouse	22 Sig Regt
Capt BL Addison	ATC (P) 2 Regt
Capt MPE Angove	7 Sig Regt
Capt L Clark	HQ London District
Capt RT Gardner-Clarke	1 LI
Capt GLM Hood	4 Armd Div HQ & Sig Sqn
Capr DJ Marcham	AFC (H)
Capt CH Mikulla	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Capt GC Smith	30 CDT Trg Team
Capt G Thomas	DES
Capt PRG Tonks	CSD Apps HQ SOinC(a)
Lt EJ Hughes	HQ 19 Mech Bde
Lt DG Phillips	RHQ HQ SOinC(A)
2Lt KJ Bilney	30 Sig Regt
2Lt ST Brinkworth	16 Sig Regt
2Lt J Carey	21 Sig Regt
2Lt CP Collier	14 Sig Regt
2Lt LM Conway	102 Log Bde HQ Sig Sqn
2Lt LN Dobson	224 Sig Sqn
2Lt LJ Exell	7 Sig Regt
2Lt N Flavelle	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
2Lt SJ Harris	16 Sig Regt
2Lt TS Harrison	16 AA Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
2Lt TRJ Hick	3 Div Sig Regt
2Lt TEB Jones	22 Sig Regt
2Lt AL Lewis	7 Sig Regt
2Lt TPO Lord	7 Sig Regt
2Lt RA Mackness	22 Sig Regt
2Lt DHSH Malortie	16 Sig Regt
2Lt AJ McGrane	21 Sig Regt
2Lt SJ Pierson	7 Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
2Lt EA Shale	30 Sig Regt
2Lt ME Wilson- Ramsey	22 Sig Regt
2Lt G Winkles	4 Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
WO1 C Batley	3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt
WO1 G McGachy	22 Sig Regt
WO1 L McGrail	14 Sig Regt
WO1 R Sherstha	HQ SOinC(A) CSDC
WO2 GE Middleton	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Sig JBR Mustoe	12 Mech Bde HQ
MAY 2008	
Maj ND Baker	G6 Branch
Maj CN Biddulph	CVHQ
Maj DA Deegan	Royal School of Signals
Maj DP Farragher	HQ SOINC(A)
Maj SJW Gunson	HQ 2 Med Bde
Maj Krishnahbahadur Gurung	37 Sig Regt (V) Sp Sqn
Maj ASF Hutton	HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div
Maj L Keily	HQ ARRC
Maj GNF Knight	22 Sig Regt
Maj RA Lane	HQ JSSO
Maj VE Maddison	Royal School of Signals
Maj DR Orr	HQ SOINC(A)
Maj CP Smith	DEC (SP)
Maj DM Stachini	JSSU (CYP) - HQTRG
Maj WA Walker	6th (UK) Div
Maj JTD Wright	HQ 16 Air Asslt Bde
A/Maj MC McCorry	DES
A/Maj VE McNaught	7 Sig Regt
Capt JEG Barr	102 Log Bde HQ Sig Sqn
Capt JT Cauldwell	DES
Capt C Coates	16 AA Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
Capt OJ Ford	HQ 19 Mech Bde
Capt CM French	2 Sig Bde
Capt FS Keith	Royal School of Signals
Capt TA Kelly	251 Sig Sqn
Capt IJ Kirk	21 Sig Regt (AS)
Capt J Malcolm	PJHQ
Capt RA Moody	102 Log Bde HQ Sig Sqn
Capt T Moran	HQ 11 Sig Bde
Capt MR Neighbour	30 Sig Regt
Capt J Nixon	7 Sig Regt
Capt F Watson	RSS
Lt JMH Paulin	1 WFR
WO1 SE Fidler	7 Sig Regt
JUNE 2008	
Maj AR Campbell	HQ 1 MI Bde
Maj RD Cowan	21 Sig Regt
Maj PA Horton	HQ 12 Signal Group
Maj A Scott	32 (S) Sig Regt (V)
A/Maj RH Angove	JSSU Cheltenham
A/Maj ACE Burdge	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Capt IA Bangurah	JSSU (CYP)
Capt M Barratt	32 Sig Regt (V)
Capt JG Evans	DPCRU
Capt SL Green	HQ 1 Sig Bde
Capt Surje Gurung	HQ BRIGNEPAL
Capt PD James	CBM Div HQ Land
Capt KW Kerr	PJHQ
Capt NGA Matthews	31 Sig Regt
Capr RA Owens	LWC CMW (UK)
Capt BB Price	14 Sig Regt
Capt Laxman Pun	Royal School of Signals
Capt J Renshaw	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Capt CR Scott	251 Sig Sqn
Capt MJ Speed	21 Sig Regt
Capt PR White	Royal School of Signals
Capt AS Youngman	36 Sig Regt (V) RHQ

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS
COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

CI **Lt Col AR Knott MBE**
DSM **WO2(SSM) Chris Jones**

- by Tony Moogan

Just a quick note to keep track of the immigrants to and émigrés from our Div, most of them legal – we think! Leading the escape committee in the summer are **Majs Lee O'Rourke** and **Dhan Gurung MVO**. **Maj O'Rourke** is "orf up to town" and **Maj Gurung** hits the heights of "The Home of the British Army" – not sure who gets the best deal, we'll see. They are to be replaced by **Maj Emma Bruce** and **Maj Ratna Pun** respectively. **Maj Ratna**, obviously missing the rustic ambience of Dorset since he was Trg Adjt here not many moons ago, before he went Stafford-side! You can take the boy out Blandford.....eh?

Other principal escapologists from around the Div are: **Capt (Tfc) Jimmy James**, **Capt Cat French**, **WO1(YofS(EW)) Mark Robson** on commissioning and **SSgt(FofS) Raj Gurung** on promotion to WO2, congratulations to them both. We wish them all and their families God's speed and good luck for the future, whether here or in pastures new. Future asylum seekers are: **Capt John Walton** formerly of ETT but now settling into DST, **Capt Paul White** replacing **Capt Jim James** and **Capt Fraser Keith** replacing **Capt Cat French**, we extend a warm welcome to them and hope they enjoy their stay with us.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES GROUP (CSG)

OC **Maj Lee O'Rourke**

DIVISION SUPPORT TROOP – VISIT TO OAKHANGER
- by Cpl Wallace

Tp Comd **WO1(FofS) Mick O'Hara**

On the morning of 27 March 08, pers from CSD assembled on Anson Square awaiting the arrival of **Sgt Jaman**. **Cpl Cerioli** seemed most excited but that was probably down to the 5 energy drinks and the caffeine patch he had on his arm more than anything else. **Sgt Jaman** duly arrived and the minibus set off in good time, taking advantage of the lack of early morning traffic and making it to Oakhanger security gate by approximately 1015hrs. After 30mins of confusion regarding the security gates (you need to take the outer case off to swipe your card) we were eventually ushered to a classroom where we received a brief on the whole SKYNET 5 project. This was new to some but a stark reminder to others of recent deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. After the brief there was a chance to have a brew (which included a fight for the bourbon biscuits) and a chat with the project manager, who then took us to have a look round the new REACHER det which was under test in the local area. The civilian instructors seemed most keen and would have climbed all over the roof given half a chance. The day concluded with a tour around the Satellite Ground Station (SGS) itself. The actual size and quantity of links managed by the SGS surprised a lot of us; myself included. All my moaning about service from the SGS while deployed on ops seems unfair now after seeing the location with my own eyes. Having remembered our problems gaining access in the morning, we re-negotiated the lock and liberated ourselves with minimum hassle.

To top off the day **Sgt Jaman** arranged for a lunch at a local hostelry which was apparently one of the top eateries in the country. Everyone seemed to enjoy their respective meals with the exception of **Sgt Jaman** who was upset that his whitebait was fish and not chicken as he had expected. A couple of local beers later and we were on our way back to Blandford. The day was thoroughly enjoyable and a welcome change from the normal daily routine. It was an excellent effort by **Sgt Jaman** who organised the whole day and everyone involved appreciated his efforts.

COMMAND TRAINING GROUP (CTG)

OC **Maj Lloyd Golley**

COMMAND INSTRUCTOR WING – TC 70 *- by 2Lt ME. Williams*

Cse Officer **Capt Jim Hawkins**

CHARITY SUPER HERO RAFFLE

On a cold Friday morning in March, 17 super heroes descended on Blandford Camp to once again take money from the rich and not so rich, to redistribute to a worthwhile cause. The worthwhile cause in this case was "Help for Heroes", a charity of particular relevance to the Army given the current op climate. Super Woman, Mr Incredible, Zorro and many others used their influence to organise a variety of prizes including PC World

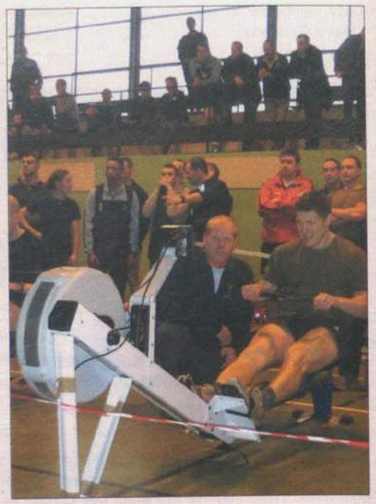
Troop Commanders Course 70 line up as super heroes

vouchers, a night in a Wiltshire B&B, champagne, wine and many more. The crime fighting team then spent several hours ambushing the occupants of Blandford Camp in order to sell the raffle tickets and "Help for Heroes" merchandise for bargain prices. As would be expected, the generosity of the Royal Signals soldiers was commendable with the majority of tickets being sold and £1200 being raised. Move aside Robin Hood!

FOREIGN EXCHANGE VISIT TO ECOLE SUPERIEURE ET D'APPLICATION DES TRANSMISSIONS (ESAT) – THE FRENCH ARMY SCHOOL OF SIGNALS

Having just returned from Easter leave the TC 70 were eased back into work with a foreign exchange trip to Rennes in France. The exchange is a traditional element of the Course and happens twice a year. ESAT is the French equivalent of RSS and so we were able to learn how our French counterparts train and what eqpt they utilise.

The purpose of the visit was to build up an understanding of the French Signals' capability and culture in order to aid relations between the two countries on ops – particularly relevant as **President Sarkosy** had announced the previous week that there would be an increase in French troops deploying to Afghanistan. During our visit we were able take part in several sporting activities in competition with our French counterparts. Having seen England's recent sporting performances, the sport of their choice was Football. They obviously thought they would have more chance of beating us at the 'beautiful game' rather than Rugby. Unfortunately for us, they were correct and despite a valiant performance from all of TC 70 the final score was 3 – 1 to ESAT. Following this we were then invited to compete in the School's indoor rowing competition. Unbeknownst to us, indoor rowing is taken very seriously by the French Army and the competition we were entered into was a heat for the regional competition for the whole of Western France. After a night of experiencing the 'cultural' sights of Rennes and a few hours sleep, the makeshift TC 70 rowing team arrived at the gym to find hundreds of lycra-clad rowing enthusiasts who had been preparing for months. Although not quite so prepared, we entered the competition with true British grit and determination.



2Lt Williams competing in the 800m sprint

The competition consisted of individual 200, 400, 600, 800, 1500m events and a 12 min team relay race. Our hard work paid off and we managed to finish 3rd out of 12 teams.

The French officers themselves spoke English to an exceptionally high level which put the majority of our GCSE French to shame. They also played the part of hosts very well and took us around a part of France that most of us had never visited before, thus providing a very useful and enjoyable experience that I am sure we will all remember.

SYSTEMS ENGINEER COMPETENCY AUGMENTATION INITIATIVE

- by WO1 (FofS IS) W L Fagan

On Thursday 31 January 2008 the first Systems Engineer Competency Augmentation (SECA) Course started here in Blandford. **Col GJT Rafferty**, Director Trg, kindly presented at the inauguration, speaking to 15 Class 2 Sys Eng Techs with a varied amount of IS experience and knowledge, ranging from none to gifted amateur. One of Director Trg's main themes was the fact that change is truly with us and with it, the importance of pioneering. I think it is fair to say, a number of this tough audience were sceptical at best. Ten weeks later and this group of soldiers had evolved into the first Communication Systems Engineers of the Corps. Behind them, 2½ months of focussed ICT trg covering a whole host of subjects including ICT basics, workstation and server practical implementation, CNO, HTML, networking techniques and electronic messaging systems. **Col Rafferty** found time to lead the graduation of this course but this time, 15 very different soldiers stood before him and in he became the first officer to speak to a group of Class 2 CS Engrs. Engineers who now had not only the physical toolbox all Royal Signals techs are issued with but also the knowledge toolbox of the ICT realm, affording their comds with the flexibility to assign any jobs and roles from within any layer in which we work, to an engineer capable of understanding the entire piece.

Well done SECA 07/001 and good luck for the future.

CORPS BAND

EXERCISE MUSICAL SNOW TIGER - *by Musician Nick McVeigh*

The Royal Signals Band headed to Alpe d'Huez in the French Alps in January, for Ex MUSICAL SNOW TIGER.

On arrival, the group was split into 2 groups. The objective for Group 1 was to gain Basic Ski Proficiency (BSP) qualification, while the others undertook their Ski Touring Proficiency (STP) qualification, under the guidance of **Maj David Larkam**. The first day was getting used to the new boots and to regain our ski legs and to re-master the art of falling over. From Day 2 onwards, it was down to the serious business of mastering the art of ski touring.

With the introduction of skins over the skis, it was time to do the opposite to everyone else and that was to ski up the mountain. You can imagine the looks we were getting, as we skied upwards as opposed to the majority, who where skiing downwards and then the sight of us digging emergency snow holes in the side of the mountain.

Skiing uphill!

The DoM enjoys his snow hole courtesy of Musician Harvey on the day before promotion and postings

It was a bit of a shock to discover the amount of effort involved, as previously we were used to the convenience of ski lifts. After a few hours of ski touring it was time to remove the skins and revert to the normal skis. After doing this, it was like we had never skied before, making us look like our colleagues in the BSP group.

LCpl Wallace, who was in the BSP group, had the biggest crash of the week, splitting her lip after slamming into a stop sign. Not so funny, as we had our Kneller Hall Inspection the following week!

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

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

CO	**Lt Col CSK Paterson**
RMS	**WO1(RSM) Dunbar**

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj AHT Garrett**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) RD Heynes**

ALPINE SKIING 2007/08 - *by Lt Suzie Wallis*

The Regtl Alpine Skiing team, comprising **Lt Wallis** (OIC), **SSgt Robertson**, **Cpls Lomax**, **Patterson**, **Thompson** and **Tuck**, **LCpls Bennett** and **Firth** and **Sigs Bell** and **Penn**, have had a busy and successful season. Our 'A' team finished 2nd in the Royal Signals Skiing Championships held in Zell-am-See, Austria in December 07. **Lt Wallis** and **Cpl Patterson** finished 2nd and 3rd Females respectively. **Lt Wallis**, **SSgt Robertson**, **Cpl Patterson**, **Cpl Thompson**, **LCpl Bennett** and newly promoted **LCpl Penn** went on to the Divisional Championships held in Les Contamines, France in January. The team finished an outstanding 3rd; **SSgt Robertson** was top Veteran and **Lt Wallis** 3rd Female.

The team and 2 individual females all qualified for the subsequent Army Championships, held in Serre Chevalier, also in France.

Competition at the Army event was of an extremely high standard and forerunners on the course included the top GB disabled skier, **Russ Docker** and members of the GB Youth Squad. The downhill race was held on the much revered **Luc Alphond** black run and provided a challenge for even the most experienced skier or kamikaze soldier (**Cpl Thompson**)! The team finished a very respectable 7th place and **Cpl Patterson** was 7th placed Female. Just missing out on a place on the Army team, **Lt Wallis** and **Cpl Patterson** look forward to trg with the Army Ladies Squad in July this year.

The Regimental Alpine Ski Team who took part in the Divisional and Army Championships

Unfortunately the core of the Regtl team will not be here to race next year due to postings out and op commitments, however **Lt Wallis** and **LCpl Bennett** hope to build on what was achieved this year and return with some more silverware.

NORDIC SKIING 2007/2008 - *by LCpl Stuart Sievwright*

After a long Christmas leave, it was vital that the team got straight back into trg for the Div Championships beginning on 12 January 2008. After a couple of days trg in Herford, **Capt Moody**, **Sgt Skene** and **LCpl Sievwright**, along with a newly sourced fourth team member, **LCpl Smith** REME departed for Les Contamines, France.

The first race of the Championships was the 15km Classic race. **LCpl Sievwright** finished in 37th place and was the first placed Royal Signals competitor, with **Sgt Skene** finishing a very respectable 41st. The second race of the Championships was the 7km Biathlon which consisted of a Skate ski and a shoot from both the standing and prone positions. **LCpl Sievwright** was once again the top Royal Signals finisher in 39th place. The next race was the combined Classic and Skate team race. This consisted of 2 competitors skiing Classic one after the other (**Sgt Skene** and **LCpl Smith**) and the other 2 Skate skiing (**Capt Moody** and **LCpl Sievwright**). The team finished a respectable 12th out of 17 teams. Our best performance came in the Patrol Race.

Starting 7th in our disturbingly tight fitting arctic whites, we were expecting to lose some places to some of the faster teams. After a scrabble to make the correct weight at the start (with a little help from **Sgt Fergusson**) we were away. It wasn't long before we realised that skiing with weight was a whole lot different to skiing without! We decided to ski down all of the hills, even though we were mostly out of control. Our stopping technique was one suggested to us by an ex-Royal Marine. "If you find yourself going too fast…just fall over". And with that in mind, we made up 2 places, overtaking 2 RE teams who decided it would be "safer" to run down the hills! After finishing around 10th in most events, we were overjoyed to finish in 5th position. With the Div Championships over, we look forward to the REME Championships to cap off our season.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Oliver**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) D Churchward**

EXERCISE SNOW DIAMOND
- by LCpl Dan Rimmer

We departed Hammersmith Barracks very early in the morning of 23 February in eager anticipation of what was to come. This soon turned to despair when we saw how far the journey was!

We collected our ski eqpt the following morning and were split into 3 groups – Skiers, Non-Skiers and a new to snow group. The weather was fantastic and everyone had a great week's skiing with a few spectacular wipe outs to keep the rest of us amused. The evening activities ranged from sledging to karaoke and we managed to stay injury free apart from **Sig Geddes**, who decided to pay a visit to the local health care facilities with a dislocated shoulder.

In Week 2, we were blessed with a massive dump of snow which meant that everyone had to learn to sit back on their skis in order to keep their tips out of the snow. Those who didn't learn this quickly suffered a few face plants which kept us all laughing.

Everyone who participated had a great week's skiing and overall the trip was a massive success with all of the beginners achieving their Basic Ski Proficiency.

ARMOURED DRIVER COURSE - *by Sig Gaz Tweedle*

I was looking forward to the driving course, particularly the technical aspects of the vehs and also getting the opportunity to take the 43s out on the road and cross country. We began by going through the all the different bits of the 43s and how to maintain them in order to keep them roadworthy. There was a lot to take in but everyone passed this first part of the course with flying colours.

Next came the driving phase, the bit we were most interested in. To start with we had to manoeuvre the veh through a series of traffic cones. This sounds easy but learning to judge the width and clearance took a bit of getting used to. Needless to say there were a few flat cones after that lesson!

Once we had mastered this we moved on to driving on the road with other road users. We were all a bit nervous about this as when you are driving something as big as a 432 you have to keep a constant watch on your road position at all times. The last thing any of us wanted to do was to hit anything when driving.

I found the most enjoyable part of the course was the cross country phase where we got to see what the vehs could actually do on various terrain. It was good fun but the only problem is the suspension, so you feel all the bumps and you certainly know about it when you hit one going fast. All in all it was a good course and everyone enjoyed it. The instructors were very patient and got everyone to pass with no accidents or mishaps.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Pearce**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) PM Watson**

REGIMENTAL CROSS COUNTRY TEAM – FLEET HALF MARATHON - *by Lt Hannah McDonald*

Seven members of the Regtl Cross Country team left Herford very early in the morning to catch the ferry over to the UK. The timings were set so early by our admin NCO, **LCpl Stickley**, who couldn't meet his own timings and had to be given a wake up call at 0545hrs to get us on the road and out of the freezing cold. **Cpl 'Magic' Mitchell** kept us and other passengers entertained with his magical genius with a pack of cards that then descended into a few animated rounds of Cheat, which made the usually long and dull trip, whiz by. Neither **Lt McDonald** or **LCpl Stickley** brought a map of the UK so it took a little longer than it should to find Pirbright Camp but we eventually got onto the scent and moved into our luxurious accn in Brunswick Camp.

The race day was soon upon us and the lack of map impacted again with a 45min journey from Pirbright to Fleet via the non-scenic route. The weather was pretty miserable with a chilling wind and spitting rain. **Lt McDonald** was wondering whose bright idea it was to run 13 miles in the cold and rain but there was no-one else to blame but herself. The boys had been over keen and got up early to do a warm-up run and made sure they had a decent amount to food inside them, the girls voted for the more rested approach and made a last minute dash to the NAAFI for supplies of Lucozade and bananas. The start of the course was pretty muddy and water logged and it took a while to get to the Forming Up Point due to the crowds which included nuns, transvestites and a couple of bananas. Fleet wasn't the quite little town it seemed!

LCpl Lieshman, our Regtl speed freak, with his short shorts and go-faster vest made his way to the 8 min mile marker along with **Cpl 'Magic' Mitchell** to put us all to shame. The remainder hung around just in front of the 10 min mile marker and waited for the off. It took a while to get all the 3000 runners over the start line but **Sig Vicky Appleton** started a fast pace and the girls soon started to move up. The race went through a housing estate, up into the High Street, then out through another housing estate and out of the town onto country roads, all of which were lined with enthusiastic supporters willing everyone on. The route was marked at every mile point, and most of us hit the wall around the 10 mile point. **LCpl Lieshman** was the first in having joined the 6 minute mile marker, followed by **Cpl 'Magic' Mitchell**.

Lt McDonald made it in 3rd with 4th place going to **Sig Haagensen**, who forgot his Vaseline and suffered the consequences. **Sig Vicky Appleton** was 2nd in for the girls followed by **Cpl Donna Douglas**. Last in was **Sig Plummer**, who came along as morale but ran a professional race in Bermuda shorts, but again suffered from lack of Vaseline.

The whole team had respectable times, and were well looked after by **LCpl Stickley**. We collected our medals and left the cold wet field before the prize giving and headed back to our 5 start huts for showers and a mid-afternoon snooze. We hobbled our way back to Germany the following day with aching knees, blisters, chaffing and minus two nipples. Point to note for all admin NCOs bring a map and plenty of Vaseline.

MANAGEMENT SKI TRIP - *by 2Lt Chazzer McPitstra*

After a very busy finish to 2007, with the tempo running into the New Year and some not quite so fresh after 3 weeks on the Regtl Cadre Course, the Officers and Warrant Officers of the Regt deployed to St Ullrich in Austria on the Management Ski Trip, staying in the Hotel Pillerseehof with the infamous **Phil Fluck** as our rep.

The accn was very comfortable with all food inclusive and free beer until 2100hrs, of which we very rarely took advantage! The trip was run over 2 weeks with half going on the first week and the other half on the second week. The first week had a number of beginners who received instruction from **Phil** and his team throughout the week. It was quite an eventful week, mainly due to **Maj Brian Stow** who found himself in Germany on several occasions – with only one of them being intentional. He had a race against the clock in order to get back onto the right side of the mountain and back into Austria before the lifts shut. Unfortunately, ski trips are very rarely complete without some form of incident or injury and unfortunately **WO2 Seddon's** first ski trip was over reasonably quickly after suffering a serious knee injury.

The second week ran much more smoothly under the clear direction of **Capt Jason 'Renee' Renshaw** who suggested we held a pub quiz one evening. **Capt Renshaw** proved himself to be a demon quiz master having no qualms about deducting points to those who "gobbed off" even if you were in the CO's team. **Maj Gareth Oliver** was the only beginner in the second week. Somehow he had never had the opportunity to ski before but he improved significantly over the 4 days with thanks **Capt Shane Abbot** and **WO1(RSM) Gerry McGachy** who took it turns to instruct. As with most ski trips there was a designated fancy dress day which saw **Capt Keith Dunwoody** dressed as Batman and **2Lt Paul Johnson** dressed as a Centurion. Both looked very stylish bombing down the slopes with their capes flowing in the wind behind them. **Capt Shane Abbott** had dug out a fantastic 80s all-in-one ski suit and **2Lt Charlotte Pitstra** looked quite cold wearing a kilt.

All in all it was an extremely enjoyable trip which was used to welcome new members of the Regt and welcome back those returning from Iraq. Our thanks must go to **Capt Jock Reid** who after all his hard work in organising the trip was unable to go due to a snowboarding accident which had resulted in a broken wrist.

HQ SQUADRON

OC	**Maj R Manning**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Brodie**

TWO OCEANS MARATHON ON 21 MARCH IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA - *by Sgt Moss*

In late 2007 it was proposed that the Regt would enter a team to take part in 'The Two Oceans Marathon'. This is an Ultra Marathon held annually in Cape Town, South Africa. It is a demanding event and is run over a distance of 56km (35 miles), with a 7 hr cut off time. It is called 'The Two Oceans' because of its amazing views of both the Atlantic and Indian Ocean on either side of the Cape. It is widely regarded as the most beautiful marathon on earth.

Initially it was planned to take a total of 8 runners, but due to logistical issues and time limitations before the event, the ex co-ordinator cut the number so the team consisted of 4 runners and 1 admin SNCO. The aim of the ex was for a team of runners from the Regt to complete this Marathon to raise money for "Help for Heroes" and the Army Benevolent Fund. The high degrees of commitment, self satisfaction and sense of achievement associated with completing such an event are in keeping with the ethos of the British Army.

The ex co-ordinator had planned and executed the same ex the previous year and so the planning process was fairly straightforward. Given the high workloads of all of the individuals taking part, managing team trg runs proved impossible. The ex leader wrote an ultra marathon trg programme, with trg distance/date deadlines highlighted and with trg runs going up to 26 miles! All of the runners were at different levels of fitness prior to the start of the trg and the programme was designed for a steady 6hr 45min finish. We had a few days acclimatisation and time to recce the route but the race day came up quickly. All runners finished in the allotted time: **LCpl Firth** – 5hrs 44mins, **Sgt Moss** – 5hrs 50mins, **LCpl Newman** – 6hrs 31mins and **WO1 Smith** – 6hrs 35mins.

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col JJ Cole OBE**
RSM **WO1(RSM) JA March**

COMMANDING OFFICER'S CUP - *by WO2 (YofS) White*

One of the many events of the CO's Cup was the Athletics Competition which took place at Ryedale Stadium in York. The event was staged as an Inter-Sqn competition which, OC athletics, **Capt Andy Slack** managed to put together despite two sqns being deployed on ex. All of the events had been represented with many soldiers happy to double up in events for their respective sqns. There was only 1 female team entered, which was headed up by **Capt Shipley**, 2IC 219 Sig Sqn and they competed with the men in some of the events – which gave them a chance for a good run out. Although there were no Olympic records broken the enthusiasm and level of competition was great to see.

There were some great performances. For example, **LCpl Sunil**, Sp Sqn won the High Jump and Long Jump having never done the events before and **Cpl Dilip** won the 3000m Steeplechase which he had never done before either. This was a credit to his personal fitness and determination. On the track, **LCpl Bates** won the 400m and **LCpl Jackson** won the 110m hurdles. **LCpl Sampson**, 214 Sig Sqn, won both the 100m and 200m comfortably.

The oldest gladiators on the day were **SSgt Myles**, **SSgt Ashford** and **WO2(YofS) White** who put in a strong performance in their respective events showing the younger competitors that they can still perform at a high level and in some cases even win. The high scoring events were the relays which proved to be very successful for 214 Sig Sqn, which managed to win all the events, including the Chain of Command, which consists of one officer, one SNCO, one JNCO and one OR.

The winners on the day were 214 Sig Sqn who claimed to have put their team together the day before. The competition proved to be a success and a good recruiting ground for the Morrison Cup team. The event was concluded with the presentation to the well deserved winning team by the Comd 11 Sig Bde, **Brig Thackray**, who thanked all those involved in the event.

CORPS OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION (OSC) 2008
- by Lt J Corns

My first response to the suggestion of representing the Regt in the Corps OSC was "have they seen me shoot?" Obviously not, but I was chosen from a long list of one to be the Officer in the Regtl Team. Although apprehensive at this task, I was excited at the prospect of getting time on the ranges and the opportunity to learn from the Gurkha contingent in the team. The Gurkhas have a long and illustrious history when it comes to competition shooting. I don't know if it's genetic or not but it could also be down to their extreme pride in their soldiering skills. The Gurkha dominance is so prevalent that they have recently added non-Gurkha trophies to allow the Brits to get some silverware. The 3 weeks I spent with the shooting team was not only about the competition but also a look into the Gurkha culture.

Operational Shooting is designed to test and develop individual and sect drills in simulated op environments. Firers wear body armour, 7kg webbing plus wpn and helmet. Shoots involve fire and movement, advances to battle and simulate different stages of the battle, advance to contact, attack, fight through, withdrawal and defence. Different matches are designed to test a firer's ability to operate in the rural and urban environment. There are rifle, pistol and shot-gun matches. Competitors are tested physically with some matches involving a tab and a small asslt course. Not only did we need to get to the "Start Line" on time but we also needed to compose ourselves to shoot accurately in the fire fight.

Sig Bradford, LCpl Khem, WO2 Dhir, Lt Col Cole, 2Lt Corns, LCpl Best, Sig Moore,Sig Lal, Cpl Sanja, Cpl Khagendra, Sig Anup, Sig Sanja, Cpl Durga, Sig Anil.

THE COMPETITION

The event was held Monday to Thursday for teams and individuals to compete within their respective Corps. On Friday the winners of the team events and the best of each Corps would compete in an Inter-Corps competition. The matches came thick and fast with at least 3 matches a day. As well as rifle, there were also pistol and clay-pigeon matches.

Competition within the Corps was fierce and the standard was extremely high this year, with a number of teams competing very closely. At the front as ever were 2, 22 and 30 Sig Regts (something to do with the Gurkha presence?) but 11 Sig Regt also had an extremely competitive young team, the majority selected straight from Gurkha Phase 1 in Catterick.

The Regt started off slowly, getting rid of the early nerves and then progressed as the competition went on. There were some excellent performances; the Class As performed very well as expected. **Cpl Durga** scored 49/50 on Match 2 (The Roupell). **WO2(SSM) Dhir** scored very well as expected, finishing 5th overall. **Cpl Khagendra** was the lynch-pin in Team B and his experience had a massive effect. The star performer of the week was **Sig Sanjay**, who came from nowhere in trg to have a fantastic competition, finishing top out of the Class B competitors and finishing 3rd Overall, an astonishing performance!

Success was found in the team events: the Falling Plate, Snap and the Para Cup. The Falling Plate is a 4-man team who run from 300m to 200m and have to hit 10 targets as fast as possible. The event was run as a knock out competition. Team A (**WO2 (SSM) Dhir**, **Cpl Durga**, **Cpl Khagendra** and **Cpl Sanjay**) knocked out Team C (**2Lt Corns**, **LCpl Best**, **Sig Bradford** and **Sig Moore)** in the Semi-Finals. They went on to beat 22 Sig Regt in a close final .The team also went on to win the Inter-Corps Falling Plate Competition.

The Snap event is a 4-man team, who have to run a 100m, get over 3 obstacles (including a 6ft wall) and knock down 10 x Fig 12 targets from 300m as fast as they can. Points are given based on time and the number of rounds returned. Team B (**2Lt Corns**, **Cpl Khagendra**, **LCpl Khem** and **Sig Sanjay)** blitzed the Corps competition, winning the event with a time of 35.6 secs. They would finish 3rd in the Inter-Corps Snap event.

The Para Cup is a Fire-Team Assessment. The Team would complete a distance of 2 miles in 18 mins and fire and manoeuvre between firing points. The team includes a LSW gunner. Team B came 2nd and Team A came 3rd in this event. Team B also came 3rd in the Pistol match.

Overall Team B came 3rd and Team A came 4th in the Corps Signals Competition. The honours went to 22 Sig Regt A Team, who were superb, scoring extremely well and deservedly won the event. Individually the Regt performed extremely well, having 6 of it competitors finish in the top10 in the Royal Signals. **WO2(SSM) Dhir**, **Cpl Durga**, **Cpl Sanjay** and **Sig Sanjay** went on to represent the Corps. **Cpl Khagendra** and **Cpl Sekendra** were reserves for the match. On Friday of the competition the best 8 firers from each Corps competed against each other to determine the best Corps of the year. Royal Signals won the Inter-Corps Match and there was strong representation from 2 Sig Regt.

The event was very enjoyable and the whole team can be very proud of themselves in an extremely competitive event. I fully recommend anyone to take part if they get an opportunity, not only will the event bring on your shooting, it's also an extremely sociable event as it's an opportunity to meet friends from across the Corps.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Anderson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) I Conlan**

The tempo continues at a pace since the last edition of *The Wire* with the Sqn supporting the Regt both in camp, LSI, Regtl Key Leader Cadre Course and supporting the field Sqns as they carry out PDT and prepare for ops. As with all Sp Sqns, the turnover of 'All Arms' manpower is high. The OC wishes to congratulate all members of the Sqn who competed in the Regtl Athletics and won the CO's Cup.

All ranks of the Sqn would like to say welcome/farewell to the following:

Postings In	Postings Out
Capt Overton (RCMO)	**Maj Jackson (RAO)**
SSgt Jenkinson	**Capt (Flower) Low (RCMO)**
Sgt Jackson (AGC)	**SSgt Butterworth** (AGC)
Cpl Rammage (AGC)	**Sgt Tuminting**
Sig Horsley	**Sgt Dhanraj Gurung**
Sig Lewins	**LCpl Caswell**
	LCpl Pickard
	Cfn Buck

The Sqn would like to congratulate both **WO2(SSM) Conlan** and his wife **Jacqueline** and **LCpl Dau** on the recent additions to their families.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Graham**
SSM **WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

SPEARHEAD LAND ELEMENT - *by LCpl Nicholson-Upcott*

214 Sig Sqn returned home from a very successful tour of Afghanistan in October 2007. Following a well deserved month on leave, the Sqn 're-orbat-ed' and our new Tps were formed. Viking Tp was back under the comd of **Lt Gray** with his able assistant, **Sgt Christian Glennard** filling the post of Tp SSgt.

Soon after forming, Viking Tp were warned off that we would be building a brand new Spearhead Land Element (SLE) from scratch and would be on readiness to move from March to August 2008. This would involve being constantly ready to deploy; anytime day or night (well, almost).

In order for the Tp to be deployable from March onwards, we had to train and refresh skills both new and old. Within the last few months much of the Tp disappeared onto a variety of courses leaving only a skeleton crew to man the Tp Admin. **LCpl Robbie Thompson** and **Sig Moon** both deployed to their Class 1 courses at Blandford. There were also many other STA courses to be done in preparation. The priority courses were obviously trade courses but a few Tp members also attended leadership courses in between the hectic schedule. During this 2 months of preparation, all stores had to be delivered and issued, with some of the new comms eqpt not reaching us until a week before we were due to be fully operationally capable!

The OPTAG trg was a week long trg package in the normally sunny town of Lydd, down on the south coast. However this week would be the week of severe weather warnings all along the south coast with heavy rain, thunder storms and gale force winds. Due to duty rumours suggesting we would be inside all week, listening to PowerPoint presentations, certain pers didn't feel the need to take waterproofs with them. Whoops! The duty rumours were wrong! We took part in the normal Op TELIC OPTAG trg, which did involve some presentations indoors but as most people will know, also involved demonstrations and rehearsals of all the skills and drills required for a deployment.

By the beginning of March all the eqpt required had arrived and was now being setup and tested. Until now most of the Tp had still been on courses but rapidly it grew to full strength. There was some Tp 'bonding' (**LCpl Chadwick** deserves a mention for his ability to talk everyone to sleep!) but the main priority was to have all the kit in and working by the end of March. With the whole Tp getting as much hands on time with the kit and learning as much as possible, we thought we would have it working in no time at all. Again we were wrong. It's never as simple as it should be. We ran into problem after problem with almost every piece of eqpt. As with any comms problem it came down to 'other end-itis' but 3 hrs before our deadline, and following a lot of cancelled Easter-leave, we had everything up and running. Much of this was down to the hard work of the guys including **Sgt Steve Armstrong**, **LCpl Chadwick**, **Sig Wilkinson**, **Sig Johnson** and **Sig Knight** to name but a few.

Part of the SLE commitment is to do demonstrations to show all of the capabilities of the Tp. We spent a week at Donnington displaying the eqpt for the relevant staff officers during their visits, which have so far included CinC Land and Comd Field Army amongst many others.

With the demos and the Sqn comms ex, Ex KEY CHIMERA, complete, we can now look forward to returning to a bit of normality. Looking to the future we are as busy as ever with Pre-Deployment trg for Op TELIC looming, as well as planning the many socials we need to catch up on!

CHARITY FUND RAISER - *by Cpl Galyer*

12 March was a fantastic day for 214 Sig Sqn. Twelve members of the Sq rolled out of the camp gates at 0730hrs and headed for Tesco at Clifton Moor Retail Park. **SSgt Nige Howard** and **Cpl Karl Wikeley** headed up the charity event. We were tasked to raise up to £500 for "Help For Heroes" and the Army Benevolent Fund doing a 24 hr static triathlon. We had taken over a part of the car park and all the eqpt, tentage and CV eqpt was set up and power was laid into the tent. At 1000 hrs we started the event, the first 3 members of the Sqn, **SSgt Nige Howard**, **Sgt Steve Crutchley** and **Cpl Mike Galyer** jumped on the CV kit (treadmill, bike and rower). At the main entrance to Tesco and at the front of the 18 x 24, in which the event was taking place, we had a constant rotation of guys with collection tins. Every 30 mins, the competitors rotated through the CV eqpt and recorded all distances after completing their stint. Every 2 hrs **SSgt Howard** and one other carried out a full count of all money raised to that point. We hit £600 in the first 2 hrs, breaking the amount requested. As time passed the competitors started to feel the effects and morale started to drop. At 2200hrs, **LCpl Whitehead** took a trip into Tesco and bought a CD from 1976 (The Greatest

Hits). This raised morale no end. Half way through the event the amount raised had reached a staggering £2000, due to the hard work of **SSgt Howard** and **Sgt Crutchley** manning the main entrance of Tesco with collection tins in their Number 2s.

As the night came to a close and all the shoppers had gone home the guys were feeling rather tired, so we split the night down into 2 teams, the first working until 0200hrs and the second working until 0600hrs, when everyone was up and hitting it hard. At 0800hrs we put on Minster FM to hear the charity event update. The total raised at this point in time was £2700 and we had collectively covered a distance of 958 miles. The final 2 hrs of our successful event saw a 110% effort from everybody. Finally the event finished and we had a final count up of the money raised and the mileage covered. The end result was £3078 and a distance covered was 1048 miles.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Mould**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

EXERCISE FOSS RISING - APRIL 2008
- by Cpl Louden and Sig Boothman

Ex FOSS RISING was a Sqn level ex designed to test the elements of the Cormorant kit and give the operators who are deploying to Kuwait some much needed 'hands on'. The ex was also a chance for the Bowman dets to roll out and determine how far away we could realistically get comms, in preparation for a Bde ex due to take place later in the year. During the IBDP some of the troops needed to get back up to speed on the kit as the recent op commitments have not featured Cormorant.

The weather wasn't on our side and once the snow started falling, it became very cold so an interrupted night's sleep was had by all (very much so by the hardcore operators who only brought out jungle sleeping bags!). While Bowman was a relative triumph, Cormorant struggled to get off the ground. Problems with the plan, which numerous units were experiencing at the time, hindered the trg that the Cormorant crews could get, so the troops got on with what was described as a 'bad camping trip' as well as some bad headwear (no names mentioned - **Lt Thewlis**).

Call the fashion police, there's about to be a murder!

After the world's fastest teardown (call McWhirter this is going to be a record breaker) we lined up and then set off back to camp. However, on the recovery back to camp one of the DAFs decided it would rather stay at Catterick instead!! Recognition must go to **LCpl Cunnington** who not only broke down with her Duro, but also managed to get lost once they were back on the road again!

MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP TRAINING AT JSMTC INDEFATIGABLE - *by LCpl Cunnington*

Easter Sunday, and as you can imagine we were all really excited about the prospect of spending the next week navigating up and down the Welsh peaks – and then it started snowing. As soon as we arrived we signed for our kit including helmets, waterproofs and ropes and then reality struck home to us all – what we had volunteered to do? We all woke up the next morning to the usual briefs and then met our instructors who showed us how to put up our tents for the night ex around the local area, on which **Lt Cat Jones** found out why we had been given the waterproof trousers!

The next few days consisted of weather briefs, tying knots, abseiling and more navigation, all to the dismay of **Sig Ray Dowson**. Then came the event that we had all been dreading – the night navex. We packed our Bergens with all of the eqpt we needed 'just in case' and started the ascent up to our camp. We finally arrived and set up tents and had our lovely ration pack meals before the night ex commenced. My group managed to locate every bog available in the area! After completing all the serials, we made our way back to camp a little tired and very wet! All in all we had a great time and would like to say thanks to the JSMTC and its staff for putting on a good week. I would recommend the MLT course to everyone – just check the weather forecast before you go!

THE BARRY BUDDON EXPERIENCE - *by LCpl Ennis*

It was the middle of March, unusually cold, unusually wet, insanely windy and my Sqn decided the best place to have our annual range package would be...Scotland! Added to our trepidation about the 'jock' weather a few of us had been lucky enough to do the admin party on the Gurkha Sqn's package last year and feared that the boredom might actually kill us this time round. However when we arrived there was no hint of bad weather, everything happened on time and how it was supposed to (at least that's how it looked from our side anyway), the serials were interesting and different and more importantly fun. It turned out to be one of the best range packages many of us had done.

I believe every one of us came away a lot more experienced, especially my sect's art of hostage taking demonstrated on **Sgt Parton's** PG Tips monkey (also his only friend!), who was removed from his usual 'daysack' home and taken on an mini-adventure! This involved being strapped to the front of the Snatch for the veh anti-ambush, being taped to the GPMG target while 150 rounds were fired through it, surviving countless other brushes with death to end up being auctioned, along with the OC's rank slide (also 'acquired' rather than donated). Known collectively as **Maj Monkey**, he was sold off to the highest bidder, **Capt Stone**, for £41 in aid of "Help for Heroes". The whole week was really good fun, and I'm looking forward to the next one, as long as **Dolly** has a new monkey!

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj BG White**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

OPERATION HERRICK DEPLOYMENT
- by WO2(FofS) Surendra Gurung

The British Gurkhas involvement in previous conflicts and engagements in Afghanistan started in 1879 and the Second Afghan War, clashing with Afghan tribesmen, the 1919 war for independence and more recently the post 9/11 war against terrorism. During all these engagements, Gurkhas, either as formed units or individual replacements have been involved as combat units or supporting elements.

In the 2007/08, on Op HERRICK 6/7 the presence of Gurkhas in Afghanistan is even more prominent than ever, but in slightly different attire than the norm. This time, the modern Gurkhas were unleashed not only in the form of ferocious war fighting elements but were also deployed as Engineers, Logisticians and more importantly as the state of the art communicators, who were responsible for providing a reliable and robust CIS architecture necessary to support Comd Regional Command South, **Maj Gen JD Page OBE**, in the accomplishment of his mission.

Having just returned from a very successful tour on Op TELIC in 2006/07, as the first ever Cormorant (WAN Comms system based on latest commercial technology) deployment in a war fighting zone, 85 pers from 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, 2 Sig Regt were again trained (and nurtured) to deploy on Op HERRICK. Commanded by **Maj Ben White** and with **Capt Nirmal Bhattachan** as the 2IC and Ops Officer, this deployment saw the Sqn responsible for many roles encompassing not only the CIS provision for Regional Command (South) (RC(S)) but also to provide the ever critical and essential life sp to HQ staffs in the RC(S).

Pre-deployment trg had to be diverse due to the nature of the task we were taking on, as CIS providers and Life Sp elements in a multi-national environment. Predominantly RC(S) had NATO CIS services, therefore eqpt and application trg had to be organised at different locations across the United Kingdom, also in Italy and Belgium and tailor made in-house confirmatory trg. We also had to train ourselves and sharpen our battle drills in order to carry out our tasks in a hostile environment. No corners were cut whilst meeting many of the stringent challenges one came across during trg. The trg effort was not cheap and certainly not plain sailing, due to the Sqn's multi task role. The consolidated effort and commitment put in by the Sqn was commendable during a very busy period. A clear reflection of a typical 'can do' attitude commonly associated with the British and Gurkha soldier.

During the initial range package on arrival at Kandahar

The phased deployment to Afghanistan started in the 1st week of October 07 and the complete handover of the RC(S) HQ & Sig Sqn was completed on 26 October 07, which was our official Transfer Of Authority (TOA) date. By this time our System Support Teams (SSTs) 4 man teams had deployed and taken control of the forward locations across RC(S) AOR Helmand Lashkar Ghar, Bastion, Uruzgan (Tarin Kowt) and Zabul (Qalat). The majority of the Sqn pers deployed in Kandahar, formed the RC(S) HQ & Sig Sqn.

There was an anticipated concern within the Staff community that they might see a dip in the quality of the services during the initial phase of the take over. Armed with flexible and adaptable qualities, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn pers took no time in blending into their new environment. Within a few weeks of taking over the reins, we were thanked and appreciated by the HQ Staff on the quality of the services provided to them. There was no turning back for the Sqn; things started moving at quite a swift pace matching the op tempo. The Staff within the RC(S) AOR had already started noticing the smart surroundings and presence of 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn pers delivering efficient comms and life sp services.

Sp Tp headed by **Capt Ganesh** (also double hatted as the QM) with his 2 SSgts, **SSgt(SQMS) Nim Pun** looking after all RC(S) eqpt and logistics accounting and **SSgt Man Pun** in charge of all HQ RC(S) accn. Also under the Sp Tp were the 4 man Comd's TAC, who deployed along side the Close Protection Team and Force Protection, providing tactical comms to the Comd and the VIPs. The implementation of the contractual agreement and security of the HQ compound also fell within QM's remit, making him indispensable at his job. Comms Tp led by **Lt Tuni Masi**, an accomplished ITIL (service desk procedure) guru, was instrumental when briefing ITIL procedures to **Brig J Thackray**, Comd 11 Sig Bde during his visit. Comms Tp was divided into 4 different sects, the first being the service desk which was the 1st port of call (the single point of contact) for all RC(S) NATO Service delivery. The 2nd being the 4 man Forward Repair Team (FRT) headed by **Sgt Prabin Thapa** who were mobilised at every occasion to cater for any tech challenges.

One of the very high profile tasks carried out by the FRT was to prepare and train themselves under tremendous time pressure for Op KHAZAN's deployed NATO CIS provisioning using previously unknown DSGT-LINC eqpt. The 3rd sect was headed by **Sgt Micky Lake**, the 4 man line team who were responsible for all the Fibre Optic and Cat 5E cable lays across RC(S) HQ and its vicinity. The 4th sect was the System Support Team (SST) at the Task Force HQs, who supported the NATO Staff at remote sites. Each SST was headed by a SNCO namely **Sgt Kumar Gurung** at Bastion, **Sgt Man Gurung** at Lakshghar, **Sgt Ratna Gurung** at Qalat and **Cpl Nal Gurung** at Tarin Kowt.

LCpl Man, a member of the Commander's Tactical Team

The daily Battle Rhythm for the Sqn included a plethora of briefs, presentations, planning and catering of CIS and ICS for the ever changing op requirements. The additional ad-hoc tasks whether it be provisioning of Cross Border Comms at the Afghanistan and Pakistan border or be it larger projects involving roll-out and implementation of highly sophisticated Information Technology (IT) eqpts, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn ensured that the delivery of these services were conducted in a very proficient manner with minimal disruption to RC(S) daily routines.

Now and then the op focus was stimulated by various activities, such as visits made by our past and present *paltan-walas*. This included **Col D B Warne** (ex Comd QG Signals), the CO, **Lt Col JJ Cole OBE** and **WO1(RSM) J March**. The all proven Gurkha kaida of strong bond within the Gurkha community was achieved in a true Gurkhali spirit by organising Sqn BBQs, curry lunches, suppers and physical endurance events such as Superstar Challenges between teams who competed against each other on various events involving cycling, running, sit-ups, etc and as well as entering teams in the Kandahar football league. The arrival of *Dashain* and *Tihar* during our deployment further boosted our morale, when Comd RC(S) joined us and happily shared his hard earned wealth with his soldiers. Thus we as a formed body of fine men and women ensured that we engaged ourselves in variety of constructive activities which pumped impetus into our daily routine and morale – keeping the all too inevitable monotony of work at a good distance.

This was 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn's first ever ISAF led deployment, as a formed unit, working within a multi-national environment. From

the outset this was an eagerly and much anticipated deployment that provided a real sense of achievement that shall forever be remembered by all. The recognition gained by the British Gurkhas during this deployment will have a lasting affect for many years to come. History will be the best judge of the Gurkha Signallers' superb performance and precious contributions towards making Afghanistan a better place to live in.

YORK CITY SALUTE THE GURKHAS - *by Sgt Jiwan Rai*

Eighty seven members of the Sqn returned safe and sound back to York at the end of February 2008. After a well-earned leave, almost everyone is now back to work and has started to blend with the Regt's daily routine work. To mark this highly successful deployment and our safe return from Op HERRICK, a medal presentation was to be held in the York City centre on Friday 11 April 2008. On the day the band from the Royal Regiment of Scotland and 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn paraded on Parliament Street and marched off, **Maj Ben White Saheb**, OC 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn leading the Sqn through the city centre. The Mayor of York, accompanied by GOC 6 Div, **Maj Gen Jacko Page**, and the Civic Party took the salute at the Mansion house. As we marched through the City of York it was wonderful to see its people watching you with friendly smiles, cheering, applauding and taking photos. We were very pleased and proud to march through the city centre, which had given us such warm welcome, generous support and homely feeling. When we entered Yorkshire Museum Garden, we were pleased to see our families, friends and spectators patiently waiting for us. **Maj Gen Page** along with the Lord Mayor and the rest of the Civic Party arrived and took their respective positions. Medals presentations by the GOC and the Lord Mayor followed. It was our pleasure to receive our well deserved medals from such highly esteemed personalities. After the medal parade we returned to Imphal

Maj Ben White, OC 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn leading the squad through York City centre

Barracks and assembled at Bhet Ghat for some light refreshments. While in Bhet Ghat we also grasped the opportunity to promote **SSgt(SQMS) Nimbahadur Pun** and **Sig Quirk** to WO2 and LCpl respectively and say goodbye to **Maj Krishnabahadur Gurung Saheb**, Gurkha Maj Queen's Gurkha Signals as it was his final visit to the Sqn prior to leaving the RHQ for another appointment within the wider Corps. Overall we had a wonderful day and everything went extremely well. I am certain this historic event will be long remembered by all the Sqn pers and their families.

3rd (UNITED KINGDOM) DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col PEJ Drew**
RSM **WO1 MR Eastman**

REGIMENTAL ORIENTEERING - *by Maj DM Sharkey*

Orienteering has continued and seen the Regt entering into the 4 Div and Corps Championships. This year they took place at Hankley Common for the Corps Individual Championships and Longmoor for the Harris Relay. Both days saw superb weather and all our runners had a good run. No silver yet, but we are now 3rd in the Div League and there is a lot of promise for the next season. Our stalwart runners are **WO1(SSM) Greening**, **Cpl Steph Bogart** and **Cpl Heywood** with several more are improving, including the author. The 4 Div Harris Relay comes up at Petersfield on 30 April. Good luck to the Regt.

The Regiment Harris Relay Teams at the Corps Orienteering Champs

HEADQUARTERS (THE SOMME) SQUADRON

OC **Maj PT Green** RE
SSM **WO2(SSM) Cartledge**

THE QinetiQ 500 - *by WO2(FofS(IS)) Robson*

3 Div HQ & Sig Regt completed the QinetiQ 500 endurance race at 1309hrs on Wednesday 13 March 08, raising in excess of £5000 for the charity "Help for Heroes". This year's event saw 4 teams battle it out over 500 laps of a standard athletics track (200km) carrying 30lb weight in what can only be described as severe weather conditions. The race was started by the CO at 2200hrs on Tuesday 11 March for what was going to be one of the toughest races attempted for the majority of those taking part. Morale was extremely high as every runner gave it their all for "Help for Heroes", finishing the race in a very creditable time of 15hrs 09mins.

The time was not fast enough to beat the competition record set by 2 RRF in Cyprus 2006 but the team comprising Regtl and RLC soldiers from Abingdon have set the UK record, one I'm sure 2 RRF would also be keen to beat on home territory.

A reminder of some of the previous record times and the conditions that must be followed.

- 10 Soldiers per team.
- Each carrying 30lb weight
- 500 laps of a standard 400m athletics track (200km)
- In aid of "Help for Heroes"

Race History:

- 2005 – CCU completes in 17hr 43mins
- 2006 – 1 LANCS completes in 14hr 43mins
- 2006 – CCU completes in 14hr 01min
- 2006 – 2 RRF completes in 13hrs 08mins. (Current record – Cyprus)
- 2007 – Postponed
- 2008 – 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt/4 Log Sp Regt completes in 15hrs 09mins (UK record)

QinetiQ who provide defence technology and services to support the armed forces of the UK and its allies sponsored this year's event, donating a sum of £2000. Look out for future events run by **WO1 Torrington.**

202 (ARMOURED) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj KA Owen**
SSM **WO2 S Crooks**

SQUADRON INITIATIVE DAY - *by LCpl Kitchen*

202 Sqn pers were given a number of simple initiative tasks to complete, in and around the Salisbury area. With each task having a different number of points, the harder or bigger the task the more points were on offer. Tasks ranged from getting a picture with the local Marks & Spencer's manager, to a picture of the group inside a police cell – without getting arrested! Then there was being forced to get 3 girls' phone numbers, serving burgers in Burger King and having 6 people in a hotel bed at once – for free. Credit must go to the groups that were able to go on SPIRE FM, which is one of the top radio stations in Salisbury. **Sig Shane Stephens**' group got on the radio, and got a "big shout out to **Shane Stephens** AKA Big Stevo and **Ewan Lindsay** AKA the Welsh Warrior." This was bettered by **Cpl Mehut** with her on-air interview with the DJ. **Cpl Daniels** used his initiative after a poor start by ordering his group: **Cpl Charnock, LCpl Randall** and **LCpl Wesley** to sit in a pub all day and draw the pictures of the tasks with a little help from a text messaging service, and a few drinks! When **Cpl Daniels** was asked to produce his pictures of the tasks, the Tp OC, **2Lt Wallace**, was expecting photos but was presented instead with the pictures the group had drawn, now that's initiative.

Cpl McSherry – the stripper for the day

SQUADRON PARACHUTING DAY

There were 10 opportunities for a group of 202 Sqn pers to go parachuting. Most of the group had never jumped before except the pro, **Cpl Stu Storey**, who jumps for Great Britain. The 2 day course consisted initially of safety lessons on and off the ground, the eqpt we were to use and the different body positions in the air (not arms and legs flapping like some of the group) and most importantly, how to land gently. Later after all the trg was complete, there was only one thing to do and that was to jump. The group got into the plane, a little nervous but definitely excited. As the rattling plane climbed up to 3500ft, surprisingly or maybe it was down to our excellent instructors, the group seemed happy to jump. Once we got the nod, off we went, well almost all of us. **Sig Birbeck** had decided that jumping out of a perfectly serviceable plane was not the brightest idea and so she landed with it, which must have been even worse.

Everyone had good landings and thankfully no bones were broken. Once the adrenaline had worn off it was decided that jumping was one of the best feelings people had experienced. When we were asked whether we would like to do it again, most said that they would jump again at the earliest opportunity.

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENT ON OP TELIC - *by LCpl Kell*

Last year I was told I would be finally going on tour. I had been waiting to go since joining the Regt in April 06 and I was the only one in ISM not to go. Luckily for me I had already done most of my courses and only had 2 to do. The first was a Synergy course in Newport, Wales in the Hilton Hotel (not bad!) and this was a really good 2 weeks and the second was 1 week learning about LWRN (Nera Communicator) at 30 Sig Regt. November came; I had my weeks leave and was looking forward to going. I flew out to Kuwait in November for my RSOI Package which consisted of acclimatisation, which was basically getting used to the warm weather and then when we got to Iraq it was starting to get cold. We had briefs and did some stands like veh drills and CASEVAC drills while keeping the crowds back. There were Kuwaitis employed by the MOD to play Iraqis to give us life-like situations. While we were there we had the pleasure of seeing some American cheerleaders but were not too happy with the food. It all seemed to be greasy food; they had donuts for breakfast and coke on tap. After a full week of drinking at home then a week of American food I was looking forward to going to the gym.

Within about 2hrs of arriving in Iraq we were IDFd when we were all in the CIP lounge. We were all trying to get as close to the ground as possible with little room and lots of people. It was like the saying "Welcome to Iraq, hope you enjoy your stay" with a hint of sarcasm I think. We got our rooms and then went to see where we were working. I was in the JOCS Café within Div HQ. There are 5 of us who work there, a Cpl and 4 LCpls. Our job is to maintain the computer network and fix any faults that come in. The job is generally the same each day with occasional new faults to keep us busy. The worst part is printers; they are the bane of my life! To pass the time I just try to keep busy learning new things and watching lots and lots of DVDs as well as going to the gym getting ready for the summer hols. R&R was early at just 2 months into tour which had its good and bad points. I have about 10 weeks left here now which still seems a long way away but hopefully will pass quickly.

LCpl Kell in Basrah

NOTES FROM BASRAH OP TELIC 11 - *by LCpl Smith*

After leaving Sunny Bulford on 10 November 07, I had absolutely no idea what to expect on arrival in Kuwait. Once we landed we loaded our kit onto the coaches and left for Camp Buehring and on arrival there, it became apparent how Yanks do things. Camp Buehring is massive and dwarfs 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt. We started our RSOI package the following day and then we saw the true size of the camp. On the package we took part in activities such as self defence, wpn retention trg, IED lane, mounted veh patrols, ambush drills and a few of us got to have a go at throwing live grenades and red phosphorous. Once this was finished, we left Camp Buehring and deployed to Basra Contingency Operations Base (COB) to get our Osprey body armour and our ammo. My first visit to the COB was uneventful until about 2hrs before I was due to leave when I got my first taste of Iraqi carpet as the IDF alarm deafened us all. After this we boarded our Merlin for the ride back to Buehring to take over from 251 Sig Sqn Synergy pers who were currently providing the KSF contingent of secure voice and data systems. When we arrived back in Buehring I had quite a lot of driving to do, as I was tasked with jobs in Kuwait City and the US camp in Arifjan. I took part in a few of the gym events such as the best effort 2 mile competition in which I placed 2nd – for anyone who knows me this does not bode well for the Yanks. Towards the end of January it was my turn for a stint in Iraq. When I arrived I was shown to my Basra Bunker and after sorting my room was at work the following day. My first day involved a PACEX on the newly arrived T4 Det. Once this had passed and was sent to Kuwait, **Cpl Adam Cain** of 204 Sig Sqn and I were tasked with fixing the relic known as an M Det. However we took this in our stride and returned her to her former glory. I am currently back in Kuwait manning the T4 Det and partaking in 'Op BRONZE' in my spare time.

DEPLOYED ON OP TELIC 11 IN SUPPORT OF OP GRIMES BASED IN KUWAIT - *by Cpl Andy Paul*

"Oh by the way **Cpl Paul**, I would like some notes for *The Wire* by Sunday please," were the last words from the RSM's (**WO1 'Michael' Yendell**) lips before I left the Kuwait Support Facility HQ at Camp Buehring. Not fast enough out of the door, I cursed. Come on **Andy**, you can do better than this! You should've been in and out in less than 12secs.Note to self: 'Must be quicker – now what the hell to write about?'

THE 5KM FUN RUN

On my arrival in Camp Buehring with 204 Sig Sqn for my RSOI in November 07, I was amazed at the scale of the place, it's just huge. I have been informed that Camp Buehring can hold a very large number of troops, so our meagre British contingent of around 200 pers (of all Corps and Cap Badges) is dwarfed by the mammoth presence of the US forces. Every where you turn you are faced with a constant bombardment of how great America is and a slightly single minded attitude to others – time to start 'Op ANNOY THE AMERICANS'!

Cpl Paul – "Sir, I say, I have a plan to put us on the map with the Americans"
RSM – "Excellent, what is it?"
Cpl Paul – "I'd like to organise a 5km Fun Run on the base with the Americans doing a bit of flag waving and we can put a bit of British spit and polish on it."
RSM – "Great idea, make it happen."
Cpl Paul – "Sir, can I have some money?"
RSM – "No! Don't be stupid! Get out and get on with it!"

The organisation of the event was made unbelievably easy with support from the American Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facility (now there are 3 words the British Army don't often hear!). In this facility resides a helpful chap by the name of **'No Problem' Bob**.

Our first meeting went something like this:
Cpl Paul – "Hello, I am **Andy**, are you the guy that does those 2 words alien to the British Army?"
Bob – "Yes, I am he"
Cpl Paul – "I'd like to organise a 5km fun run"
Bob – "No Problem!"
Cpl Paul – "Could you help me produce some t-shirts, for free?"
Bob – "No Problem!"
Cpl Paul – "Can we get a few medals as well?"
Bob – "No Problem!"
Cpl Paul – "I now dub thee, **'No problem Bob'**"
No problem Bob – "No Problem!"

The day's Fun Run took the name "The Great British Tea Run" – a cheesy name I know but we are talking about Americans here and I wished to push something totally British and non-American! I was warned that the numbers might reach 75% or even more and on the morning, we believe the number exceeded 200 pers, US and British (not a bad catch). We laid on hot and cold drinks as post-run beverages and deafened them with Scottish bagpipe music on a PA system borrowed from, I swear this is true, "Big Mama", hung up a couple of flags and we were ready. 'Op ANNOY THE AMERICANS' is a go!

In the race, our resident medics did us proud by completing the run with a stretcher and beating the majority of the field! **LCpl 'Troy' Bayliss** and **LCpl 'Dan' Kelk** (both from the Regt) took part. **LCpl Kelk** did very well and took home a 3rd place in his age group18 – 25 yrs. I got quite lucky and achieved a semi-reasonable 3rd place in the 40 to geriatric bracket, but was beaten by 2 sprightly guys with highly illegal turbo charged zimmer frames and go faster silver stripes in there hair. I personally believe that they where also taking steroids and those little blue diamond-shaped pills that you talk about in hushed voices but make women smile. The morning run was greatly enjoyed by our American hosts and at the prize giving we received accolades from our multinational colleagues for our endeavours. The aim was to let the Americans know who we are, what we are about, that we mean business and to simply have a good social and some fun! I believe we achieved that.

7th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col NJ Makepeace**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) McDonald**

We start these notes by saying goodbye to the Regtl 2IC, **Maj Andy Parsons** (now Lt Col) as he leaves for a new appointment at DSTL. **Maj Carl Ratcliffe** has now moved into the 2IC's chair having just completed a 6 month stint as OC 232 Sig Sqn. Congratulations to **ASgt Case**, **Cpl Wilson** and **Cpl Montgomery** who were awarded their LS&GC medals by **Brig JN Wolsey CBE** Comd RESG on 14 April 08. Tour medals were also presented for those who had been on ops recently. The presentations were conducted in the Cpls Club and then the WO and Sgts Mess, followed by a lunch attended by the medal and honours recipients and their families.

229 (BERLIN)SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Darcy Rawlinson**
SSM	**WO2 Gary Sinclair**

February has seen the Sqn take on the final few stragglers from the Bde restructuring that took place at the start of the year. For 229 this involved a reduction in overall manning and also the inclusion of a number of IS Ops; a new capability to be held

The presentation group in the Cpls Club

within the Sqn. The weather has been chilly but initial signs of summer have begun appearing. The ex season has kicked off already, starting with the Sqn's Point of Presence (POP) Tps, complete with their Digi-Dets, deploying onto the airfield to practise set-up of their various eqpts.

Following this, the Sqn turned into a ghost town as the IS Ops and Techs vanished to Regtl Ops to oversee the checking and re-issue of the Regt's new Richelieu eqpt. At the same time most of our Bowman Ops were seconded to the Trg Wing to assist the BOWTAT team, as they arrived to run the Regt through its mandated comms trg on Bowman.

The few soldiers left in work were reduced even further by the requirement for the Sqn to provide operators to become Information System (IS) (Assistants), who will deploy on future ops in sp of the normal IS operators – a concept that raised a few eyebrows amongst the diehard Comms Sys Ops! March saw most of the Regt deploy off camp, supporting ARRC HQ on Ex ARRCADE GUARD. 229 Sqn was not required, giving us a further opportunity to practise the roll-out of the POPs, this time with satellite bearer and E1 cable links to the ARRC HQ, allowing a full run-up and testing of the comms assets.

Despite loaning out much of our eqpt to bolster the other two Sqns, we managed to produce some constructive and effective trg. Being able to crawl back to their own beds each night was an added bonus for the guys! As this is going to press, the Sqn is on well-deserved Easter Leave following what has been a running-start to the year that does not look like slowing down any time soon. The Sqn comes back slightly early ready to deploy on a 2-week Battle Camp. As well as covering the obligatory MATTs, a week of ranges, including rifle, pistol and GPMG will be followed by a week of honing basic inf skills and living in the field. Snow is predicted, so it could turn out to be quite character building, especially for some of our new arrivals from Trg.

231 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Mark Cornell**
SSM	**WO2 Ian Linton**

REGIMENTAL SKILL AT ARMS MEETING - *by LCpl Stanley*

The Regt held its annual Skill at Arms Meeting in late January. Having succeeded in winning the Regtl Cross Country competition at the beginning of the month, 231 had a reputation to uphold. The Sqn's competition consisted of 229 Sig Sqn and Sp Sqn with 232 Sig Sqn still committed to Public Duties in London. The event started with a modified APWT, which was followed by a March and Shoot. Throughout the day a very high standard of shooting was demonstrated by the Sqn and the Regt as a whole.

There are, of course, obvious exceptions. **Sig Rehm** was made infamous on the day by firing an entire magazine without a single shot hitting the target. At the other end of the spectrum there was **LCpl Moran** who produced consistently high scores and earned notoriety as top shot. Overall, the Skill at Arms Meet was a brilliant opportunity for the experienced marksmen in the Sqn to pass on their knowledge in an effort to raise future standards. Unfortunately, 231 Sig Sq was pipped at the post by Sp Sqn on the day.

BOWTAT TRAINING - *by Sgt Kerry Smith*

It has been all systems go on the Bowman front. The BOWTAT team have taken most of the Sqn through how to set up and operate a generic Bowman Platform. For the past week Radio Tp and an element of Oscar Tp have been up on the airfield initialising and testing all the new Bowman Platforms ready for the up and coming exs. Despite the weather being absolutely horrific (rain, hail, frost, wind – you name it, we experienced it) we nevertheless managed to complete all the vehs and move on to the ECH platforms before the end of the week. It has definitely proven that practice makes perfect as the Tps are now all over the Bowman kit like a rash. The Sqn now look forward to the forthcoming exs both at Sqn and Regtl level.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON - *by 2Lt Bell*

OC	**Maj AJ Lawson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Paul Jordan**

The Sqn is currently undergoing a whirlwind transitional period, both in leadership and in constitution. We've had to say goodbye and good luck to **Maj Ratcliffe** who has left us to take up his position as the new Regt 2IC, and we've welcomed **Maj AJ Lawson** who has taken on the mantle of OC 232. New arrivals also include **2Lt LA Bell** who takes over as OC Tac Tp, **2Lt Lawrence Wilmore** Hotel Tp, **SSgt J Bean** Delta Tp SSgt with **Sgt M Rodger** who joins as Tp Sgt. We bid farewell to **Capt K Oldridge** who has left us for ATR Pirbright, **Lt E Hughes** who goes to 19 Lt Bde Sig Sqn, **Sgt Hay** who has left for 16 Sig Regt and finally **Sgt Lawer** to whom we wish all the best as he leaves us for pilot selection in the Army Air Corps.

On the eqpt side, the arrival of Digi-Det and Richelieu to replace Ptarmigan as well as the ongoing process of Bowmanisation, see the troops continuing to familiarise themselves with the new kit, with many on BOWTAT and Richelieu courses at present. The Sqn have also re-acquired the roles and responsibilities of Tac CP which will provide a fresh challenge for all concerned, and will provide COMARRC with a fast moving HQ capability from which to influence the battlefield. How fast moving we will be however is questionable as Tac is as yet to receive their complement of hairy pioneers! The Sqn also takes on a new radio tp who will be known as Hotel Tp, primarily made up of newly acquired Bowman eqpt.

There is good news on the promotion side of things; we congratulate **SSM Paul Jordan** on his promotion to WO1 and on his move to Blandford as a Tp Comd and **FofS Garry Stokoe** on his promotion to WO2. The recent board produced happy results for **Sig Bruce**, **Sig McArthur**, **Sig McCran**, **Sig Sowerby**, **Sig Lyle**, **Sig O'Connor** and **Sig Nelson** who have all been selected for promotion to LCpl. **Sig Lyle** is also leaving us unfortunately and will join 231 Sig Sqn. Ex ARRCADE GUARD gave us a chance to deploy some of our newly acquired assets and it

performed well under the pressure. Further on into the year, Sqn trg will progress towards the Regt's 2009 deployment to Afghanistan.

CO'S CUP - *by Cpl Foulkes*

It was that time again – the CO's Cup had come around for another month. After 232 not doing so well in all previous events due to Public Duty commitments, this one had to count and count well.

So, as the day was drawing nearer 232 managed to get a few willing volunteers together and start practising for the Tag Rugby event. The rules of the game were simple, 7-a-side with one female on at all times and every team member had 2 tags attached to their waist.

The aim was to get the ball and avoid getting one of the tags ripped from your waist by a member of the opposite team. If they manage to 'get you' then you have to pass the ball backwards before you can retrieve your tag. A try was worth 1 point, but females scored 2 points. It sounded easy, but it was obviously a challenge to those who thought it was just plain old rugby and mercilessly 'roughed up' anyone in front of them on the pitch!

The Sqn managed to enter 2 teams but on the day some spectators had to be harangued into joining in to bump up numbers for one of the teams. And so the games commenced with matches being played side-by-side on 2 pitches. **SSgt 'Jim' Bean** and **Sig 'Brownie' Brown** displayed some real heavy power and amazing sprint tries!

Both teams made it to the semi-finals which delighted the spectators but there was still the issue of placings. Team B came 3rd and Team A made it look easy and stormed in to take 1st place overall!

This meant that 232 Sqn had beaten 229, 231 and Sp Sqn at Tag Rugby in the CO's Cup. Our OC, **Maj Lawson**, was beside himself and was the first to buy the Teams a round of drinks at the awards ceremony that afternoon. His message to the other Sqns.....bring on the next CO's Cup event - football!

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj John Fradley**
SSM	**WO2 Nav Elliott**

The Sqn has been heavily committed to the Bowman conversion with the Trg Wing providing all the course coordination, the QM Dept accounting for and distributing all the eqpt, the LAD inspecting all the vehs and NES Tp evolving the first and second line repair system.

With all the other depts continuing with their normal work, we have been providing real life sp to the Regt. This is nothing new for the Sqn but it does make life interesting and it keeps us on our toes!

We would like to say goodbye and good luck to the outgoing SSM, **WO2 Chris Stuart** and his family. A very warm welcome to **WO2 Nav Elliott** and his family; welcome to the Sqn. As these notes are being written we are in preparing to host the Bruggen 10 mile road race. Look forward to photographs and a race report in the next edition of The Wire.

NES TROOP - *by LCpl Hatch*

Tp Comd	**WO1 (FofS) Pace**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Thirwell**

Congratulations to those members of the Tp who participated in the Regtl Operational Shooting Competition. **LCpl Wilson** and **LCpl Rodway** were both on the highest scoring team. **LCpl Hatch** and **LCpl Forknall** contributed with their scores helping the Sqn to victory in the competition; another fine effort in the CO's Cup! It has also meant that **Cpl McGlown**, **LCpls Hatch**, **Wilson** and **Rodway** have been selected to represent the Regt in this year's shooting events. Congratulations!

The Tp have been taking full advantage of the sport available in the Mighty 7th and several pers have been selected to represent us at higher levels. **LCpl Rodway's** was selected for the Corps Female Football team, **Cpl Booth**, **LCpls Hatch**, **Lawrence** and **Swift** have represented the Regt in the Corps Cross-Country Championships and **LCpls Hatch**, **Wilson** and **McClair** have been representing the Regt at Football – swanning all over Germany. The football manager is very happy to have the fastest 'Water Boy' in the league – bring it on **LCpl Wilson**! It has been a great period for the Tp; with the encouragement and sp of the OC and Tp SSgt, we are fast proving that we are the best dept in Sp Sqn!

NOAH'S ARK TEAM DAY

Noah's Ark is the Javelin Barracks Crèche that provides childcare facilities to all pers. The crèche supervisor, **Becky Smith**, approached **Cpl Wood** to see if it would be possible to have a team building day in the trg wing. His reply was quick and decisive "Leave it with me...I'll make it happen."

The day started with the RTO welcoming the ladies and then **Cpl Wood** and his team started with a brief on the Trg Wing and then wpn familiarisation. Once they had turned these day carers into skilled wpn experts, they then tackled the DCCT Range. Virtual Shooting at its best; distances up to 300m, moving targets and snap shooting; finishing with a sect level advance to contact (which lasts 17 mins!) and CQB shooting with pistols.

The day was a great success, **Becky** and the girls thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the Trg Wing team worked very hard and had a lot of fun. The day could not be done without a competition, so **Becky's** teams; Perky Penguins, Happy Hippos and Cuddly Koala's (these names were not made up by the Trg Wing, they are the groups from the Crèche!) scrapped it out and it was a close fight but the top shot was **Kyle Barrelli** and the best team was the Cuddly Koalas.

CATERING DEPARTMENT MATT TRAINING WEEK - EXERCISE READY STEADY COOK

Although the Regt has its own allocation of Mil Chefs they are pooled with the other Station Chefs, which makes it very difficult to get any centralised Trg. The RCWO, **WO2 Neil Bate-Jones**, requested a Trg week for his and any other chefs he could get his hands on; he managed to find 23! So bright and early on the Monday morning they started a 5 day MATT and field confirmation ex.

The programme was packed with interesting and challenging activities from the routine of WHTs and ranges (emotional) to battle PT. The first session was a rope race where they had to negotiate an extremely hilly part of the trg area (very emotional). At this point comd appointments were dished out under the watchful eyes of **Cpl Wood** and **Cpl Potts**, although **Cpl Potts** concentrated on the rations and could be heard shouting "Put that back, only one choice for you" and took personal care of the jelly doughnuts.

The final phase of the ex saw the Chef Pl Comd, **Sgt Barney Barnett**, coordinate the final attack and on the move to their safe location fight through a very well organised ambush...but they fought their way out and won the day. We are all little concerned with **Sgt Barnett** and **Sgt Garrison** during their ICP drills.

After the discovery of an IED; they informed ATO pers that they had set up their cordon 200m away from the IED and gave the details of this whopping device which they assessed was 7 cubic metres...and these people manage to make cakes! After the ex, presentations for best student and sect were carried out and the war stories were told. Well done to them all for their hard work and effort.

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col RJ Quinlan**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Rayson**

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Pardew**
SSM	**SSgt M Stowell**

Commitments continue at pace in the Sqn with extremely successful sp to Op HERRICK and a major 16 AA Bde Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX). These commitments were immediately followed by another surge team deployment to Op TELIC for urgent installation projects, while the Sqn remains poised to support a 7 Bde MRX in Bavaria in April and the wider Regtl activities, such as CO's Cup Hockey and Swimming competitions and an extremely worthwhile 'Help for Heroes' charity event. The Sqn are definitely finding its feet through improved structured trg and excellent commitment from soldiers at all level. Well done so far, your efforts continue to maintain a good reputation of the Regt through your high standards and professionalism across the globe.

HOTEL TROOP

OC	**Capt J Perring**
SSgt	**SSgt M Carr**

OP HERRICK SURGE TEAM DEPLOYMENT TO CAMP BASTION JANUARY – MARCH 2008

After uneventful but delayed flights through Kandhahar and on to Camp Bastion, the whole Surge Team arrived on Afghanistan soil in dribs and drabs over a 2 day period. The team of mighty Inst Techs were led efficiently by **SSgt 'Giz' Carr** and assisted by **Sgt 'Rod' Rouchy**. The surge consisted mainly of Inst Techs from Hotel Tp with the addition of pers from both Kilo and Lima Tps. The team also consisted of 6 Electrician Drivers from 2 and 14 Sig Regts. Once on the ground, the first day consisted of sorting and collating through all the stores which had arrived for the project. Once that had been sorted it was full steam ahead.

The project consisted of 4 main tasks each led by a Cpl or LCpl as team leader.

Task 1 – Led by **Cpl 'Rob' Passey** consisted of installing the comms infrastructure into a number of buildings including HQ Log, QM's Dept, DANCON and Bastion Sp Gp within Bastion (BAS) 1 and 2.

Task 2 – Led by **Cpl Kervell** was tasked with the installation of 4 Network Eqpt Rooms within BAS 1 and 2.

Task 3 – Led by **Sgt 'Rod' Rouchy** and **LCpl 'Dan' Quai** consisted of the pulling all the cross site fibre and copper cables within BAS 1 and BAS 2. This was a mammoth task in which over 25 kms of cable was installed within the pit and duct network.

Task 4 – Led By **Cpl 'Ozzy' Osborne** was the testing and commissioning of all cables installed.

The Surge Team was visited in theatre by our CO, **Lt Col Quinlan**. A fond farewell and congratulations to **Sig 'Jimmy' Tearle** who is posted to 7 Sig Regt and **Sig 'Lloyd' Cromar** who is posted to 233 Sig Sqn in Northern Ireland, both promoted on posting.

We bid a warm welcome to **Sig Oslin** who has just arrived from Blandford. Lastly, hello to **LCpl 'Ian' Branchette** and **LCpl 'Jay' Emmanuel** who are currently on a 6 month IR tour of Baghdad.

Briefing – Cpls Passey, Kervell and Osborne discussing the task just one more time!

KILO TROOP

OC	**Capt SLR Gray**

As ever the Tp are very busy and at present are mainly UK based committed to supporting exs and NARO tasks. In February we supported the Op HERRICK 16 AA Bde MRX in Salisbury and as this edition publishes we will be supporting the Op TELIC 7 Armd Bde MRX in Bavaria, where our task will mainly involve building and installing cable networks and infrastructure. In May the TP will re-role and take on the Surge Team responsibly for Op TELIC.....it's a very busy place to be!

As ever, while work is busy we have found the time to have a little fun. **Sgt Sunderland** led a weeks AT hill walking in Snowdonia. Not to be outdone the Tp OC is also preparing for his own charity hill walking event in Trailwalker 08 in July.....good luck Boss you're going to need it. As the Tp continues to grow, there have been some new arrivals from other units. We welcome new Tp OC **Capt Simon Gray** (2 Sig Regt), **LCpls Jamie Reynolds** (JCCU Cyprus), **Chrissy Riddel** (16 Sig Regt) and **Sig Chris Meredith** (JCCU Cyprus). Newly arrived to the field army from RSS Blandford are **Sigs Sam Roads**, **Ben Eaton** and **Nathan Sykes**.

EXERCISE LIGHTNING STRIKE 2008

At short notice 10 Sig Regt volunteered to provide one of 11 stands on Ex LIGHTNIING STRIKE, the Corps recruiting event held in early March. Under the direction of **Capt Simon Gray** a small team deployed to "show off" the talents of 10 Sig Regt on Salisbury Plain on a wet and windy March weekend. Given the diversity of tasks within the Regt, the stand reflected the Inst Tech role of 241 Sig Sqn and was based upon a Battle Damage Repair to a telephone cable.

After a short presentation on 10 Sig Regt and scenario brief from **Capt Gray**, the teams of 10 cadets were trained on how to crimp cable and connect a field telephone by **LCpl Rutter**. Racing against the clock and each other, the teams then deployed onto the ground where they were required to reconnect 4 breaks in a telephone cable stretching 25m from two 9x9 tents. Successful teams then passed a codeword to down the line to prove the connectivity. To make the task a little more taxing and to provide more amusement, they completed the tasks in NBC suits and on the belt buckles! **LCpl Caisley**, **Adcock** and **Sig Roads** were on hand to help oversee the cadets and greatly enjoyed giving them

all the vocal encouragement they needed. Over 20 teams from UOTCs and DTUS units around the country took part in the weekend, and all gave the task a really good go, some with more success than others!

Overall the best team were from Wales UOTC finishing in the fastest time; they came second overall for the weekend. The 'Speckled Jim' prize for the team who gave the best effort went to Queen's UOTC, but that may have been because the bribed **Capt Gray** with a shot of Irish Whiskey when they arrived.....though he claims that wasn't the case!

The 10 Sig Regt Team: LCpl Rutter, Sig Roads, LCpl Caisley and LCpl Adcock

LIMA TROOP - *by Sig Pyke*

OC	**Capt A Manley**
SSgt	**SSgt D Pope**

Lima Tp would like to welcome the new arrivals and bid farewell to the departures. First we would like to say goodbye to **Cpl Aidey Stokes** who has been posted on promotion to 16 Air Asslt, **Sig 'Meat' Bartlett** who has been posted to 16 Sig Regt and **LCpl Reg Tranter** who has joined 1 UK Civ Div. We would also like to say welcome to **Sig 'Pykey' Pyke** who has just come from 16 Sig Regt and **LCpl Darragh** from 2 Sig Regt. Lima Tp would like to wish them all luck in their new postings. The Tp and Sqn would like to congratulate **Capt Manley** and his wife on the birth of their first child. We would also like to wish a safe and successful tour to the Surge Team which has just been deployed to Iraq and **LCpl Jase Buley** who is deploying to the Falklands at the end of the month.This month the Tp has been busy in its preparations for its forthcoming ops in Afghanistan. This has proved to be a difficult task as half the pers were on a current deployment in Iraq. Special thanks must go to **Cpl Rod Williamson** for his efforts in preparing the lads for their deployment to Iraq.

During the past month the Tp/Sqn took part in the CO's Cup Hockey and Swimming. Good old Lima Tp, (being the sport Billies we are) couldn't supply anyone for the Swimming with the exception of the Tp Comd. The prestigious event awarded to the Boss was the "Doggy Paddle". Now you would expect anybody to be able to get in a pool and achieve this but he got disqualified for being too good at it (i.e. cheating) and the Sqn were bust down to 5th place for this race. The rest of the Sqn managed to pull it out of the bag for **Capt Manley** and eventually we gained a respectable 3rd place overall.

Several members of our Tp took part in the Regtl Hockey Tournament where the Sqn managed to come 3rd overall with 1 win, 2 draws and 1 defeat. This was all possible due to our very own **LCpl Hargreaves'** superior goalkeeping skills. We had some boisterous fans that not only heckled the referee but also the Sqn team as well. They were led by **LCpl Chris Rutter**, who, very quickly became the RSM's friend. Just a quick one for **LCpl 'Simo' Simpson** – stick to the Kiss Ball, there's a better chance of scoring. Our "look forward to" is a sunny, red hot trip to Afghanistan in May, followed up by the UK Op's cycle in September 08. Speak to you all next month.

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Owen Finnie**
SSM	**WO2 Billy Lilburn**

233 Sig Sqn is currently ramping up its preparations for the marching season in Northern Ireland. While it is hoped that all remains peaceful there, the Sqn's high readiness standby commitment to sp Op HELVETIC is a vital one and one which requires continuous ex. Over the past 2 months the Sqn has progressed its procedures and skills over a series of internal exs under the guidance of **WO2(YofS) Mick Durrant**. This has included cross trg to ensure that the all soldiers remain flexible and able to respond to any ICS task. The Sqn has also linked in with the local Royal Signals TA Unit to share best practice and a number of soldiers were involved in an ex with 40 Sig Regt in early March. In addition, the Sqn has supported a 38(I) Bde mini-CAST ex for the Staff and more build up trg is planned in the coming weeks and months.

ALPHA TROOP - *by Sgt Wall*

OC	**Capt P Emsen**
SSgt	**SSgt Dale King**

EXERCISE TARENTAISE TIGER 02 – 09 MARCH 08

On Thursday 28 February 2008, **Sgt Mick Wall** and **Cpl Glen Knight** set off with 3 members of ECM/FP for a spot of AT. The destination was the exclusive resort of Tignes in the Southern region of France. First we had to go via Bulford to meet up with elements of the Regt that were also game for taking advantage of an excellent package laid on by 202 Sig Sqn. The trip down was long and tiring, but there was some spectacular scenery towards the end of the 24 hr road trip.

Once in location, we were all pleased to see that the small picturesque place of Tignes was as decent as the glossy magazines and fancy web sites had portrayed. It had plenty of slopes and plenty of nightlife complete with an English Bar that gave discount to British Armed Forces. Needless to say this became the favoured venue to conduct the always important next day briefing. On Day 1 all skiers were divided into groups of competence from beginners to Corps champion level, in the shape of **Cpl Glen Knight**. **WO2(SSM) Steve Crooks** was the chief instructor who assessed people's standard. He provided valuable time, patience and tuition to the novices. **Cpl Glen Knight** seized the opportunity to carve down the red slopes

The Regiment Super-heroes in Tignes

performing a double somersault and creaming in to the applause of the remainder. The penultimate day was Super-Hero day; all members donned their alter-ego attire resulting in a range of costumes from Spider Man to Wonder Woman. Just to make the day that slightly more memorable we all gave the World Cup Giant Slalom a bash. This provided **Steve Crooks**, **SSgt Sean Middleton** and **Lt Peter King** an important opportunity to identify who had real potential for the future. Times were recorded with the day culminating with a medal ceremony in down town Tignes. The week finished with only one minor casualty, **Sgt Mick Wall**. Seeing him lying on the slope having sustained a typical ski type injury, dressed as Captain America was probably the most entertaining sight for some of the locals with him then being skied down the mountain to the Med Centre.

BRAVO TROOP - *by Cpl Knight*

OC	**Capt R Gorman**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Rob Hickley**

Every year the Royal Signals Corp Ski camp and Championships is held in Zell am See, Austria. This year was no exception and despite heavy op commitments across the Corps there was still a strong turn out, with over 70 skiers. It all kicked off in mid-November with 3 weeks of technique trg with the Corps' top instructors. During these 3 weeks people are tested both mentally physically but also have enough time in the evenings and weekends to make it a great time socially. By the end of the trg, complete novices and old veterans were ready to take on the challenges of the Championship Slalom and Giant Slalom courses. This year's competition was not expected to be as high a standard as in previous years, with a lot of the top skiers no able to attend, however the sceptics where quickly proven wrong. It was an extremely close competition fought between last year's champion and the chasing pack. Experience and a little bit of luck finally saw the previous champion retain his title for another year and help his team take home the overall title. With a new Camp Officer taking over for 2008 we are all looking forward to another great few weeks when the Corps descends again on Austria. It is the extra opportunities that the Army provide that makes this job so rewarding, where else would you get top quality ski instruction and competition experience and get paid for it!

Cpl Knight receiving his Corps Championship trophy

SUPPORT TROOP - *by LCpl Coss*

OC	**Sgt Pullen**

At our Sqn Christmas party I couldn't believe it when I opened the envelope – I was going to be OC for the day with **LCpl Rodway** as SSM. The day of 'girl power' was going to be on Wednesday 6 February and we were going to enjoy every moment of it. We had a Sqn Parade at 0900hrs where the OC, **Maj Finnie** and the SSM, **WO2 Lilburn** were to hand over their appointments to me and **LCpl Rodway**. Then we carried on with the inspections. Well of course **'LCpl' Finnie** was picked up with a collar that stood up like Elvis, the king, himself and **'LCpl' Lilburn** was picked up for having fluff on his shoulder. I knew these 2 clowns were going to be trouble for the day so **WO2 Rodway** made an example of them. She gave them area cleaning along with **SSgt King**, whose stable belt was lop sided and **Sgt Wall** with his million creased uniform and rank slide up side down, just to name a few of the bad examples shown by SNCOs in the Sqn. **WO2 Rodway** and I paid a visit to Alpha, Bravo and Sp Troops who explained in great detail their day to day routine. Then we had a tea break served by **'LCpl' Finnie** and **'LCpl' Lilburn** who spent the duration of a working day dossing and nattering. I also did an arrivals interview with **WO1 Rawling** and **Sgt Shubert**, I'm sure they will be an asset to the Sqn unlike a couple of so called soldiers that I would like to mention! The SSM marched **'LCpl' Finnie** into my office for his Confidential Report review, which was appalling.

I was not impressed with this soldier at all and have never had to tolerate behaviour of his sort in my entire Army career, so he signed his Confidential Report along with a AFB 6848 for discharge!

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Maloney**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Manley**

OPERATIONS SUPPORT TROOP - *by Sig Luckman*

OC	**Lt AP Foot**
SSgt	**SSgt Pengelly**

Ops Sp Tp welcomes our 2 new Inst Techs **Sig Ackril** from Cyprus and **Sig Johnson** from Germany who have recently been posted here. We also welcome a new addition to the SCP; **Cpl Dooks** who is posted to us from 30 Sig Regt. 243 Sig Sqn recently gave an open day for the first CS Engineers conversion course (SECA) from 11 Sig Regt at Blandford Camp. A lot of work and preparation was done to give these soldiers a key insight to the responsibilities and tasks done by the Sqn. We were given very positive feedback and will be hosting another open day for the next SECA course in 10 weeks. We have also been competing for the 10 Sig Regt CO's Cup, participation in both the Hockey and the Swimming last week. We were undefeated in the hockey but had drawn twice so we came 2nd and in the Swimming we came 1st in all but 2 events where we came second, meaning an overall 1st place. We also took part in a March and Shoot and we congratulate **WO2(SSM) Manley**, **Cpl Ward**, **Cpl Lawrence** and **LCpl Barr** for being awarded 1st place. 243 Signal Squadron has achieved high marks and are now joint

The 243 Signal Squadron victorious hockey team or does my bum look big in this?

top for the Cup. We would like to say thank you to **Capt Morgan** from the Land G2 Branch who organised Ex BURNING TIGER for Land HQ. This was a skiing AT ex which took **Sig Luckman**, **Cpl Ward**, **Cpl Nicholas** and **LCpl Neary** from 243 Sig Sqn to Lyon for a week teaching them to ski.

600 SIGNAL TROOP - *by Cpl Warner*

OC	**Capt D Petty**
Tp Sgt	**Sgt Jones**

The Tp has had a very busy period recently with pers deployed to Brunei, Cyprus on Mitral trials and on OP HERRICK. A warm welcome to **PO 'Bert' Cuthbertson, Cpl Karl Rummery** and **SAC Chelsie Fitzpatrick** who have recently joined the Tp on attachment to the 506 Comms Base. Congratulations to **SSgt(FofS)Ford** on his promotion to WO2 on posting to 7 Sig Regt. Within recent months Tp members have been preparing for up and coming sporting events for the 10 Sig Regt CO's cup. Hockey is the flavour of the month with **Cpl John Howe** educating us in the easiest way to get the ball to him since he is a member of the Corps hockey team. Tp members of the winning CO's cup March and Shoot team were **WO2(YofS)Jones, SSgt(YofS)Heaps, Cpl Kennedy, Cpl Warner** and **Sig Deven**. This took place at ATR Pirbright and took the form of the Para Regt Cup 8 Man with a few modifications. The team won this event with all round steady shots and a high standard from **WO2(YofS) Jones** who came joint second best shot of the day.

The winning March and Shoot Team

Sgt Rob Jones organised a bonding day consisting of paint balling and ale – a good combination. So off our party of 14 set for Experience Paintball at Roves Farm in the village of Sevenhampton, Swindon. Once there we were introduced to the site briefing and quickly ushered onto the paint balling area. With games involving capturing bridges and blowing forts, we all found our stride. To finish off it was a free for all shoot out which ended with many aches and pains but quickly relieved any built up tension within the group. We say goodbye to **Cpl Andy Kennedy** who will be departing for 1 (UK) Civ Div and **Mrs Vivian Budding** who has left the Crypto Cell. Congratulations to **Sgt Gareth Scott** who is now **Mr Scott** on joining the ranks of the civil service.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Jez Toze**
SSM	**WO2 Kev East**

1 TROOP

OC	**Capt Emma Cameron**
SSgt	**SSgt Kenny Macpherson**

Firstly the Tp would like to welcome **SSgt Kenny Macpherson** from 2 Sig Regt, **Cpl 'Obe' Igboebisiokwu** from 102 Log Bde, **Sig Anthony Stewart** from 7 Sig Regt and **Sig Robert McLachlan** from 16 Sig Regt. Also 1 Tp bids a big farewell to **SSgt Steve Pengelly** who has left us to play more racket sports at 243 Sig Sqn. Congratulations to **Cpl 'Russ' Russell** and his wife **Rachel** on the arrival of their baby **Alex Lucy**, she weighed in at 8lbs 2oz and was born on 20 February. Members of the Tp have been busy since January with several exs. The first of which was Ex TRAILBLAZER which was a driver trg ex running from the 14 – 18 January which familiarised or introduced drivers to driving Land Rovers, vans, cars and HGV vehs. The next ex was Ex HOT SANDS. This went straight onto the Sigs' Cadre Course, Ex ROCK BOTTOM II organised by **Lt James Snelgrove** proving he has a 'green side' not just a ceremonial side as OC 638 Tp. All members of the Tp who were deployed on the Cadre seemed to enjoy the cold wet weather and long hours experienced on the course. **Sig 'JT' Talbot** particularly enjoyed the drill at the end. But all were relieved at the end of it after a hard month away on ex. And finally several members of 1 Tp were involved in the Regtl March and Shoot competition on 5 March. Although the Sqn team did really well on the March some of the shooting let down our lead and we came 2nd overall. 251 are still leading the CO's Cup competition and looking forward to winning the overall competition in July.

2 TROOP - *by Sig Yasmin Abouda*

OC	**Capt Alex Hodges**
SSgt	**SSgt Mark Bagstaff**

It was a very busy February for 2 Tp as we deployed on the perennial Sqn task, Ex HOT SANDS. Week 1 was a trg package with daily PT starting at 0630hrs! This proved challenging and entertaining as it was pitch black; unfortunately this was no obstacle for our PTIs, **LCpl Kris Looker** and **LCpl Jase Allard** who ensured PT went ahead regardless of visibility! Week 2 was the real-time ex phase with the Incident Response Team (IRT) Light and Heavy dets deploying to civilian locations: **LCpl Andi Eddon** and **LCpl Lydia Newton** nearly died of pneumonia from riding the IRT road bikes to Nottinghamshire Police HQ on a freezing, dark morning. Concurrently, **Cpl Dave Smith** and **Sig 'ASBO' Hadlow** deployed to Greater Manchester Police HQ by Gazelle but the sight of the policemen at the HLS made **'ASBO'** instinctively panic and pull the emergency jettison door handle by mistake. Luckily everyone lived but it did result in one slightly excited pilot! For the new members of the Tp the ex proved to be a steep learning curve, in challenging and realistic 'Gold HQ' locations, for the veterans it was their fifth or sixth HOT SANDS with a slightly different twist. It has also been a busy couple of months in sporting achievements. First was the March and Shoot in which the Sqn drew for 2nd place. Next was the swimming, again, resulting in a 2nd place for the Sq and then most recently the hockey, where we finally gained a deserved victory. Finally, 2 Tp would like to say congratulations to **SSgt(YofS) Karl 'Stan' Knowles** and his new wife **Bev**. They tied the knot in Colchester over the Easter weekend.

638 (LONDON) SIGNAL TROOP

OC	**Lt J Snelgrove**
SSgt	**SSgt A Carter**

638 Sig Tp has had another busy period with exs, Ceremonial Events, Visits and commitments to UK Ops. The Tp began the year with a shock to the system with Ex HOTS SANDS. This ex is in sp of one of the UK Ops that we support and all those involved must gain a licence to operate with the Technical Response Force. The ex started with some build up and MATT Trg with some seriously depressing early morning sub zero PT sessions. It finished with a 2 day Incident Response Team ex at Manchester and Nottingham Police HQ, the first of its kind ever. The Tp would like to congratulate **Sig Burns** on his promotion to LCpl by coming top of the Regtl Sigs' Cadre Course. We also say a fond farewell and good luck to **LCpl Woodward** who leaves the Sqn and Regt for Civvy Street. 638 Sig Tp are now in preparation for their commitment to Ceremonial Duties beginning with the State Visit of France at Windsor Castle in March 08 and them onto the Queen's Birthday events.

ECM (FP) SQN

OC	**Maj J C Fraser**
SSM	**SSgt West**

The pace continues on in ECM (FP) SQN as pers are continually committed to deployment trg and courses. There are still on-going commitments to both Afghanistan and Iraq where our boys and girls are working very hard to continually provide the best sp to those working alongside them. As the Sqn SSM, **WO2 Jay Saunders**, begins his resettlement, he has been replaced by the Bravo Tp SSgt, **SSgt Gaz West** until the arrival of our new SSM.

ALPHA TROOP

OC	Gapped
SSgt	**SSgt Bri Mclean**

The Sqn put in an excellent effort to come 2nd in the Regtl March and Shoot competition. Running 2 miles in under 20 mins and then continuing to do well on the shooting side. The Sqn also competed in the Regtl Hockey and Swimming competitions, losing both, but with good spirit (at least afterwards)! Alpha Tp would like to bid farewell to **Cpl Smith** who was a very valued member of the Tp but with all goodbyes there are also welcomes to **LCpl Wheatley, Cpl Fraser, Cpl Gallacher** to whom we wish a warm welcome and every success at the unit.

BRAVO TROOP

OC	**Capt Dorrington**
SSgt	**SSgt Gaz West**

The Sqn put in a valiant effort as they competed in the 4 Div Basketball Championships. The female team worked hard during the competition, both in vocally supporting the men's team, in trg, in the competition and afterwards in Aldershot! On the day of the competition, they put in an excellent effort beating all teams involved, only to find out that with the top 2 teams drawn they had to play another match, which unfortunately they lost, coming 2nd overall. The Sqn was represented by **Sgt Beattie, Cpl Bond, Cpl Kelly, LCpls Healy, Gilbert** and **Baker**. Bravo Tp would like to welcome, **Sgt Sills, Cpls Philips, Tillman, Smith, Meads**, and **Catt** and **LCpls Downward, Baker** and **Colling.** We wish you every success at the unit.

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col JAG Langley**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) TJ Bickerstaff**

To say it has been a busy time in the Regt is an understatement. The Regtl sports calendar has been in overdrive with some excellent results, a successful Gordon's Cup Mil Skills Competition has taken place, as well as all the usual Sqn level exs and events. Farewell and congratulations must be said to the outgoing 2IC, **Maj Carter** who retires to explore life on the outside and the RSM, **WO1(RSM) McGrail** who leaves on commissioning to take up post of Welfare Officer at 14 Sig Regt; and a warm welcome to the new incumbents, **Maj Jennings** who moves upstairs and to the new RSM, **WO1(RSM) Bickerstaff**.

BILATERAL BOXING COMPETITION - *by Cpl Gardner*

The Bilateral Boxing competition between the RAC Trg Regt and 11 Sig Regt was held on 12 March 2008 at Bovington. Headed up by **SSgt 'Red' Davies** and under the expert tutelage of **Cpls Grant Shipley, Sean Dinsdale** and me, we were hoping for success. The boxers arrived early for medicals and the final weigh-in. Parading around in their Regtl Boxing Team tops, confidence was at an all time high. As the first bout loomed, anticipation set in and you could tell the boxers were getting nervous; I know I was! At 1935hrs the competition began with the Lightweight bout first and **Sig Rai** was our first boxer. As he entered the hall through the smoke to the playing of the bagpipes, the supporters from 11 Sig Regt went wild. We got off to good start winning the first bout but unluckily for **Sig Williams** (who put up a tremendous effort) the Tankies pulled one back. At the interval it was 2 a piece but we knew the best was yet to come. **Sig Jowers** started the proceedings after the break and again victory was ours. Next **Tpr Bell's** height and reach advantage was no match for **Sig Gillings'** superior punching power and fitness, as he stopped him at the beginning of the third with a beautiful left hook to the head. The night drew to a close with 11 Sig Regt taking home the Trophy, with an impressive 7 out of 10 wins and **Sig Hodges** leaving with the 'Most Gallant Runner Up' award.

AN INSIGHT INTO MY BOXING EXPERIENCE - *by Sig Gilling*

It started with an introduction to fitness trg, where we had to get up at 0530hrs and be ready in PT kit with a water bottle! Each morning session lasted at least 1 hr and would involve various methods of trg: 6 mile (fat burner) holding two water bottles, cardio hill (reps up and down forwards/backwards), sprints around the athletic track and at least 50 – 80 press ups and sit-ups. The night trg involved skipping, bag work, foot work and basic boxing techniques (how to throw punches correctly and accurately) and most important of all sparring. Sparring was important because it was the closest thing you would get to a real fight and it was a chance to show you were developing your skills in the ring. The week before the fight all the boxers worked extra hard to impress, as we knew there were only 10 available fights, with 22 boxers up for selection. I was one of the lucky 10 selected and would be fighting at Cruiserweight (13st 6lbs). So after weeks of morning trg, going to trade and then night trg it was all going to be worthwhile on fight night. To be selected to represent the Regt against the Tank Regt was an amazing feeling. Fight night arrived. As the day went on I was getting anxious as I still had to lose 2lbs before the fight. So with only hours to go before the weigh-in I skipped constantly for 20 mins and ran for 20 mins just to get my weight down; luckily I made the weight.

As my fight drew closer I saw a couple of our lads who had taken a battering coming back with cuts and black eyes. This made me more determined to succeed. Finally my turn was up and I walked out to the bagpipes with the excellent support of my fellow sigs. I was well up for this. I stepped into the ring and saw my opponent. He was a big guy and solid looking but I couldn't care less; I wanted to fight. The bell went and I went in with a few jabs and hit him with a flurry of punches which wobbled him across the ring and the crowd went mad. In Round 2, I took a good punch before I eventually got through and stopped him with a left hook to the head. He was unable to carry on and it was the best feeling I have ever had in my life. Like a true gentlemen I shook his hand and wished him well in the future, then collected my winner's trophy. I would recommend boxing to anyone.

WEIGHT	RUNNER UP	WINNER
Light	Tpr Chapman	**Sig Rai**
Middle (1)	**Sig Williams**	Tp Green
Middle (2)	**Sig Hodges**	Tp Metcalf
Light Heavy (1)	Tpr Butterworth	**Sig Ray**
Light Heavy (2)	Tpr Deans	**Sig Jowers**
Cruiser	Tpr Bell	**Sig Gilling**
Heavy	Tpr Johnson	**Sig McAnaspie**
Welter (1)	Tpr Percival	**Sig Eley**

Welter (2)	**Sig Stay**	Tpr Greagh
Welter (3)	Tpr Ridge	**Sig Morgan**

Sig McAnaspie is victorious over Tpr Johnson

11 SIGNAL REGIMENT RFC – CORPS RUGBY 7s
- by SSgt Adams

The Regt took 18 players to compete in the Royal Signals Inter-Regtl Rugby 7s Tournament in Cardiff on Friday 14 March 2008. The squad was split to make two 7s teams, with an A and a B team playing in different pools. The first game saw the A team play against 18 Sig Regt which resulted in a large win for 11 Sig Regt but at a cost; **Sig Blackledge** with a dislocated knee. The A team carried on in the same vain for the remainder of the pool matches but lost their team captain, **Cpl Swanson** with a nasty cut which required 6 stitches. Top of the pool the A team progressed into the Quarter Finals. 14 Sig Regt were the Semi Final opponents for the A team and all eyes were on 11 Sig Regt's young team. This turned out to be a bridge too far for Blandford. In a very hard fought game the lead changed hands numerous times, with 11 Sig Regt losing out by only a conversion, as 14 Sig Regt went on to win the tournament. After a hard tournament the players of both teams from Blandford performed at their best. Notable mentions to this are **Sig Naulago** who set his place in stone for the Corps in the up coming play off game against the AGC and **Sigs Baker** and **Young** being selected for Corps Rugby League trials.

Squad members for the Royal Signals Corps 7s Tournament 2008

	Rank	Name		Remarks
1	**Capt**	**Palmer**	A Team	OC
2	**SSgt**	**Adams**	B Team	2IC Coach
3	**Cpl**	**Swanson**	A Team	1 Sqn
4	**Cpl**	**Jukes**	A Team	1 Sqn
5	**Cpl**	**Downer**	B Team	2 Sqn
6	**Cpl**	**Ingoe**	A Team	3 Sqn
7	**Sig**	**Thomas**	B Team	2 Sqn
8	**Sig**	**Young**	A Team	2 Sqn
9	**Sig**	**Field**	B Team	2 Sqn
10	**Sig**	**Baker**	A Team	2 Sqn
11	**Sig**	**Stepney**	B Team	2 Sqn
12	**Sig**	**Clark**	B Team	2 Sqn
13	**Sig**	**Palmer**	B Team	2 Sqn
14	**Sig**	**Mogford**	A Team	3 Sqn
15	**Sig**	**Harrage**	B Team	2 Sqn
16	**Sig**	**Perkowski**	B Team	2 Sqn
17	**Sig**	**Blackledge**	A Team	2 Sqn
18	**Sig**	**Nauago**	A Team	3 Sqn

HARROGATE CUP SWIMMING TROPHY COMPETITION

The Harrogate Cup Inter-Tp Swimming Competition took place at Blandford Leisure Centre on Wednesday 9 April 08. There was an excellent turn out from all Tps and the standard was high. The chain of command race lacked the CO but he did promise he would partake next time. In the end, by an impressive 11 point lead, the winning Tp was Beaufighter Tp, 2 Sqn.

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JD Morrice CD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) MA Bell**

EXERCISE OUSTON WARRIOR - *by Cpl Swanson*

Battleaxe Tp deployed to Copehill Down FIBUA Village under the guise of a Tp from a Bde Sig Sqn tasked with conducting build-up trg and then taking over the security of the area. Friday night was taken up with a short insertion tab followed by the occupation and securing of the Tp house. Trg commenced the following morning with a round robin of veh Anti-Ambush, Patrolling and FIBUA asslt. This was a steep learning curve for the Phase 2 soldiers and a useful reminder for the sect comds. Come midday the situation changed as it was revealed we were to take over site defence earlier than planned and start aggressive patrolling of the area. With intelligence gathered from the patrols it became apparent that the enemy were looking to move into the village and come 0200hrs Sunday they were occupying it in force. A deliberate asslt to clear the enemy from the area was planned, orders were delivered at 0430hrs, and H Hour set for 0630hrs.

At H Hour the lead asslt sect was launched into the first house. The asslt started slowly but quickly gained momentum with the asslt sects working though each other and the houses with admirable efficiency. With the main street clear and the re-org done, everyone was starting to relax when we were hit again. The Tp reacted quickly and set off to fight through what was left of the enemy. Four hours after H Hour, the village was declared to be free of enemy. All that was left was to clean up and head

Vehicle Ambush drills

1 Squadron at the end of the assault

back. Thanks must go to **SSgt Lucy Mason** for her hard work in organising what was a very successful and enjoyable ex and to the DS present for allowing the Tp the freedom to work on its own and overcoming the temptation to get too involved.

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj LD Roddy**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) MA Tench**

SURVIVAL EXERCISE - *by Sig Nash*

We arrived at Bramley Trg Area around 1830hrs and at this point we had still not been told anything about the ex! We were taken swiftly towards what we thought was going to be our accn by **Cpl Dinsdale** but to our surprise we marched straight past the buildings and on through some woods to our bed for the night. We were shown to an empty warehouse and told by **Cpl Wells** to stand fast until each sect was taken to our harbour areas. Much to our surprise we met an 'agent' half way along a pitch black track and were ushered reassuringly into another empty warehouse, where we were going to pick up some 'food and water' and then leave. However, when we got to the warehouse we were forced inside by unrecognisable NCOs into complete darkness. I personally thought: "This can't be good" and unsurprisingly it wasn't! The lights switched on and we were 'rushed' by foreign agents with weapons shouting what sounded like really aggressive foreign language. We were then put through a series of disorientation methods. All valuables were taken and stored until end-ex, then we got put into a 'weird vibe' room with incense sticks burning, then finally unmasked and debriefed by **WO1 Dray**, **Capt Harris** and **SSgt Davis**.

Next morning each sect shared a breakfast out of a ration pack and we were briefed that we had been captured and now had to escape. We were told to get as far away from the area of capture as possible and led by **SSgt Adams** and **Cpl Dinsdale** we started running! For the remainder of the day we had lessons on improvised wpns and clothing, map marking, fishing, cooking, water collection, shelter and traps from **WO1 Dray**, **SSgt Sneath**, **Sgt Clegorn** and **Cpl Crispin**. We thought we had the rest of the day to build ourselves shelters, but we were then briefed by **SSgt Sneath** that we had to use the improvised maps we had made to reach certain RV points so we could meet agents and receive useful items. We had to avoid the patrolling 'enemy' and not get captured again. After this task we returned to our improvised shelters and cooked the vegetables we had received from the agents. The next day we marched to the other side of the trg area and spent the morning on the high ropes confidence course which involved tasks like the 'leap of faith' and the 'Crate tower'. These were good because they really brought the confidence out in people and tested team building and initiative. I personally thought it was a great ex and well worth the experience and I took a lot of newly acquired 'skills and drills' away from it.

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JR Jennings**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) G Padfield**

ULSTER TROOP - *by Cpl Gardner*

The trg staff of Ulster Tp would like to bid a farewell to their OC, **WO1(RSM) Gaz Dixon** and a big hello and welcome to **WO1(RSM) A Caulfield** formally RSM of 1 Mech Bde.

EXERCISE HARROGATE INITIATIVE - *by Sig Thomas*

Organised by **SSgt Watts**, 14 teams of 3 pers (made up of 1 x Phase 3 and 2 x Phase 2) took part in Ex HARROGATE INITIATIVE. After being briefed and dropped off at Bath or Reading, we had 36 hrs to make our way to a designated pick up point. During this time we had to complete a number of tasks, all having different point ratings. The winner would be the team who earned the most points. With no money and only an issued mobile phone, teams were dropped off at 0400hrs on Saturday. Our team, Blue 6 comprising **Cpl Walsh**, **Sig Grieve** and I) were dropped in Reading and straight away began completing our tasks. Some of the tasks included were; get a photo with the Prime Minister (difficult seeing he was out of the country), help an old lady cross the road, (difficult as the elderly ladies approached didn't want to know) and drive a car worth at least £100,000. Some teams using their initiative, changed price tags on old bangers while others actually tried to find £100,000 cars. After the 36 hrs were up, all but one team made it to the pick up location on time. We all returned to Camp delivered presentations of our photos to the OC, 2IC and SSM where we would also get scored. After this the scores were announced. In last place with a measly 260 points was Red 2 (**Cpl Kinson**, **Sig Colverson** and **Sig Ross**) and would you believe it Blue 6 (my team) were the victors with a massive and untouchable 2530 points; probably secured by the live interview conducted on BBC Radio Solent!

EXERCISE HARROGATE ENDEAVOUR - *by Sig Mckenna*

This ex was to prepare the Tps for the forthcoming Gordon's Cup Mil Skills competition. On arrival at Bovington Trg area, the Tps completed a 2km tab into the harbour area. We commenced our basic admin, where a lot of funny looking bashers were set up, re-set up and re-set up again under the direction of the Sect Comds. At a time that I did not believe existed on a Saturday morning a number of mil stands including a cheeky log run, first aid and mine awareness were set up in order for the Tps to tab around the trg area to refresh their mil skills knowledge. Far too late on the Saturday, a night navigation was set up in the pouring rain and howling wind to the delight of all the soldiers. All in all it should have taken an hour and a half to complete but it was double that time when the first fire team decided to rock up at the harbour area. After the commotion about the ownership of a torch, everyone got their heads down ready for another early morning. We deployed back to camp for a march and shoot hosted at the DCCT, then finally a couple of hours of wpn cleaning (sweet joy!). Big thanks to the trg staff that took part, especially to **SSgt Anderson** who organised the event. My only criticism of the ex was not spending any time with **Cpl Steve Blake** who was noticeable by his absence!

GORDON'S CUP 2008 - *by Cpls Rai and Centeno*

Thanks to the superb logistical skills of **SSgt Steve Davies** the Gordon's Cup 2008 went off without a glitch, apart from the odd bruised Land Rover courtesy of our illustrious 2IC, **Capt 'Colin McRae' Palmer.** On the morning of Friday 11 April 2008, the admin team deployed to Salisbury Plain Trg Area to set up for one of the 2 Gordon's Cup exs to take place each year. The teams entering the event from all 3 Sqns within the Regt (25 in total) arrived by coach at approximately 1900hrs and prepared themselves for the next day's activities with safety briefs and instructions on where to be and at what time, before setting up their harbour areas and getting the best sleep they could in the 5* Salisbury Plain Hilton.

At 0600hrs on Saturday, the teams began to disperse from the admin area to locate and participate in as many of the 10 stands as they could. The stands consisted of: Mil Knowledge, Skill at Arms, Battlefield Casualty Drills, a Stretcher Race, Mental Comd Tasks, Physical Comd Tasks, Patrolling Drills, CBRN, Observation and a Practical Leadership Development ex and were all manned by a range of volunteers and instructors from within the Regt. The ex was visited by a range of VIPs from both the mil and civilian industry, who after visits to the stands to get an idea of what the participants were enduring, were treated to a full Gurkha Bhat. Our Sect (30) consisted of **Cpls Jagatram** (Sect Comd) and **Alex Centeno** (2IC) and **Sigs Suman**, **Man**, **Kailash**, **Tejkumar**, **Narendra**, **Damber**, **Vijay** and **Kabin**. We carried out the tasks presented to us at each stand with grit and determination, with our experience and planning skills playing vital roles and due to our professionalism and effort we completed the course. All Sects put in a tremendous effort, starting from early morning and carrying on throughout the day. Every team dreamed of lifting the coveted Gordon's Cup, but only one could be successful. When

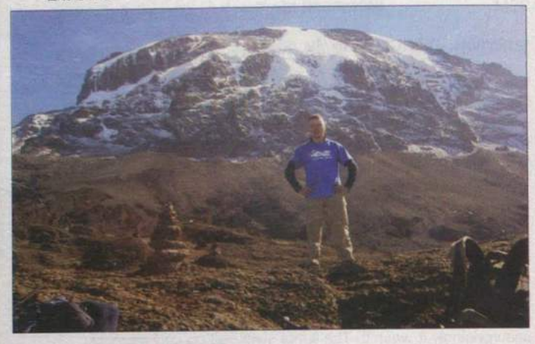
the scores were counted and the results were in, our Sect was victorious, beating our nearest rivals by a mere 4 points and bringing the Best Sect title to Ulster Tp, although the overall Tp winners were Lightning Tp, who now hold the trophy for the next 6 months. The Best Endeavour prize went to 11 Sect, Beaufighter Tp, 2 Sqn, for the spirit in which they approached the competition. The prizes were presented by **Brig Watts**. After which we were treated to a Michelin starred container meal (Range Stew), served on the finest crockery (paper plates) and using only the best cutlery (plastic forks). The coaches were loaded up and ready to leave by around 1800hrs, with everyone thoroughly exhausted but in good spirits. Section 30's proud moment will linger in the memories of every member during the upcoming months, allowing us to hold our heads high as Gordon's Cup 2008 Winners.

The Gordon's Cup Winning Section

3 SQUADRON CHARITY EVENTS

TREK KILIMANJARO

WO1 Dougie Icke's successfully summitted Mount Kilimanjaro (5940m) in Tanzania, managing to raise £4000 for The National Deaf Children's Society and enjoying sun, rain, wind and snow with some altitude sickness thrown in along the way. He was lucky to be involved in a team of 2 ex-soldiers who were assisting a deaf and partially blind man in getting to the top of Kilimanjaro which was both successful and extremely rewarding. The climb took 4.5 days to ascend and 2 days to descend. Should anybody have the inclination to organise an exped to Kilimanjaro, it is thoroughly worth the effort and is a challenge that a fit soldier is capable of achieving. Any advice on organising a trip to Kilimanjaro can be sought from OC Lightning Tp, Blandford Mil Ext 2479.



WO1 Icke at Kilimanjaro

CYCLE LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS

The next challenge will see **Maj Jack Jennings**, **Capt Dave Palmer** and **WO1 Dougie Icke** cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats (1000 miles) in May, which will no doubt test our fitness and the robustness of our butts! We are joined by 5 Phase 2 recruits who as a reward for completing their electrician course will see the country by racing bike. The soldiers have been loaned bikes from the Regtl store and are familiarising themselves with the scenic countryside and hills that surround Blandford as the big day draws closer. The ride promises to have its "ups and downs" (rather too many) and will challenge us all both mentally and physically but we have all committed ourselves to raising money for "Help for Heroes" and are confident we will celebrate in John O'Groats 2 weeks after setting off from Land's End – it is just the bit in between we are anxious about. Bring it on!

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

CO **Lt Col TJ Carmichael**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DR Taylor**

ATTACHMENT TO THE CHILEAN JOINT PEACEKEEPING CENTRE - *by Capt JF Godfrey*

It's said that if you tell enough people and spread the rumour of your next posting enough times it will eventually get back to MCM Div. So in a hot Camp Bastion last year, while deployed with 245 Sig Sqn, I was doing just that and imagining myself in a slightly cooler, but definitely not cold, Santiago in Chile.

All that paid off and at the end of June 2007, I set off to Chile for a 6 month stint as the British Instructor at Chile's Joint Peacekeeping Centre in Santiago (CECOPAC). The post is run through the Army Language Scholarship Scheme (ALSS) which trains Army pers at the Defence School of Languages (DSL) prior to sending them on 6 month attachments. Although relatively small, Chile is keen to contribute on the world stage and has an established position as a UN Troop Contributing Country and is currently involved in UN missions in Haiti and Cyprus with UN Military Observers deployed to Israel and Lebanon as well as India and Pakistan. The other main deployment is in Bosnia under EUFOR and this is where the Chileans originally came

Capt Godfrey training Chilean soldiers for UN duties

under British command, which was the impetus for creating a post for a British Instructor in their Peace Support Training Centre. After arriving on a freezing cold July morning (and wishing for the heat of Afghanistan or even Brawdy!), I soon found myself thrown head in at the deep end and instructing classes in my first week. Not a problem in itself, but when you complicate it by being in Spanish or rather Chilean Spanish it becomes more taxing. Luckily I spoke Spanish well, or so I thought, until I realized that my Castilian Spanish bore no resemblance to the Spanish I was hearing. However, my Chilean colleagues were helpful and picked on me constantly for my Castilian Spanish accent until it disappeared!
Having got my language issues out of the way, I got stuck in to the job. I was primarily teaching Briefing and Reports, Communications and Use of Interpreters in a classroom based environment (in Spanish) followed by assistance in role-playing on ex (in English). CECOPAC runs around 20 courses a year, most of which directly sp the pre-deployment trg for Chile's participation in UN missions and I found myself involved in all courses while there. My other tasks mainly included translations, assistance with English and liaison between CECOPAC and the DA at the British Embassy.

Each course culminated with a week long ex phase where they would typically work out of an OP or Liaison and Observation Team House as they would expect to find on UN deployments. Dependent on the UN op and the special to arm role of the course (e.g. Marine/Infantry Bn, Engr Company, UN police) they would conduct specific exs and react to scenarios. They were not always 100% realistic as the Cyprus course had to prepare for a hot summer on the island by patrolling through half a metre of snow! This phase gave me a chance to apply more pressure by testing their English in different situations, as well as testing my acting skills.

The 6 months were a fantastic opportunity to break completely with the British military way of life and learn to integrate in a multinational environment. While the pace was some what slower than we are used to, and it did take a while to get used to the Chilean 'modus operandi', it was overall a positive experience. If we had a tri-service OPTAG with the police involved, we wouldn't expect it to run smoothly all the time! What the Chileans lack in operational experience they make up for in professionalism and I was surprised at the number of staff who had served on UN ops and the eagerness for the Armed Forces to increase their involvement in peacekeeping ops. The 6 months allowed me to improve my Spanish skills as well as confidence in my instructional abilities by working in a trg environment. But maybe more importantly it also gave me an amazing opportunity to live in Santiago and experience Chilean culture, and of course with the stunning Andes overlooking the city it would have been rude not to have skied them every winter weekend!

You don't need to speak a language to apply for the Army Language Scholarship Scheme (ALSS) and it would ideally suit a Junior Officer on their trg year.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON BATTLECAMP - *by Sig Fullalove*

On 2 March 08, 226 Sig Sqn (EW) deployed to Nescliff Camp for the annual battle camp with the promise of action and adventure and an introduction to FIBUA skills. Three Sects made up the Pl that were exercised against a determined enemy force with the scenario that the Pl was tasked with clearing insurgent trg camps.

Ex DDRAIGS ROAR kicked off on the Monday with a back to basics phase reviewing everything from 2 man contact drills up to sect patrolling skills and CASEVAC drills. With the drills and skills firmly locked away for the day, the Sqn retired for some light refreshments where the seniors had taken the jukebox hostage and were abusing the ears of everyone present with golden oldies (1922 – 1945). Tuesday morning looked promising with a thick layer of frost on the ground. The Sqn then moved onto sect manoeuvres. In the afternoon the Pl moved onto larger scale drills which culminated in attacks on several in depth enemy positions with great success Wednesday morning saw the Pl start on FIBUA trg. The Sects worked hard, taking on the finer points of building clearances from **SSgt Hobson**. With a lot of loud noises, confusion and smoke, the Sects worked very well and the progression from the earlier contact drills to FIBUA was impressive. There were a lot of sore elbows and knees during the FIBUA trg (except for **Cpl 'Mclovin' Harle** and his knee pads!) Once everyone was happy with building clearance we went back to the camp to prep for the final phase of the ex.

The main event of the ex started with the Pl Comd briefing the 3 Sect ICs, **LCpl Simpson**, **LCpl Smith** and **LCpl Wood** who then turned their sects out ready for the insertion into the field. **Cpl Minza**, the Pl Sgt, having crammed his Bergen full with extra ammo nearly exploded when he was handed an extra container 1min before departing, the Pl Sgt's job is never easy! Once established in the field, everyone put their all in and by 2115hrs, the Pl had secured their main objective for the evening after numerous contacts with enemy forces. From this 'Platoon House' the Sects were tasked through the night in an effort to dominate the area and recce targets for the morning asslt. At 0500hrs the Pl were again briefed and marched out and were on their LOD 5 mins before H-Hour surprising the enemy by attacking from a different direction – as if FIBUA wasn't confusing enough! Special note should go to the enemy sect and maybe an apology to ATR Lichfield for confusing them after **SSgt Davies** and I were opened up on by them, as they were also exercising on the area.

The main points to note from Ex DDRAIGS ROAR were:

3 Sect decided to dub themselves 'The War Dogs' and even managed a feeble 'war kittens' cry. A demonstration of this should definitely be asked for from **LCpl Wood**.

Cpl Minza loved being the Pl Sgt and can now regularly be seen running around camp with a Bergen on his back screaming "more ammo please"!

The 'promotion' of Pl Comd went to **Cpl Harle's** head as he had just completed the box set of "Sharpe" and kept referring to the Sect ICs as 'The Chosen Men'.

LCpl Simpson doesn't allow his Sect to be ambushed by the enemy, instead he ambushes them himself!

226 Signal Squadron on battlecamp

LCpl Dixon will pause and cower when clearing a stairwell before changing tack and 'demolishing' the enemy, in fact any enemy within the trg area!

A big thank you to **SSgt Hobson**, **SSgt Davies** and **SSgt Yuille** for what was an amazing ex.

EXERCISE ANDEAN DRAGON 08 - *by LCpl N Taylor*

Ex ANDEAN DRAGON was an AT ex run by 14 Sig Regt held in Mendoza, Argentina. The 17 day

exped was organised by **Capt Neil Matthews** and the chief instructor was **QMSI Mark Hedge** APTC. We set off for our deceivingly long journey on 4 February and 34hrs later we arrived at our accn in the centre of Mendoza. We all looked as though we were in severe need of some sleep but not before we celebrated **Sgt Steve Taylor's** birthday. We spent the following 2 days acquiring guide books, hire cars and a sufficient amount of food to last us 5 days up in the mountains. Before we left we gave it our best shot at devouring the massive Bife de Chorizo (600g fillet steak).

The decision was made to head to Refugio Protinari (2600m), Los Arenales, which offered us vast amounts of traditional, sport and multi-pitch climbing. However, the not so precise guide book did not tell us how much the dirt road was going to deteriorate as we headed further and further into the mountains. The first day was spent on a nearby boulder, which we used to run through some essential skills. **Sgt Phil Morgan** RAF proved to us that he was not lying when he told us that he did have a great fear of heights. The following day we decided to up the anti slightly and headed for El Zorro which was a 5 pitch 210m climb – not a climb for the faint hearted. At the summit there was a very special presentation, **QMSI Mark Hedge** received his Corps Colours for Mountaineering from **Capt Neil Matthews**.

Capt Matthews awarding WO2(QMSI) Hedge his APTC Colours for Mountaineering on El Zorro

The next day was spent on a single pitch traditional crag, **Capt Joanna Godfrey** showing that she wasn't afraid to try and push the grade. We also made our first accent over 3000m through a not so enjoyable boulder field. Trekking was on the menu for Day 8, with a climb of the local mountain Punta Negra (4400m). After summiting, everyone looked as though they were in need of a good wash in the nearby glacial river. **QMSI Hedge** and **Sgt Taylor** fitted in some climbing on a local sport climbing crag, where the QMSI took a particular interest in the exotic wildlife. We spent the next day on the road back to Mendoza for a quick turn around – having a shower at the top of all of our lists but not forgetting the Bife de Chorizo, before we headed out to the mountains again.

The cars were packed and ready to go for the next 5 days. Off we went and this time a little further a field, to Malague (420km South of Mendoza). From there we then headed to a Manqui-Malal, a small camp site which had huge amounts of climbing which was predominately sport and varied massively in grades. We were greeted with the news that the campsite had recently flooded and had been washed away, but in true mil fashion we camped and crossed our fingers, but to everyone's delight the campsite had showers. The next 3 days we spent in the local area on the numerous crags in the sweltering heat and this gave **Capt Matthews** and **Capt Godfrey** a chance to lead many of the routes. **Capt Matthews** was not short of a "shimmy" or two to get himself to the top of some of the routes. **Sgt Taylor** and I spent a couple of days on "the roof" (F6b) trying to crack some very tricky moves after being shown how to do it by **QMSI Hedge**.

Everybody managed to push their grades and were building up quite a log book. **Sgt Taylor** did not miss the opportunity to get a photo or two of himself, he was building up quite a portfolio by now. We sampled some of the local delicacy on the second evening which was fried goat and surprisingly it was a great success. On the afternoon of the 3rd day we headed over to the Amphitheatre which was larger than the crags we had spent the last two and a half days on. This area was riddled with harder climbs and gave us the chance to push ourselves for the final afternoon of climbing. We spent the evening cooking up the rest of our food where **Sgt Taylor** stole the show with his culinary skills. The feast was accompanied by yet another electrical storm to entertain us.

We returned to Mendoza the next day with a couple of days R&R we visited a couple of vinyards and finished the tour with an amazing buffet lunch served with wine produced from the local area. Ex ANDEAN DRAGON 08 was a well organised and run exped which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Everybody now has a very good foundation for their log books which has enabled them to gain qualifications. My thanks go to those who helped make this exped happen.

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col J Hodges**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

As this copy of *The Wire* hits desks and crew rooms across the Corps, soldiers from 16 Sig Regt will already be half-way through their HERRICK 8 deployment and many people will have had, or be looking forward to their hard earned R&R. The unit is one of the most spread-out formations in Afghanistan at the moment, with troops and dets providing crucial comms assets from Helmand Province to Kabul. Below are updates from several of these locations. On the home front, Germany Based Elements Sqn is gearing up for its upcoming ARRC ex commitments where it will be putting its newly acquired Bowman assets into the field for the first time.

A DAY WITH THE DOGS - *by Sig Lyons-Negus*

One of the other units based in Bastion, where my Tp is located, is 102 Military Working Dogs Unit. To break up the monotony of life on tour, my Tp Comd organised for me to go down to the dogs unit for a day and work with them. I leaned their role in theatre, the jobs they do and met the trained dogs that are an important part of many ops. When I got to the kennels I met the 2 main breeds of dogs used. These are the Springer Spaniel which is used for wpns and explosives searches and the well known Alsatians that assist with guard and patrols.

My day spent with the dogs unit was hard work and there was a lot to learn. The dogs and their handlers have to search every veh that comes in to camp. Sometimes this can be in excess of 100 vehs in just one morning. The main role of the handler is to control the dog as it moves around and inside the veh, watching out for any signs of different behaviour indicating some sort of explosive device or wpn. As it was market day, the number of vehs requiring searching was far greater than normal. Despite the search dogs being worked particularly hard, they still seemed happy and had more character and spirit than any other dogs I have met. They obviously love their work and it was a pleasure to see them in action. I was also shown the guard dogs. Most people have seen demonstrations of the fierce side of these animals and the attacks they are trained to inflict, but in reality they are intensely loyal to their handler and when not at work are friendly and playful. They also seem to live for their job and will do anything to please the handlers. My time with the dog unit showed me a different side to Army life and gave me an understanding of the various roles the dogs fulfil. The highlight was when I was sent out on the ground as part of a night patrol. I got to see the dogs working and patrolling at night.

Sig Lyons-Negus with one of the Hounds of the Bastion-ville

Even with night vision it can be hard to see at night and we are not as agile as the dogs in jumping over ditches and holes. It soon became obvious why we needed them. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the dogs unit and realise how hard they work to keep the dogs up to the standard of trg and behaviour that they have. I would recommend this experience to anyone if they get the chance.

THE SEARCHER - *by Cpl Ball*

Cpl Ball In action

Soon after arriving in theatre I was asked to be a female searcher for the OMLT as there were very few females on camp. After getting clearance from my OC, I joined elements of 52 Inf Bde to conduct house clearances in the town of Gereshk. We left FOB Price very early on Sunday morning and the eerie silence of the Afghan dawn really put me on edge. With the sun rising above the horizon, we went outside the wire and into the town. The mobile patrol was lead by the Afghan National Army, with the OMLT following behind. Our destination was a small compound built in the typical Afghan manner with tall mud walls sealing in a settlement of several buildings. We went straight into the compound and once secured I was tasked with searching all the females and children, using the techniques I had learnt on OPTAG. In all we cleared 5 houses and returned to camp. The experience was fantastic and has given me an insight into how Afghan families live and how different and lucky we are in the UK.

OUT AND ABOUT - *by Sig Ng*

The great thing about being part of a multinational force is that we get the opportunity to work with fellow soldiers from all over the world and experience the way that they do things. So when I was told I was required to join the Danish on a convoy move, I was eager to get going. One morning I received the order stating that I would be going with the Danes to one of the FOBs further north to repair a generator. "No problem" I thought. Easy – I was on to a winner here, escaping from base for a bit and getting to see some more of Afghanistan other than the small patch of sand that had recently become my home. During the morning brief, the Camp Commandant came in and I was told that the convoy would be leaving for FOB Armadillo at 1100hrs. With the normal 5 mins before 5 mins before, I was there by 1045hrs kitted up and ready to go. Five hours later I was still waiting on my own with all my kit beside me. No convoy. Another hour went by before the convoy turned up eventually. I received several briefs and then I was off. It became apparent very soon that the Danes know how to travel in style. I was in the most up to date Danish APC with air conditioning if I was hot and heating when I was cold. I had a comfortable seat to myself and loads of room for my kit. There was even a cool-box with cans of Coke or Fanta when I was thirsty! Life could not have been better.

When I got there I had 20 mins to make my repairs before we started off on the return journey. I thought "no problem" as I only had some simple servicing tasks to carry out. After a quick look around, it became clear that several other generators were also in need of some tender love and care. There were numerous repairs and maint tasks that had to be done. I set to work at a frantic pace trying to get as much done as possible, but armed with just my Gerber, the odds were against me.

With 3 out of 5 generator sets fixed, I thought "job well done" and with my pack on my back I was off again. As I set off for the pick-up-point, I was looking forward to my luxury ride back with the Danes, only to be grossly disappointed as a Snatch turned up and I was hastily bundled into the back with all the kit. It was absolutely jam packed and unfortunately no aircon or soft drinks!

THE JOURNEY TO LASHKAR GHAR - *by Sig Bartram*

We landed in Kandahar just before dawn on a cold Afghan morning, gathered our baggage and went to find a bed for the night. Unfortunately there were no spare beds in the allocated tents as our arrival time was different to that planned. This was not a drama however as it was only a few hours until our C-130 flight to Bastion left. We didn't have much time to grab any takeaways or American goodies before we were airborne again. Once in Bastion we were met by some of our colleagues and housed in transit accn for the night. The last leg of our journey was by Chinook from Camp Bastion to Lashkar Ghar. After several delays we finally arrived at our destination 3 days after leaving Elmpt. We were met by the rest of the det pers already in location and they guided us around camp to the tents which would be our homes for the next 6 months. Early the following morning the huge task of the hand-over, take-over was to be undertaken by all pers in the det. This task ran smoothly with very few problems because 30 Sig Regt had made sure that all depts were prepared for our arrival. The handover was complete ahead of schedule and 30 Sig Regt pers started to leave Lashkar Ghar, embarking on their long journey back to Nuneaton. Now left alone, we started to grasp our individual jobs. The weather was starting to warm up gradually from the very first day which provided us with the perfect opportunity to work on our tans. The days have settled down since we first arrived and people are starting to get into routines with work and the gym. We have set up weekly activities such as the National Lottery bonus ball, film nights and sports, all of which are keeping the morale up and helping time go by that little bit quicker.

ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON CP - *by Barnaby Bear (Mascot)*

With the handover of the Helmand ICS Sig Sqn from 30 Sig Regt now complete it is a time of reflection in the Sqn CP. Both **FofS SSgt Rogan** and **SSgt Pearson** are hard at work trying to get their heads round all the various systems, while the SSM is trying to get his head around the helicopter flights plan (or lack of it!). Now the weather is warming up, **Capt Scaife** has finally ditched

his awful 1970s olive green jumper and the team are wishing that the aircon unit actually worked! Within the first 2 days of arrival we all experienced our first sandstorm which not only destroyed the SSM's cam net, but also covered everything in sight with dust. Most of the Ops team have already been out on the ground. **SSgt Rogan** has visited Sangin to carry out upgrades and the OC and SSM have been busy visiting the troops at FOB Price. All are looking forward to the challenges that the next few months will bring and most have already completed 10% on their chuff charts!

Sgt Jolliffe, WO2(SSM) Graham, Maj Morris and Sgt Raby at FOB Price

BASTION ICS TROOP - *by LCpl Crabtree*

The arrival in theatre was fraught with the usual series of delays. Luckily we had all packed our sleeping systems in our day sacks, which turned out to be an extremely wise move. There is something ritualistic about the procedures of Army travel. It wouldn't be the same to arrive in theatre on time, clean-shaven with fresh clothes. At the baggage check-in I was told that I was over the weight limit; obviously when I teetered on top of my bathroom scales holding all my bags, I didn't succeed in standing still enough. Or I zeroed the unit too hastily. Or maybe I had just eaten too much junk food during the hold up at the airport. I stood around looking perplexed until they just let me through.

On arrival at Bastion my first task was to visit the numerous offices, buildings, server rooms and crawl spaces to account for over 100 laptops, printers, servers, switches and to scrub off the dust to check serial numbers. Three days later I had a complete inventory with one tick per item, and a head full of data. My predecessor was the walking-talking 118 118 of computer networks. I made a futile attempt to write down everything he said and wondered if I would have his encyclopaedic knowledge of the job by the time I was at the end of my tour. Since our arrival my team, responsible for maintaining the network here, have worked hard and late to ensure the network and our procedures are organized and efficient. **Sig Breese** has impressed us all with his natural IT instincts, and **LCpl Taylor** has proved himself a fault-finding magician. It is amazing how people seem to grow so well into their jobs when on deployments. Both of them claim to be ordinary soldiers and not network administrators, but it is official – they have both become 2 of Camp Bastion's computer élite. They just don't know it yet. They vehemently deny it but their heads are definitely becoming pointier and more cone-shaped as the days go by.

We have set ourselves up for a good tour and morale is high. The ICS Tp as a whole has a good mixture of people and there is a genuine feel-good factor about our work as we administer a network that is very much in-demand, and most of our customers are grateful. That is, they are happily relieved when we restore the important files they delete by accident and reset the password they forget! The imaginative ways that staff officers find to break things will easily keep us entertained for the next few months!

DEPLOYABLE TROOP - *by Cpl Crawford*

Of the first chalk, we were the only 2 staying at Kandahar as the rest were moving on to Kabul. We said our goodbyes to the guys and girls and were picked up by a RC South representative who took us to our accn. For the next 7 days we waited for an aircraft to take us to our final destination, Tarin Kowt, but it seemed that this was never going to happen. Every time we got to the 'Taliban Last Stand', which is the departure gate for all helicopter flights (the name is self explanatory), we returned to the accn after being told that there was no room on board. In the end we spent a lot of time on the famous KAF Boardwalk eating way too many hamburgers and pizzas from the stalls there and became pretty good at both "Tiger Woods Golf" and "Call of Duty 4" courtesy of a PS3 from the NAAFI. We had just about given up any hope of ever leaving KAF when we were told to pack our gear and get to the departure gate as there was a flight leaving that day to Tarin Kowt. Well we didn't need telling twice! Before long we were sat in the departure lounge (of sorts) waiting to be called forward. Eventually we boarded the Hercules and took off, but it was short lived. Due to ops taking place on the ground around Tarin Kowt, we had to complete a fly round but unfortunately we were running low on fuel so returned to KAF. We refuelled. More waiting. But this time the frustration was tempered with the fact that we did get to see 2 fast jets take off just feet away from us leaving the shock wave from the after burners shaking through our bodies.

Before long we were on our way again and after only half an hour we were starting our descent into Tarin Kowt. As we landed and the tail gate was dropped we caught our first glimpse of our new home. The snow was still on the ground and it was freezing. Unfortunately the Gurkhas who met us did not bring a veh and so we had to hump our kit for about a mile to our new accn. Penance for the burgers and pizzas from Kandahar. Tarin Kowt is in a beautiful location set in the mountains. However, the Taliban are nearby and we are reminded on a daily basis of our purpose here as we listen to the sounds of artillery and attack helicopters passing on their regards. We have all settled in well and at the moment the battle-rhythm allows us plenty of time to get exercise and entertain ourselves.

XXII 22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col ND Fraser**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) J Pritchard**

You will note from the welcomes and farewells (at the end) that there has been a fair amount of churn in Regtl appointments of late, which is set to continue through to July. A particular thanks goes to **WO2(RQMS) Al Combe**, who has shouldered the combined burden of RQ(A) and RSM since August 07 and has just handed over to the new RSM, **WO1(RSM) Jim Pritchard**. I would also like to thank 30 Sig Regt for rolling over so easily in the West Midlands Inter-Services Football Challenge Cup – the trophy looks good. Congratulations go to **WO2(SSM) Bharat Shrestha** and his team, who have just won the Corps Operational Shooting Competition and to **Sgt Seville** and the orienteering team, who are now 5 Div champions.

EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH - *by Capt Phil Stubbs*

On 2 April, 30 intrepid members from Staffordshire businesses participated in a team building and skills day with 22 Sig Regt at Beacon Barracks. Dressed in Army camouflage, there were a few nervous faces as they set off to the gymnasium for the first serial, which was an indoor assIt course. Sessions on the 25m Range, Clay Shooting Range and Comd Task arena followed, separated by a spot of lunch, in the form of ORP. The day was a great success and fortunately, the liability insurance and consent forms did not need to be referred to again once they had been completed. Thirty able bodied people crossed the start line and 30 able bodied people finished the day – thank goodness. Thanks to **Capt Phil Stubbs** (who drummed up interest), **Capt Colin Milne** (the token grumpy LE), **2Lt Pete Crawley** (rent-a-clown), **WO2(RQMS) Combe** (who just looks the part), **WO2(YofS) McDonnell** (who likes shooting stuff), **SSgt Mick Lynn** (who also likes shooting stuff), **Sgt Colbert** and **Sgt Burns** (who were always up to mischief), **Sgt Jayaprakash Rai** (who made sure that everyone was signed for), **Cpl Barratt** (who just drove a big truck), **Cpl Gilroy** (whose patience is a virtue), **LCpl Manindra** (whose barked verbal orders were set to 'encrypted') and finally, **SSgt Brotherston** (who genuinely did pull it all together).

WO2(RQMS) Combe coaches a junior manager from Chicago Rock Café

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj M Rouse**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Abbott**

EXERCISE HOPTON BURN

Ex HOPTON BURN was a Regtl Battle Camp held in Otterburn over a 2 week period, bridging the end of February and start of March. Sp and 217 Sqns deployed out for the first week to Otterburn Camp and 222 and 248 Sqns replaced them for the second week. It can certainly be said that both pairs had remarkably different experiences due to the dramatic change in the weather going into the second week, although the wind was a massive morale factor for the whole 2 week period. The ex was broken down into 2 phases: an initial 48hr dry ex in the field, practising basic skills and a second phase; a series of live firing shoots over the rest of the week. The first night of the Battle Camp was spent in Otterburn Camp, with an initial brief and several lessons. The Sqns then deployed into the field the following morning and immediately patrolled to and occupied harbour areas before settling into routine. This was carried out with varying degrees of success, notably the 'Old and the Bold' of Sp Sqn in the form of the pair of QMs arguing (with gusto) about whose turn it was to dig in and whose it was to 'brew up'. It was good to see that across the Regt the majority took the opportunity to dig in as deep as they could go, although this may well have been more for avoiding the wind than from a tactical point of view. After the harbours had been completed, the Sqns then moved into a trg afternoon consisting of 5 stands. This is when the real difference in weather occurred, with Sp and 217 having dreadful conditions whereas a week later 222 and 248 were blessed with sunshine. The teaching stands covered a good blend of important skills and drills; sect battle drills, target indication, fire control orders, ground briefs, model making and duties of a sentry. Following these lessons it was back to the harbour and back into routine, with one of the sqns moving onto a night patrol lane; the other sqn completing this the following evening. The night patrol lane might as well have been conducted during an eclipse, for the amount of available light in the woods.

Everyone was blundering up the lane and several people narrowly avoided incurring injuries, although this was as much to do with the booby traps as the dark! The swinging sandbag on the bridge being a particular highlight for… no one. The next day was the culmination of the ex in the advance to contact, an arduous event for all the sqns with Sp Sqn OC, **Maj Dougie Craig**, describing it as 'Re-Enactment of the Falklands Campaign', with the particularly pleasant final hill (Goose Green anyone?) having 4 enemy positions on it. After a much sought after and well received call of End Ex, the Battle Camp then progressed into an excellent live firing package, the highlights of which were undoubtedly the IBSR and the CQB ranges. The fire team assessment was yet another excellent event with all of the teams doing very well. The event consisting of a mile best effort march followed by a falling plate competition, **LCpl Ghanendra Jimee's** team performed superbly to win overall. A mention has to go to the CO **Lt Col Neil Fraser** and the Adjt, **Capt Graham Clarke** who were joined by 2 of the fittest Gurkhas in the Regt for their attempt. **Cpl Surya's** priceless comment of 'Don't worry Saheb, you did OK for your age' proving that they did not come first. On the last day of the Battle Camp a CFT took place and yet again the difference in conditions was massive, with Sp and 217 battling horizontal rain and gale force winds to complete an epic 8 miles in 2 hrs, whereas the majority of 222 and 248, a week later, were battling boredom and cattle grids for 2 hrs in the sunshine.

DRIVER TRAINING ON EXERCISE HOPTON BURN

The Battle Camp served as an ideal opportunity to conduct valuable driver trg, which involved an initial test which was passed by everyone (after several attempts and **LCpl Bhim's** belt feeding of AESP 101). This was followed by sessions of off-road and on-road driving. **Cpl McEwan** succeeded in bogging-in the first veh to go cross country, which was a great highlight, although he was somewhat fortuitously saved by the MTO's quick thinking; turning the situation into an impromptu recovery lesson.

217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj S Abram**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Burdus**

EXERCISE CSI STAFFORD - *by 2Lt Pete Crawley*

On 18 February, members of the Sqn attended a team building day at Stafford University based around a forensic police investigation. The event was organised by **2Lt Crawley** and mainly attended by members of Bravo Tp looking for any excuse to get out of the garages for a day. On arrival at the University, we were split down into 3 groups, 2 of which would be collecting evidence at the scene of the 'crime' (ably led by **Cpl Thrower** and **LCpl Mcgrath**) with the 3rd, led by **Cpl McGinn** would run the Ops Room. The crime being investigated was a mock murder set up in the special 'crime house' that the University uses to train students in forensics. As a great start to the day and proving our radio tp expertise, we comprehensively failed to get comms in with the supplied hand held radios, having to resort to a runner, which **Sig O'Rourke** managed admirably! It was a good day out enjoyed by all and a good basic introduction to the way the police and forensic teams handle crime scene investigations. The boss was keen that we think about what we had learnt in terms of 4Cs and ops. On reflection we are all now in a better position to understand the types of evidence that we should hope to conserve, so the value of the day was achieved with a lot of good fun thrown in as well.

A TWIST AND A KHUKURI - *by Lt Elliot Moore*

217 Sig Sqn is the first of its kind, consisting as it does of formed troops from both the Queens Gurkha Signals and the Royal

Corps of Signals. The Sqn held its first social function in March this year. Having missed its Christmas function and therefore needing a different reason to throw a party, it seemed that as many of the troops had never worked alongside Gurkhas before, the party should be a Gurkha themed evening with dance, poetry and food. Not only did this give Alpha Tp the chance to show off the famous Khukuri dance, but also gave the OC, **Maj Abram** and his wife and the SSM, **WO2 Abbott** and his wife, to show off their daura suruwal and saris. The evening kicked off brilliantly with members of Alpha Tp performing the Khukuri dance, a cultural routine and a modern dance that saw both **Sigs Givendra** and **Pukar** break dancing and body popping. With exceptional food and great entertainment the gauntlet has been laid down for others within the Sqn to follow. A British cultural evening of fish and chips and folk music is rumoured to be in the pipe line.

THE 'A' TEAM

On 16 March, Aplha Tp took part in the annual Sports Relief event held in Stoke-on-Trent. It was a chilly Sunday morning and as usual, A Tp was on form, parading on barracks at 0830hrs with 20kg in their Bergens ready for the longer 6 mile route. The idea belonged to **LCpl Claire Chapplow** who ably pulled the Tp together. There were only 2 attachments. The Sqn OC, **Maj Abram** and **WO2(SSM) Abbott** kindly offered their support and we were more than happy to have them with us. After some debate on the fastest route to Stoke, the Tp made it to the location and decanted, ready to take on the challenge. The Tp completed 6 laps of the 1 mile route in just under 1hr 20min and raised a little over £400. To the SSM's dismay there was no "tipin-tapin" (titbits) to munch on once we had finished....Well, there's always next year!

Sports Relief Hosts the Official "A" Team

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj C Alexander**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Ingham**

SQUADRON BATTLECAMP

As ideal preparation for the Regtl Battle Camp and a useful opportunity to catch up on MATTs, the Sqn deployed to Nescliffe trg area in late February. The 4 day ex was split into 3 parts, the first day a refresher on MATTs including the much loved values and standards and also map reading. Over the following 2 days the Sqn then began a series of trg stands, including mine awareness, target indication, sect battle drills and a chance to familiarize ourselves with the pistol and the GPMG. Although by far the best lesson learned over this period was the necessity for wearing warm kit during the height of winter, highlighted by **Sig Devonport's** vain attempts to keep warm in only his CS95 working dress. Nice one. We then moved into a 24hr dry trg phase, bringing into practice some of the lessons learned. This included moving into routine in a disused barn, sending out patrols, QRF and guard for the 'comms site' location. The ex culminated in a final defence of the site against an insurgent force. The final part of the week was an inter-troop competition organized by **LCpl Watson**; a stretcher race which was an excellent way to finish off the ex with Golf Tp taking away the honours after winning convincingly.

248 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj K Jeeves**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Bharat Shrestha**

STAFFORD HALF MARATHON - *by Sig Bharat Shrestha*

The Stafford Half Marathon, which took place on 16 March, started off from the Market Place in Stafford. Lining up with the thousands of other competitors was a team from 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn, who took part in the race carrying full CEFO. After a month of preparation, the team was able to impress in front of the Stafford public, finishing the race in a very respectable 3 hours. The team were able raised an excellent £600 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust – so an excellent result all round.

CORPS SHOOTING SUCCESS

The shooting team, led by **WO2(SSM) Bharat Shrestha**, pulled a blinder in winning the Corps Operational Shooting Competition, which was held at Ash and Pirbright Ranges over the period 4 – 11 April. Individually, **WO2 Bharat** claimed Rifle Champion, Champion at Arms and Best Gunner, whilst **Lt Pete Wilson** claimed Best Young Officer. Collectively, the team won the Rural Attack, the Attack, the Urban Contact and the Para Cup matches as well as claiming Champion Team Rifle.

The team comprised: **Lt Wilson**, **WO2 Bharat Shrestha**, **Cpl Dambar**, **Cpl Netraprasad Rai**, **LCpl Anjit Tamang**, **LCpl Smith**, **LCpl Bheshraj**, **LCpl Bibahadur**, **Sig Bhakta**, **Sig Jiwan**, **Sig Lalit**, **Sig Harrison**, **Sig Dinesh** and **Sig Nirmal**. Well done guys – truly outstanding result.

WELCOME AND FAREWELL

Sp Sqn welcomes **Maj Mark Rouse** who has moved a whole 5 yards from the QM(A)'s office to that of OC Sp Sqn, **Capt Anthea Burdus** who has moved from UWO to 2IC Sp Sqn, **WO2(SSM) 'Abbo' Abbott** who has moved across from 217 Sig Sqn. **Capt Colin Milne** is now firmly in the chair as the QM Tech, ably assisted by **WO2(RQMS) Jim McEwan** and **SSgt John Blowes**. Thanks go to **Capt Tom Lappin** who has recently been unburdened of the 2IC-ship and is now enjoying being the MTO (and retention officer!). 222 Sig Sqn welcomes **2Lt John Howie** who has arrived fresh from his Tp Comds Course and **SSgt Hulse** who has finally left 7 Sig Regt after 11 years, **Cpl Taylor** from 16 Sig Regt and finally **Sig Devonport** fresh from Blandford. 217 Sig Sqn welcomes **WO2(SSM) Burdus** who arrives shortly from 30 Sig Regt, replacing **SSM Abbott**.

Elsewhere, welcomes go out to **Sig Wood** from 1 Mech Bde and **Sig Flanagan** from 2 Sig Regt. Sp Sqn bids farewell to **Maj Dougie Craig** who has moved from OC Sp to Regt 2IC, whilst also filling the post of the Station QM at Innsworth for BORONA, a post that he will soon be doing full time when he is replaced by the 2IC (Des) **Maj Russell Edwards**. A farewell also goes to **Cpl McIntyre**, who has been posted to 11 Sig Regt. 222 Sig Sqn is sad to lose **Cpl O'Connor** and **Sig Frankle** both moving out into the trials of 1(UK) Civ Div.

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col C Ford**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Brett**

250 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Anderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Lok**

COLLECTIVE TRAINING TEAM IN KABUL - *by 2Lt Harryman*

When the opportunity arose to deploy to Afghanistan with the Bde of Gurkhas, I jumped at the chance. Not long after I jumped I found myself at the departure gate at Brize Norton looking for the 6 other members of my team. I had not met any of them yet but I was about to share the 6 months with them and combined with the fact that it was my first op deployment, I felt a little apprehensive. The team had been briefed to deploy to Kabul in order to mentor the final 2 test weeks for the Afghanistan National Army's basic inf soldier trg.

The Kabul Collective Training Team

We quickly realized that the task ahead of us was not going to be an easy one. The number of soldiers that were to pass through our course was staggering. Security reform is the priority for Afghanistan and so the number of soldiers passing through was typically a little in excess of 1,500 soldiers, every 2 weeks for the full 6 months. The trg schedule was varied from sect attacks to deliberate coy urban ops. Also included in the 2 weeks were live ambushes, defence exs and recce patrols. The trg was aimed at producing a solid, robust and rounded soldier able to be deployed to the fiercest areas of fighting, including the Birish OA of Helmand Province. To make the task manageable the soldiers were split down into 4 coys, each with around 375. Sandhurst prepares you for lots of things but not for an Afghanistan coy comd turning to you, in front of his company and asking what they are going to do that day! During our 6 months we encountered many challenges that needed to be solved for the trg to move forward. However, none proved to be as great as the weather, which ranged from 3ft of snow to torrential rain to sand storms. The whole mentoring process was made a lot easier due to the relationships the teams were able to build up with the Afghan officers. This was a learning experience for me, as the Afghan psyche is a delicate animal that at times tested my mentoring skills to their maximum. The overall improvement in both the standard of soldiers leaving the trg facility and the leadership abilities of the instructors were plain to see by the time we left. As a first op tour, I could not have asked for a much better team to work with. My Nepali certainly improved and the feeling of actually making a difference goes a long way.

OP GRIMES - *by Capt Ambar Gurung*

A team of 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn from 30 Sig Regt deployed to Kuwait at the end of November last year on an op with the code named OP GRIMES. Our task was to provide Comd Sp to the Staff Officers at Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) HQ to facilitate the smooth drawdown of British troops in Iraq. Currently there are about 280 plus British troops in Kuwait as part of this task; this will increase to 500 plus by May this year. The complexity and number of CIS services that need to be provided is increasing rapidly as well. The team is led by **Capt Ambar Gurung**.
Two main systems used are Synergy Mobile Nodes (Voice and

The Defence Secretary the Rt Hon Des Browne MP, visiting the Kuwait Support Facility

Data – Coalition Secret) and Cormorant dets that provide Voice, JOCS (UK – Secret) and DII. Two Talon (mobile satellite system) dets provide resilient links back to UK. The team comprises 1 + 35 pers that includes 10 pers from 204 Sig Sqn and one RAF tech.

EXERCISE HELIUM MERCURY CYPRUS - *by Sgt Singleton*

Due to the ever changing international political climate our main ex for this year, Ex HELIUM MERCURY, changed at the eleventh hour from the wilds of Kenya to the sunshine island of Cyprus. This meant a considerable amount of extra work for all involved on the G4 side arranging new flights for both passengers and the freight. The Ops Officer being deployed at very short notice as the pre-advance to find a suitable site came up with a part tented/part building opportunity location for the HQ to be set up in. Due to the new arrangements the advance party, followed by the main body came in to Cyprus from various departure points in the UK and by various types of aircraft, with a chosen few, arriving on the Queen's flight that had been commandeered for the task! The initial build up phase is always an intense time for all involved as the priority is the working environment for the Staff Officers. Once the forward HQ was up and running, it was straight on with the rest of the build. Tents were up, powered up, furniture was in place and it was time for the Inst Techs to really earn their money installing cable and fibre networks.
The IS Eng and Sys Eng Techs were also extremely busy engineering their links and powering up the eqpt.

As usual the HQ was up and running in record time and it was time for some well earned rest, with a shift system in place. Although we didn't deploy to Kenya, the ex scenario remained unchanged and all restrictions that would have applied were strictly enforced. When the ex for the Staff Officers was over, it was all hands to the pumps as every piece of eqpt had to be taken down, checked and packed away ready for re-deployment straight away should the need arise, as the Sqn's R1 role means that we have to be ready to go in 12 hrs. The Sqn's ability was tested and found up to scratch. It was time to return to the UK to await the call in the middle of the night. In the meantime we shall continue to train hard and improve our trade and soldier skills to maintain the high standards of 250 Ghurkha Signals.

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON WIRE NOTES

OC	**Maj E Dallyn**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Robinson**

It has been a very quiet but very relaxing period for the members of 256 Sig Sqn. Having all returned safely from a busy and fulfilling tour of Helmand Province, the last 2 months have been up by normalisation and well deserved Post Tour Operational Leave. The extended leave couldn't have come at a better time as the Sqn will now be working flat out to prepare for taking on JTFHQ 1, SLE, EE Tp and many other R1 level tasks by August 08.

Who said there was no rest for the wicked?There have been too many movements to mention each individual however we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of Support Squadron, 250, 258 and five individual augmentees from 22 Sig Regt, for their hard work dedication and professionalism. Additionally we wish our replacements from 16 Sig Regt a safe tour of HELMAND Province. Congratulations go to **Sig Niki Gittus** for becoming the Combined Services Middleweight Boxing Champion.

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col SL Streete MBE TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) M Concepcion**

TA SPORTS DAY

Under the guidance of the RSM the Regt participated in the first TA Sports Day held on 9 March. The tournament, the first of its kind, was introduced to help increase the amount of sport that is played between TA units in London District. The participating units were all from TA units across the area and competed in rugby 7s, 6-a-side football, basketball, squash and finishing off with a team cross country event. The venue at Woolwich Barracks was well suited to host such an event, with copious amounts of outdoor sports pitches and sizeable indoor facilities too. However, sadly some events weren't fully subscribed only 3 participating teams took part in the rugby 7s as an example.

Nevertheless, our Regt had teams in all the competitions and performed well throughout the event, finishing in a creditable 2nd place overall. The rugby 7s team and got of to a flying start with the team captain **SSgt Hawker** scoring one of the tries, and the teams sterling efforts resulted in a well deserved victory over the London Scots.

Sadly it wasn't all glory with injuries affecting the team during the rest of the competition. Ultimately they didn't fare as well as had been hoped losing both games to the London Regt and the second match against the Scots. The six-a-side football team finished runners up overall in a tournament of 6 teams. **WO2(YofS) Bailey** captained the team and the Regt's top scorer was **Sig Pierson** from 41 Sig Sqn with 2 goals. The team narrowly missed out winning the tournament, losing to 71 Sig Regt in the final. The basketball team was captained by **Sgt Hunter** of 41 Sig Sqn and finished as runners-up. Despite losing a couple of players through injury, the side got through to the final, albeit assisted by the intervention of the OM, **Maj Pete Griffiths**, coming on as an emergency substitute! The squash team performed well under the guidance of the RSM and overall they gained a very creditable 2nd place. A cross country event concluded the day with our 3 runners securing 3rd place, assisted by an excellent performance from **Sig Londo** of 56 Sig Sqn. The competition was enjoyed by all, even by those who ended up visiting the hospital during the day and will hopefully serve as a foundation for future sporting events between London District units.

ORIENTEERING

Three members of the Regt took part in the Royal Signals Orienteering Championships at the beginning of April.

Day 1 was the individual event, a particularly physically demanding course on Hankley Common, going up the hill, down the hill, up the next hill, and then straight down the hill again! The CO, **Lt Col Sarah Streete** finished as the W40 runner up while **LCpl Ali Rowsell** finished a creditable 4th in the Open Class.

Day 2 was the Harris Relay and **Sig Sarah Clarke**; a complete novice joined the team as the 3rd runner. They did particularly well and despite missing one control, which gave them a 30 min penalty, they finished as the Corps runners up.

In the TA championships at the end of March, **Lt Col Streete** once again had a very good run and finished as winner of the W35 Class.

REGIMENTAL SKIING EXERCISE TO AUSTRIA – MARCH 2008
- by Capt Kieran Francis

Ex COCKNEY SLIDE was one of the largest AT exs the Regt has undertaken to date and took place in the North West Tirol in Austria at the height of the skiing season. Over 60 of our soldiers were involved and it proved to be as challenging and rewarding as the participants had been promised. Many of those taking part were novices or beginners and about 10 of the party had never skied before. The organisers also tried to select the younger and newer members of the unit to reinforce the point that there is so much more to being a member of the Reserve Forces than just a soldier in green. The instruction, in the capable hands of **WO2 Dave Alleyne** and **SSgt Dave Allen**, was second to none and we certainly met the aim of the ex, which was to gain as many military skiing qualifications as possible amongst those taking part. These ranged from the Basic Ski Proficiency (BSP), the Ski Touring award (STP) and the Advanced Ski Proficiency (ASP). During the evenings additional theory lessons took place and covered such practical subjects as living and working in mountain environments, mountain rescue, avalanches and the way ski eqpt works and is made. A high standard of personal fitness was a prerequisite for the ex and much use was made of hotel swimming pool and spa facilities to help unwind after physically demanding days on the slopes. During the trip we took part in an evening toboggan run, which was even more scary and testing for some than a days skiing on black slopes. This really got the adrenaline going.

Overall the ex was a great success and for many their first experience of AT in the Army. The ski trg was very intense and the whole trip was by no means an easy ride. Soldiers of all ranks were pushed to their physical limits and the experience has afforded many of the younger members of the party an opportunity to develop personal confidence and leadership skills as well as a chance to integrate with other members of the Regt. Many of those who took part have been bitten by the skiing bug and will, I'm sure, be spreading the word about the benefits and fun to be had from AT in the Army. Our thanks go to all those involved in organising the ex which proved to be a mammoth undertaking and special praise must be given to those who helped sponsor and fund the trip.

5 (QUEENS OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CL Muirson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Taylor**

EXERCISE CAMBRAI HUSSARS – BATTLEFIELD STUDY

This year may be TA 100 but it is also the 90th Anniversary of the Battle for Rifle Wood near Amiens, France where our Sqn predecessors fought and died. In memory of the event the Sqn arranged a visit to the area to study the battle. Over 18 serving soldiers, along with past members of the Sqn and friends took part in the study. These included members of the Maasz family, whose uncle was killed in the battle. The tour provided a fascinating insight into the conditions of 1918 and then put it into the context of today's battle space. The ranges and the effectiveness of weapons then and now were among the points considered – bring back the Vickers machine gun! The living conditions of soldiers, the ground and the start of the combined all arms battle were discussed. **Maj Peter Richardson** RE and **Dr John Peaty** brought the past to life and made sure all of us understood what happened, realised that effect the ground had on the battle and challenged our brains by asking us what we would do today. The tour was also brought to life when the weather turned, giving the true feeling of the mud and cold and

Sig Jurgen Brown in period uniform with his new friend

when **Sig Jurgen Brown** and **Sgt Mark Belcher** put on uniform of the day and a local farmer provided a horse the full cavalry picture was complete. They truly felt the effect of the material and

The group at the Pozieres Memorial

the variation in temperatures. The first day was made complete when a small ceremony we planned became somewhat larger after a French contact placed an article in the local paper. Over 40 local people, including the Mayor, attended the ceremony after which we were invited back to the Town Hall for a reception. More thought provoking moments followed when **Sig Sarah Elliott** found the name of her Great Grandfather at Thiepval and the group visited the memorial to the Sqn fallen members in Pozieres.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Fensome**
A/SSM	**WO2(FoS) M Byrne**

March has been a very busy month for us with 2 key activities taking place, Ex CASTLE COMMUNICATOR 1, a sqn level comms ex, and a liaison visit made by our linked US Army unit, the 114th Sig Bn. Both activities support the Sqn's primary role of providing strategic HF comms in conjunction with our opposite numbers in the US.

EXERCISE CASTLE COMMUNICATOR 1 HELD 7 – 9 MARCH 2008

We are great users of Stoney Castle Camp Site, part of the Pirbright ATE. It has sufficient space for our antenna fields (when erected, the international traffic masts cover 100 sqm), hard standings to park our LANWARDs on and the DZ hut itself, which makes the perfect admin base. In addition, Hedley Park range is nearby. The ex itself was planned by the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Justin Harris**, and our new SPSI, **SSgt Sandra Evans**. The aims of the ex were fourfold, to conduct LONGHAUL with the 114th Sig Bn, to conduct loopback testing on 2 x LANWARDs, to conduct BSS utilising an FFR Det and to undertake a range package involving the Sqn's 4 new LSWs. Before going any further, we must offer an apology to 94 (BY) Sig Sqn for plagiarising their exercise name – **Capt Harris** is an ex-Berkshire Yeoman, but in this case he was referring to Stoney Castle and the other well known one at Windsor.

The weekend itself was very successful. The loopback testing was completed and the LANWARD system proved on both insecure and secure means, thanks to some very hard work by **WO2(FofS) Mark Eastwood-Bell**, **SSgt Simon May**, **Cpl Warren 'OD' O'Driscoll** and **LCpl Carol McMillan**. Only LONGHAUL itself was marginally less successful, but the chirpcom testing worked and the 114th were able to receive all our traffic (transmission problems at their end meant that we could not always hear them). A Basic Signalling Skills package was very ably conducted by **Cpl Gareth Burgess** from 'C' Tp and the range package was run to his usual high standards by our PSI(T) **Sgt Joe Smith**. The range package was designed to test fire our 4 new LSWs and train members of the Sqn in their correct use. **Sigs Dave Neilsen** and **Rebecca Ibrahim** were soon getting some good results thanks to **Sgt Smith's** patient coaching ('bursts of 3 to 5 rounds please').

Both the OC, **Maj Jason Fensome**, and the SPSI were suitably impressed by what they saw. In the meantime, the Sqn 2IC and OC 'C' Tp, **Capt Matt Cahill**, had been busy and had attended RTMC for the UK/US exchange briefing. **Capt Harris** is going to a field hospital at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, and **Capt Cahill** has a good chance of visiting the USMC in California no less. **Matt** has since been watching the film Jarhead on a feedback loop as an essential part of his pre-deployment trg. **Capt Harris** is not that keen on being likened to various characters in MASH, but if anyone has any particularly good ideas about which character he resembles, then please send them on a postcard to Coulsdon.

UK – US LIAISON VISIT 18 – 20 MARCH 2008

As we mentioned the Sqn is linked to 114th Sig Bn. To foster improved working relationships and to progress a number of joint initiatives, the CO, **LTC Michael Hynes**, and the S3 (Ops Maj), **Maj Kevin Neumann**, were invited to visit both the Sqn and the

Regtl HQ at Southfields. Out guests were initially taken to Stoney Castle to see two of our LANWARDs deployed in a field location. They were even offered ORPs for lunch, which were consumed with polite interest. They also had an opportunity to meet numerous pers from the Sqn, including our PSAO, **Capt Bob Goulding**, our SSM, **WO2 Maurice Byrne** and **Sig Danny Hopkins**. They had not quite appreciated the fact that we operate from field locations as opposed to a fixed site, but they were suitably impressed with the scale of effort involved.

They then visited RHQ on Tuesday morning for a briefing with the CO and were then taken to both the Sqn's locations at Coulsdon and Kingston upon Thames. During the evening, they delivered a briefing on the role of the 114th to all the Officers and SNCOs of the Sqn which was very well received. Wednesday was a study day in London, with visits to both the Imperial War Museum in the morning and to the Tower of London in the afternoon with free admission to the latter being arranged by our Ops Maj, **Maj Pete Griffiths**.

The day was rounded off in style with a meal at the Pico Bar & Grill at Vauxhall Cross, hosted by the CO. In summary, it was a very enjoyable visit for all involved and our working relationship has improved further, proving that there is no substitute for face-to-face contact.

Maj Griffiths in a happy mood after selling Tower Bridge to our American cousins

We are now looking ahead to Regtl MATTs in April, followed by the PLK Dinner and Ex CASTLE COMMUNICATOR 2 in May. More news from the Kensingtons will follow then. As the Sqn motto says, 'Nothing is too hard for us.'

56 SIGNAL SQAUDRON

OC	**Maj IG Holland**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Hall**

It has been another busy start to the year with 5 recruits recently attested and the news that our previous OC, **Anthony Lamb** has picked up his Lt Col and been posted to Shrivenham as an instructor on the senior staff college course. Plenty of great quality trg has been planned and with the longer evenings on the way, evening comms exs are on the horizon for our Sqn YofS, **SSgt Rob Vincent** to co-ordinate.

We have had several guest speakers on recent drill nights, including a former member of 22 SAS who during his 14 years service, took part in the Falklands, the Iranian Embassy siege and other events that didn't make the media spotlight. **Lt Col Lamb** also returned to talk about his experiences during an op tour in Iraq last year. Both were great lectures and a real insight into areas of the British Army that many of us knew very little about.

LCpls Ben Carter and **Justin Goodchild** recently completed their Det Comds course at Blandford and **LCpl Goodchild** won the prize for best field student. This was an outstanding achievement on a course when heavy snow cold weather reminded both of them what real soldiering is all about!!

REGIMENTAL SKIING EXERCISE

The Regtl Skiing ex, which recently took place in Austria, was well supported by 17 members of the Sqn. By the end of the week, 11 of the group had passed the Basic Ski Proficiency, 1 had passed the Ski Touring award and a further 2 passed their Advanced Ski Proficiency.

One of them, not mentioning any names (**Capt Keiron Francis**), managed to pass after failing it last year! The other 6 soldiers continued to develop their novice skills but were not quite ready to attempt the Ski Touring Proficiency, which includes such disciplines as Nordic skiing and walking up the mountains on skis!

56 SQN SENDS ITS SOLDIERS OVER THE EDGE

It's the age old problem, a job needs doing and there's a tight deadline to get it done. This was the situation that **Fran Stovold**, Curator of Eastbourne's Redoubt Museum found herself in recently.

The dry moat surrounding the museum was in dire need of a tidy up, weeds and rubbish had built up over time and the only way to get down to clear it was from the top. Who are you going to call? Well in this case it was 56 Sig Sqn based at the TA Centre in Seaside who rallied round to help.

Assisted by 2 instructors, **Sgt Dave Kinnear** from the RAF and **LCpl Arianne Murray** from the RLC (herself a past member of the Sqn), some 25 soldiers abseiled into the moat to help in the clear up.

Sig Lewis wonders if she can really trust the instructor before abseiling into the moat at Eastbourne's Redoubt Museum

Additionally several other jobs were completed around the museum to help prepare for the start of the tourist season.

Not least of these was the de-rusting of an old cannon and the application of a new coat of paint. Several members of the Sqn, closely supervised by the SSM, **WO2 Steve Hall**, had a go with the chipping hammer and all agreed it was a good way to relieve stress and tension.

The OC, **Maj Dutch Holland**, commented:
"This was an ideal opportunity to present our soldiers with a real challenge and also to give something back to the local community."

32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO	**Lt Col HA Jenkins**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Wilson**

51 SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Linda Smith TD**
SSM	**WO2 Dave Riach**

SQUADRON BURNS SUPPER 9 FEBRUARY 2008
- by Cfn Chris Flockhart

After a busy day of comms trg, Sqn members and their guests gathered in The Clansman for the annual commemoration of our National Bard. The night started very well on a clear, but brisk, Aberdeen evening with everyone in high spirits. Unfortunately, due to a heavy cold, the OC was unable to attend but sent her apologies. **SSgt Davy Shand** kindly stepped in and assumed the role of addressing the haggis. At 1900hrs, the event began with a few informal drinks in the Sqn bar. At the appointed hour the party moved to the Gordon Suite and the event officially got under way. In order to foster links with other Royal Signals pers in the area, we had invited **SSM Mick Preece**, the Signals PSI from the Aberdeen UOTC, along with a few of the Officer Cadets. Our former SQMS, **George Fraser** was also present as an honoured guest.

The proceedings opened with **Cfn Chris Flockhart** undertaking the duty of carrying in the haggis. Once this was complete **SSgt Shand** addressed the haggis which was promptly served with the traditional accompaniments of neeps and tatties. Poems followed the meal from various people present, all of which were warmly received. The notable recitations included **Cpl Marc Wiggin's** "To a Mouse" which was done in a broad Wolverhampton accent, which brought both amusement and applause from the crowd. **SSM Dave Riach** did the toast to the Lassies and **Capt Lynn Bertram** responded accordingly. **Sgt Kenny Lawson** gave a performance of "The Immortal Memory" to bring the speeches to a close. The assembled guests and Sqn members then moved back to the Sqn bar and finished off the evening with some singing and more drinks. Once again an immensely successful event, which has become a firm favourite in the Sqn's social calendar.

MY FIRST REGIMENTAL TRAINING WEEKEND 21 – 23 FEBRUARY 2008 *- by Sig Hiroshi Morris*

The Friday night we left Aberdeen was a mild one. The inclement weather from the preceding days was not to be seen and the journey to Inverness was uneventful. Once there, we were given some soup and were then briefed on the following day's schedule. Saturday morning was greeted with the usual "joy", though the breakfast at least helped to sooth the passage to the day's events. These started with shooting at the ranges, though the options of completing other aspects of the Military Annual Training Tests (MATTs) courses (such as first aid, etc) were available to those who were interested. The rain had started coming down on us heavily that morning but thankfully slackened off and eventually dissipated by the time the actual shooting had begun. The shooting began with rifle shooting in various firing positions and was taken part in with relish by all members of the Sqn. This was followed by a nice change of pace with some pistol shooting which was a new experience for many and a good opportunity to experience something other than the usual rifle shooting. The last shooting event of the day was intended to be the Falling Plates Competition but the strong winds kept making the targets drop prematurely and thus it was deemed that there was no point going ahead with this ex. Next it was time for the Combat Fitness Test (CFT). This was a 6 mile hike with just over 12kg of weight carried, plus our rifles. This was new for some who had last done a CFT at the old distance of only 4 miles. The CFT was done in the strong winds which made the walk more difficult than it otherwise would have been as the wind caught the Bergens and made it difficult to balance for some. The walk was started out at a fearsome pace and later the walkers had to be slowed down to what seemed a crawl due to the need to finish within the set timings. The majority of the group that started finished the walk with no major dramas.

The rest of the day was spent wpn cleaning and travelling back to the barracks. That evening was spent by everyone relaxing, with a few more adventurous types making the journey into Inverness for the odd pint. The exceptions were the few who were selected to do the night's guard duty. With the night passing without incident, the troops all rose the next morning and had breakfast. The rooms were all tidied and the kit all stowed on the appropriate vehs. Wpns were recovered from the armoury and after a bout of further wpn cleaning and last ditch room cleaning, the vehs and occupants all made their way back to their respective places of origin. The journey back was as uneventful as the earlier drive and was made seemingly shorter by the smooth flowing traffic and the now clement weather. All in all the entire weekend, despite the weather, was an interesting one and seemed to be enjoyed by all who participated.

SQUADRON TRAINING WEEKEND 29 – 30 MARCH 2008
- by LCpl Kelly Burnett

The Sqn Recruiting Team (SRT) hosted some of the 26 recruits we have currently interested in joining the TA for a Recruiting Administration Weekend (RAW). With the new enlistment process in full swing now, the potential entrants arrived and were treated to a variety of activities. Paperwork of course dominated the weekend, but they also had briefings on the recruitment process, the Sqn, the Regt and of course the Royal Corps of Signals. An insight into mil life was given by **LCpl David 'DJ' John** by means of a mini MATTs round robin and he showed off his culinary skills in field conditions with a ration pack. The beans and sausage breakfast bag seemed the most popular. Comd tasks facilitated team bonding and helped break up the extensive paperwork. All potential entrants who attended were able to have their interviews completed and complete their BARB tests. An evening social enabled some of the recruits who did not have to attend work that evening, to meet and greet with the rest of the Sqn. All in all, the potential entrants found the RAW very informative, entertaining and helpful. The SRT look forward to hosting another in the near future with Summer Challenge 2008 fast approaching and requests to join coming in fast and furious

TA 100 REUNION

The Sqn is holding a reunion to mark TA100, on Saturday 5 July 2008, which will consist of a Ceilidh, with a Stovies supper. All current and past members of the Sqn are welcome to attend and tickets are still on sale. If you have not yet received an invitation, this will be because we do not have your contact details, so if you are interested in attending, please contact the Sqn Office on 01224 705304 or the PSAO on:
32SigRegt-51SqnPSAO@tanet.mod.uk

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Lindsay**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Poulson**

It's hard to believe it's only been 2 months since our last contribution to *The Wire* as we've been up to so much. From walking in the Highlands to charging around central Scotland in our Land Rovers, some of us even found time to attend a ball

with the Colonel in Chief. We welcome **Cpl Carr** from 2 Sig Sqn in Dundee and congratulate **Sig Harley** for winning the prize of most improved recruit during Winter Challenge.

SCOTTISH ROVER 2008

Although there was no trg organised over the first weekend in March, 4 intrepid members of the Sqn took part in Ex SCOTTISH ROVER, a driving and navigation competition held at Garelochhead and Central Scotland. As well as the wide range of trophies to be won, Strathclyde Police donated a one-day advanced driving course at their Driver Trg Department at East Kilbride. After borrowing some Land Rover Wolfs from the local Rifles bn, the teams spent much of the Friday night sticking numerous map sheets together to form a comprehensive map of the central belt of Scotland. The competition involved off-road driving, micro navigation, orienteering and much more. For their first time in the competition, **LCpl Brown** and **Sig Addicott** did extremely well, coming 29th overall (out of 70) and 10th in their class (out of 30). Seasoned veterans, **SSgt Taylor** and **SSgt McGinlay** didn't do so well and came 64th overall (after a slight navigational embarrassment) and 29th in class.

VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' BALL

In the presence of **HRH The Princess Royal**, the officers from 61 Sig Sqn had a fine evening of food, wine and dance at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh in early March. Despite not getting the chance to have a chat with the Colonel in Chief, **2Lt Hardwick** did claim that she danced with her. It has to be pointed that merely being in the same room as royalty, whilst they are dancing, hardly counts.

2Lt Hardwick and Maj Lindsay at the Volunteer Officers' Ball

EMPLOYER OPEN EVENING

We hosted an Employer Open Evening on 19 March in order to thank employers for their continued sp to members of the Sqn and to inform them about the current HRR trial and the up and coming op tour to Cyprus. It was a very successful and beneficial evening.

WEST HIGHLAND WAY

In preparation for the Caledonian Challenge in June we completed 30 miles of the West Highland Way over the Easter weekend. It was an early start at the Royal Marine lodge in Kinlochleven, so that we could get round to the start of the West Highland Way near Fort William in good time. Starting as close to the actual start point of the Caledonian Challenge as possible, we stepped off slightly before 0800hrs along an innocent looking forest track closely following **SSgt Forbes**.

It wasn't long before the path started to climb and our hardy group began to spread out. Spoilt by the occasional glimpse of Ben Nevis, it wasn't long before we emerged from the Nevis Forest and out on to the old military road taking us through the valleys towards Kinlochleven. An awful lot of tree felling has occurred since the Sqn last visited the area and it has sadly detracted from some spectacular views. Nevertheless, looming Munros and sweeping valleys continued to take our breath away as we descended into Kinlochleven for lunch.

A great big bowl of pasta bake and lentil soup saw us well prepared to charge up the hill out of Kinlochleven following the old water pipes from the aluminium factory. It was a long and challenging slog up the hill but the views out towards the Blackwater reservoir were fantastic. Now above the snow line we made it to the top of the Devil's Staircase and were very glad to be going down it rather than up the other way! A cup of tea (minus the milk) at Altnafeadh saw us right for the final few miles to the Kings House Hotel in Glencoe. This was the flattest bit of the route so far, so most of the group made good speed and soon had the finish in sight.

Training for Caledonian Challenge on The West Highland Way above Glencoe

A great day, with perfect weather (despite a horrible forecast), that provided quite an eye opener for those that haven't done the Caledonian Challenge before - especially the thought that when we finished, you would normally have another 31 miles to go! On the second day we travelled down to Beinglas to tackle the last leg of the Caledonian Challenge in reverse (and to be closer to Edinburgh for the drive home). There were fewer hills than the previous day but lots of cheeky little slopes to remind us of the hot spots on our feet. Passing some gorgeous water falls and stunning views, it only took us 2hrs to complete the route before another welcome cup of tea in Crianlarich. Many thanks to **Sgt Kelly** and **Sgt Traynor** for supporting the walkers so well and cooking us some fantastic grub.

EXERCISE CAPITAL CONVOY

With all our MATTs squared away for another trg year, we decided to have a weekend of driver trg at the end of March. After a thorough briefing and walkthrough of first parading the different vehs in the Sqn, we set about trying to complete a veh obstacle course around the TA Centre that had been set up by **LCpl Brown**. With cones and mine tape set at different heights and widths, it took a keen eye to spot where you could get the Combi through and where a Land Rover might get stuck. With **SSgt Taylor** leading the way, it was a brave soldier who stood near the course when **Capt Gaw** and **2Lt Hardwick** were having a go.

Packed lunches collected and it was time to practise our convoy and map reading drills. An interesting drive through the East Lothian countryside saw us arriving at our destination at the foot of Berwick Law in good time. Not detracting too long from their shopping spree, **Sgt Borland** and **Sgt Traynor** were on hand to give us the route card for our journey back to the TA Centre. Despite being a completely different route back, **Sig Gay** decided that the proven route was the best and took the convoy back almost exactly the way we had come, including a short detour through the wrong side of Dalkeith. Surviving our convoy drive through the Scottish countryside we headed for Cambusbarron near Stirling for some off road driving. Everyone got a chance to take a Rover around the challenging circuit, although the 2IC's comment of "you've not been off road unless you get mud on the windscreen" didn't go down well with the instructors (he did by the way). With only one broken Rover at the end of the trg, the weekend was considered a great success.

Off road driving at Cambusbarron

COMING UP

The Sqn is looking forward to MATTs testing at the end of April and then completing the Lyke Wake Walk in May as the last trg ex for the Caledonian Challenge. We'll also be working hard for the 2nd line inspections and CPX in early May.

33rd SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO — **Lt Col P S Cubbin**
RSM — **WO1(RSM) P Haughton**

42 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC — **Maj AJ Quinn**
SSM — **WO2 K Westall**

EXERCISE NORTHERN MANCUNIAN ENDEAVOUR
25 FEBRUARY– 3 MARCH 08

A party of 18 soldiers from the Sqn spent 8 days in Austria carrying out a skiing AT ex during February/March this year. The aim of the ex was to train novice skiers up to a standard which would enable them to pass the Basic Ski Proficiency Course (Alpine). The ex was organised by the PSAO, **Capt Gerry Whelan** and the Sqn OC, **Maj Andy Quinn**, was the exped leader. Sqn pers were accommodated at Walgau Kaserne, an Austrian Army barracks in Bludesch and the ex was conducted in the Arlberg ski area using several ski resorts, of which St Anton, Lech and Zurs are probably the most famous and which offer over 460km of pistes and slick lifts. The instructors were our very own **Capt Glen Martin** and **WO2 Dave Smith**, from 165 Port Regt RLC based in Southampton, who was attached as the second instructor.

The party flew from Manchester to Zurich where hire tpt was picked up for the onward journey over the Swiss/ Austrian border to Bludesch at the Western end of Austria, near Lichtenstein. Walgau Kaserne is used as a base for AT under the auspices of the UK/Austrian Bilateral Trg Programme. This is part of a reciprocal programme which covers a broad spectrum of trg intended to establish closer working relationships between the UK and Austrian mil. The camp offers comfortable barrack accn and excellent facilities with saunas, a gymnasium and the use of the SNCO's and OR's Messes and bars. The ski slopes of the Arlberg ski area are only a short trip from the camp and offer superb slopes suitable for all levels of skiers. The party split into 2 groups and spent the first 2 days on the slopes of the Sonnenkopf in the Klosterle area, in weather that started off bright and sunny but then became overcast and quite cold. This proved to be a testing time for some members of the party who needed to gain their ski legs and their confidence and for the complete beginners who struggled with the trials and tribulations of unfamiliar eqpt and the problems of staying upright for more that a few minutes.

On Day 3 it was decided to move the intermediate group to the Alpe Rouz ski slope near St Christopher which lead up to the Ulmer Hutte at well over 2000m. This offers some wide blue runs and it is possible to ski down to St Anton for lunch. The remainder stayed on the easier slopes of the Sonnenkopf. By this time the skiing was beginning to improve and although the weather remained overcast, morale was on the up as the wipe outs became a thing of the past. The complete beginners were particularly enjoying the Sonnenkopf, which is reached after a long gondola ride and where you ski in a natural basin surrounded by the snow covered Alps.

By now as everyone had entered into the swing of things and it was obvious that the instruction was beginning to pay off, the whole party moved to the Lech area for a change of scenery and the extra challenge of skiing on the slopes of the Stubenbach and the Schlegelkopf. By this stage the skiing was becoming quite respectable with snow plough turns being a thing of the past. Unfortunately, a storm hit the Arlberg area and most of the lifts had to close, which meant that skiing had to return to the Sonnenkopf where the lifts were still operating. Even here, it was too miserable to continue, which necessitated an early return to camp. However, this extra time was not wasted as it provided an opportunity for students to bush up on the written test which is now part of any ski trg course. On the final day the course assessments were carried out as the weather had improved and the sun had come out at last. A lot of lifts were still closed but good conditions prevailed on the Sonnenkopf. Happily there were no failures and everyone achieved at least a basic pass..

All too soon it seemed it was the end of the ex and time to thank our Austrian Army hosts for looking after us so well and as a mark of our appreciation, to present them with a plaque to put up in their SNCO's Mess. It was then back on the autobahn to Switzerland for the return flight to Manchester. The trip had been a memorable one and the aim of the ex had been achieved. It is

On top of the Galzig peak above St Anton with guest appearances from Capt Gerry Whelan in the blue top, and Maj Andy Quinn in the brown ski jacket

hoped to repeat the trip next year when it should be possible to run a ski touring course for the beginners of this year to enable them to attempt the advanced course in the future.

CATHY MAKES A CLEAN SWEEP

The Sqn is fortunate to have **Mrs Cathy Loftus** as its domestic employee and it is time that she had a mention in *The Wire* as she is definitely a vital member of the permanent staff team. **Cathy** is a native of Sarawak in Malaysia and lives in New Moston, Manchester where she settled when her husband, a former WO in the Medics now retired from the Army. She is an employee of SODEXO, the contract cleaning agency for most of the Defence Services these days. Due to her sunny personality and excellent work ethic which has the TA Centre looking spick and span at all times, it was decided to put **Cathy** forward for the SODEXO employee of the year award. This award is given to the employee who is not only first rate at their job but who demonstrate the friendly, efficient and reliable service that SODEXO wishes to be known for.

Cathy being presented with her certificate by Mr Andrew Stones, Group Manager SODEXO Defence flanked by Mr Aaron Ainslie, SODEXO Area Manager and the PSAO, Capt Gerry Whelan

As a result of the representation by the Sqn, **Cathy** received the best employee in the North West District (£25.00 cheque), best employee in the 2 Div area (£50.00 cheque) and finally best employee in the UK, Cyprus and the Falklands (£100.00 cheque). As SODEXO employ over 9000 people across these areas, this is no mean achievement and certainly a remarkable clean sweep of awards. Well done **Cathy**!

55 (HEADQUARTERS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj M Turnbull**
SSM	**WO2 Coburn**

Fifteen volunteers from 33 Sig Regt's LAD, led by **Capt Mal Pool**, dedicated 2 weekends of their own time for the benefit of the League of Welldoers, a Liverpool inner city charity that has been established for over 100 years and today mainly helps the senior citizens in the area.

Some of the Volunteers are civilian tradesmen in 'their day jobs', electricians, carpenters, painters and even one with demolition experience.

Their ex was twofold, the first was a mammoth task to remove an outside metal stairway as vandals were able to use it to get onto the roof and either break in or cause damage.

The second task was to transform a large room into a luxurious lounge with a snooker room for the elderly to use after they have feasted on their subsidised lunches. When the League was first founded in 1893 it was for the benefit of the poor families in the area and one of its aims was to deliver meals to 22 schools in Everton, Bootle and the surrounding areas for the children who could not afford a meal.

They receive no grants and have to do their own entire fund raising themselves plus they receive very kind public donations. Their president is the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, **Dame Lorna Muirhead**.

The Team led by Capt Mal Pool

BODY PUMP - *by Cpl Pete McDermont*

Ever felt like your PTI was trying to kill you? Well forget about it because here at 33 Sig Regt we've discovered (or should I say the Trg Maj, **Maj Boyle**, has discovered) a new form of torture called "Body Pump".

Body pump is basically low weights hi reps weight trg set to music over a 1 hr period; each song concentrating on a different muscle group, at the end of which you are left in absolute tatters.

This was done as our weekly permanent staff PT lesson courtesy of Green's Health and Fitness centre in Liverpool and their lovely instructor **Lucy**.

As you wouls expect there was a twist, we did it wearing combat 95 trousers, stable belts and Army T-Shirts, all in the aim of a little publicity for our Regt. All in all though it was greatly enjoyed by everyone and was a welcome break from the norm.

It was the best attended lesson I've seen at Permanent Staff PT and I think that may have more to do with **Lucy** than anything else!

Permanent Staff PT led by Lucy

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col MJ Finch**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Legg**

At the beginning of this year we said goodbye and all the best to **Lt Col David Sixsmith**, who is now enjoying the snow in Sarajevo and hello to **Lt Col Mark Finch**. We like to keep it in the family as **Lt Col Finch** is an ex-OC of 49 Sig Sqn and so it is a welcome return to him. We have also said goodbye to our Adjt, **Capt Jane Ellis** who has left us for sunny Blandford and so hello and welcome to **Capt Ian Flannery**.

49 (WEST RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Jenny Bowes**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Mark Alexander**

30 YEARS SERVICE - *by WO2 M Alexander*

WO2 Alexander and SSgt Mason

Having arrived at Newcastle train station early one morning, we were met by a **Cpl Hardacker**. He directed us to transport leaving soon for the Albemarle Barracks, Ouston. It was 7 September 1977. We were only 16 years old. We got off the transport and were directed to our block. We were Battleaxe Tp 1st block right hand side of the Barracks, part of 2 Sqn, 11 Sig Regt, Junior Signalman Wing. There were 12 persons in our room. I talked to the person in the next bed first, **Junior Sig Frank Mason**. We spent 6 months together becoming good friends. Whilst on basic trg the Tp won all of the sports competitions, but came last in the drill. For some reason our Tp was rubbish at drill. After many runs around the runway and yes having to pass our cap badge drill, we eventually passed of as Champion Troop in April 1978.Due to the fireman strikes and other incidents around this time, all trade trg was put back. I was delayed by 3 months before going to 8 Sig Regt for my trade trg. **Frank** was not delayed, so by the time I arrived he had finished his course as an ED and moved to Germany. I trained first as an RTG then trade re-allocated to Combat Radio Op, as Morse used to put me to sleep. I could still read up to 15 words per minute.

Frank Mason	**Mark Alexander**
7 Sig Regt	2 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt (L Cpl)
Army Apprentice College (LCpl)	266 Sig Sqn (Falkland Islands)
22 Sig Regt (Cpl)	2 Inf Div HQ & Sig Regt (Cpl)
2 Sig Regt. Left Reg Svc Oct 1993	16 Sig Regt
Joined 34 Sig Regt	8 Sig Regt (Sgt)
49 Sig Sqn (Sgt)	2 Sig Regt. Left Reg Svc Oct 1994
Promoted to SSgt 2005	Joined 34 Sig Regt
Currently with 745 Tp, Hull	49 Sig Sqn (Sgt)
Promoted to SSgt 2004	Promoted to WO2 Feb 2007

As you can see our paths have crossed on a number of occasions, a memorable one being at the filling station at Wankum, West Germany. **Frank** and I have remained good friends throughout our careers, even though we lost touch for some time. I hope we will have many more good years serving together in the Army and especially with 34 Sig Regt.

50 (NORTHERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Simon Smith**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Carole-Ann Philips**

This quarter has been action packed with exs aimed at keeping the Sqn's mil and comms skills up to date.

EXERCISE SPECKLED JIM HELD 22 – 24 FEBRUARY 08

During February this year, members of 50 Sig Sqn carried out a mil skills orientated weekend focusing on low level inf skills. Following kit checks and Orders, the Task Force deployed via Bedford to Catterick trg area and established their FOB in Rabbit Wood. The 2 fire teams took it in turns to patrol across the area and after both had familiarised themselves with the trg area (read faulty navigation for the first few serials!), the ex began to pick up momentum. The Task Force was detailed to carry out a wide range of tasks from agent RVs to establishing OPs overlooking enemy positions.

Just when the Task Force thought that they had the measure of the weekend, Delta Team were forcibly abducted at a Veh RV by the massive **SSgt Blair** and equally enormous **SSgt Heathcote**! **Sgt McCluskey** insists that he fought the enemy off for as long as possible but eventually succumbed and Delta Team were bundled into the back of a Rover and dumped at an unknown location.

Ex SPECKLED JIM – Group photo

After Delta Team had been recovered from their ordeal by friendly forces, Charlie Team was dispatched on a CTR. **2Lt 'Jedi' Seaton** and **Sig 'Crazy Eyes' Gardiner** successfully reconnoitred the enemy FOB and a deliberate attack was planned for dawn. Although the attack successfully captured the enemy FOB, the area was not secure and the Task Force had to asslt further enemy depth positions, which were inconveniently up-hill and on the opposite side of a marsh! In the asslt **Sig Gardiner** and **Sgt McCluskey** were lost due to injury, which resulted in **Sgt Cansfield** and **SSgt Fletcher** switching sides and assisting in the destruction of the remnants of the enemy forces.

Thanks to the Sqn FofS, **SSgt Read** for taking time out of his busy kayaking timetable to organise a challenging, but rewarding weekend!

EXERCISE SPRING FALCON HELD 7 – 9 MARCH 08.

Ex SPRING FALCON 08 was a 12 Sig Gp ex designed to test the C^2 and R^2 procedures at all levels of group with the emphasis on comms skills and refreshing individual knowledge of the Ptarmigan eqpt.

Fresh from his TA Tp Comds course, **2Lt Seaton** successfully delivered his first set of Trunk Comms orders. On the move into location he succeeded in taking the Trunk Node on only one minor detour around the picturesque villages of Oxton and Bolton Percy. Then when **SSgts Blair** and **Standing** had 'cleared' and recced the planned location on Appleton Roebuck Airfield, the Trunk Node began establishing itself with only one minor objection from **SSgt Heathcote** who discovered that he had been sited next to 10 tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate! Even though he gave up cigarettes 7 weeks ago, he still didn't feel comfortable with the position of his FFR and promptly moved to a more high profile location at the entrance to the site!

As usual the set up of the Trunk Node (TN) by 50 Sqn was swift and sure and they were forced to wait for some of the other TNs to catch up! Following **SSgt Heathcote** establishing comms first (with his 7km VHF and HF link to Ech) the TN settled into normal routine, with visits from **Maj Smith** and **Lt Col Finch** over the weekend. Despite the short range of the links the ex was useful trg for the younger members of the Tp and on the route in **SSgt Standing** was fascinated to hear about **Sig 'Flyman' Fosker's** university dissertation on cutting hairs off flies to examine their aerodynamic properties! Congratulations from the whole Sqn to **Sgt Cansfield** who bit the bullet and proposed on Valentine's Day to **Angela**, who was crazy enough to accept!

90 (NORTH RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

A/OC	**Capt Brad Hogg**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Ian Evans**

EXERCISE MARTIAL ARTS – PATROLLING SKILLS WEEKEND

Eight soldiers from the Regt undertook a gruelling weekend of trg in patrolling skills in order to prepare the Regt's team for Ex MARTIAL MERLIN, 15 Bde's Annual Patrolling Competition. Set on Catterick Trg Area, the patrol moved with full patrol kit in order to get used to carrying enough weight to operate as a long-range recce patrol. Along the route the team undertook trg serials on Agent RVs, Casualty Evacuation and Mine Clearance, and Close Target Recces. Throughout the trg the teams were subjected to memorising a selection of foreign wpns – by the end of the weekend they were confirmed spotters! The team combined with the RMC for map reading and quickly proved their ability to move over ground quickly and accurately with bergens.

Sgt Dave Knapman took on the role as patrol comd and developed the team's SOPs in all areas such as obstacle crossing and contact drills. In the evening the team were briefed and rehearsed for a CTR on an enemy location. The team marched to an agent RV, at which a veh was supplied to move the patrol closer to the target. In order to ensure the team didn't get an easy ride the vehs were ambushed and the patrols had to break contact and move on foot to the location. One veh found that if you can't open the back doors of the vehicle quickly – you soon become a sitting duck! The team then moved onto the target and moved back to the FOB, where they debriefed the Int Officer. The next morning, after CNR and Media Ops lessons, the team prepared for a cheeky CFT from Green Hut which was a great way to end the weekend. The team deploys on the competition on the weekend of the 14 – 16 March – so watch this space for how they get on!

35th (SOUTH MIDLAND) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col MG Hanson**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Overton**

COMMANDING OFFICERS FOREWORD

The Regt has now sent our 15 strong cohort to join 22 Sig Regt on Op HERRICK and I know that we all have every confidence in **Capt Penny Mell**, her NCOs and Soldiers in their ability to do the job and to acquit themselves in the finest traditions of the Regt. Our newly created Command Leadership Wing rose to the challenge of not only conducting Regtl Phase 1A Trg but in preparing our HERRICK soldiers for what lay ahead. Well done to all.

We once again have had to say a sad farewell. First to our Hon Col, **Col Brian Foxton** who was the staunchest of supporters of the Regt and we thank him and his lovely wife **Carolyn** for all their help and support over the years. We have also had to say farewell to **Maj John Middler**, again a stalwart member of the Regt and his work on organising and running the AT side of things in the Regt will be sorely missed. We also have **John** to thank for managing the Regt's change in personal admin on to the JPA system, which was not without its problems and had **John** burning the midnight oil on more than one occasion.

We are also about to say farewell to **Maj Dave (Stacks) Strachini** our QM who has worked tirelessly during his tenure to ensure that everything is where it should be when people want it and in the right amount. **Dave**, we could not have done it without you – many thanks. But the exodus on the G4 side doesn't end there we also bid farewell to **WO2(RQMS) Doe** and his Sp Sqn side kick **SSgt(SQMS) Rutherford**. Gentlemen, was it something I said? Seriously, we all wish you well in your new posts. One of the prices we pay for having bright and dynamic young TA officers in the Regt is that they are just as fantastic in their civilian jobs as they are in their TA roles, so it comes as little surprise that **Lts Warren Cain** and **Rachael Stanley** have been promoted in their civilian jobs and sadly this has meant that they have moved away from the Unit. It is always tough losing young officers but the loss of these 2 officers will be felt across the Regt. Nevertheless, we do look forward to seeing both again and wish them well for the future.

The Regt has once again, under the direction of the ROSO, **Capt Bob Bath** taken the bull by the horns in the field of recruiting and led the Bde on a 4 month Bde wide recruiting Surge. This started in sp of the ACE (Midlands Soldier) in February and continued into May, ensuring that both the DE TAPO campaign and Midlands Challenge were well advertised and supported on the streets in the West Midlands.

SUPPORT SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj William Henderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Mair**

- by Capt Nav Muhammad

Sp Sqn has been particularly busy continuing to act as the focal point for the essential services for the other Sqns. Special thanks must go not only to the QM and his team for being there for everyone, and producing endless steams of kit seemingly out of

no-where, but to **WO1 Mick Doherty** our MTO who again manages to produce vehs, drivers and solutions to everyone's tpt problems, and there are many, without breaking his stride or dampening his good humour. I know that without the QM and MTO, the ROSO would have struggled with the Bde recruiting Surge and especially with the deployment of the Regtl recruiting caravan and its ever deflating tyres.

On the recruiting front, we have had to manage without our omnipresent recruiter, **Cpl Tom Oldfield** who has put himself forward for TAPO Trg (Good luck with that) and still manage to support the ROSO in his efforts to make us the best manned Regt in the world, with events like the Ricoh Arena Youth Conference, Skills West Midlands which saw our soldiers manning the National Recruiting Stand in sp of the Regular Army in the Midlands and the Soldiers were commended by the AFCO Community Liaison Officer (CLO) for their professionalism, so well done to those that took part.

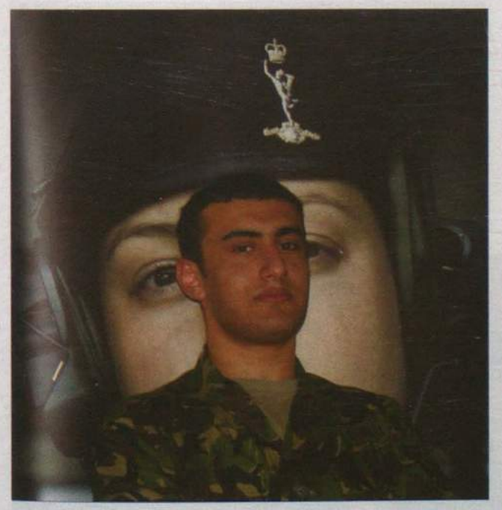
We continue to support the Regular Army's Insight Courses with the provision of our ever willing to help, **Cpl Cantrell** who acts as the female chaperone and instructor on the all female "Army Insight Courses" at what is sometimes quite short notice.

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Paul Rodenhurst**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Stowell**

EXERCISE MERCURY MARKET - *by SSgt Jeffers Ford*

There has been a huge run on recruiting for the past few months and 48 Sqn has played its part to the full. We kicked off the year in the centre of Birmingham with the BRMB (Local Radio) jobs fair and then began a series of visits to Birmingham University to the Students Union Jobs Fairs and from there to the Birmingham College of Food Technology in sp of the Regular Army Careers Advisor (Soldier)



Sig Dhalhai at Birmingham University posing in a really big beret

The ROSO has also managed to secure a regular pitch in one of the main town centre shopping precincts, which although only 200m from an Armed Forces Careers Office (AFCO) is staggeringly busy every time we go. This is great news for the Sqn and for One Army Recruiting (OAR) as we are regularly wheeling enquirers round to the Careers Office. We have had to say a brief farewell to the longest serving member of our recruiting team here in 48, **Cpl Zoe Trimm**, who has gone on deployment with 22 Sig Regt. Best of luck **Zoe** from all in 48.

LCpl Appleyard in front of the recruiting display

58 (STAFFORDSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj David McCormack**
SSM	**SSgt(ASSM) Purdon**

UNIFORMED SERVICES DAY – 1 MARCH 08 - *by LCpl Phillips*

Knowing that the ROSO was planning a recruiting Surge, we in fighting 58 took the initiative and organised an Army in Society (AiS) event that would include all of the local Uniformed Services, holding an open day here at our TAC. This was made possible by the efforts of **SSgt Heesom**, who is also a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

We were doubly fortunate as a member of the Sqn was a friend of the "Big Brother 4 Twins" and asked them if they would come along and support the event. To their credit they said they would and I have to say they were the main attraction of the day and wore out several pens signing autographs. Girls a great big "Thanks You" you made everyone's day.

The Big Brother Twins with LCpl Phillips – the happiest man in NATO

We also support our local AFCO by sending a TA Recruiter to the Office every Thursday to brief any potential TA recruits and while that is going on I ensure that we are booked into the Market Square once a month to 'Keep the Army in the Public Eye' (KAPE) as well as OAR.

Once again 58 Sqn led the way and provided nearly all of the sp and eqpt for the ROSO on Ex MIDLANDS SOLDIER which was the Bde ACE and saw us supporting the Corps Recruiting Team.

89 (WARWICKSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Chris Moseley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Wright**

- by Capt John Standen

The Sqn has been very busy with its veh fleet and preparing our soldiers for deployment and recruit trg but we have still found time to play our part in the ROSO grand scheme to recruit from every corner of the globe. We have also taken part in Ex MERCURY MARKET, supporting the Regular Army by using our Regtl recruiting caravan as a recruiting clinic in Rugby town centre. We deploy and man the caravan every Tuesday for 6 hrs along with a Regular Army Recruiting SNCO from Coventry ACIO. This is proving so fruitful that the OC of the AFCO is looking at shop premises to make the clinic a more permanent fixture in the town. This can only be good for the Sqn and the Regular Army.

95 (SHROPSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Ann Downie**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) McIntosh**

- by LCpl Sophia Appleyard

Is no one safe from the ROSO? We too have been conscripted into the many recruiting events that are making up Ex MERCURY MARKET. I have to thank **SSgt Paul Stewart** as he is the one who took care of all of the town centre bookings for the Recruiting Surge which will see the Sqn having soldiers deployed for nearly 6 weeks of the Surge. This has given the SPSIs and the PSAO all sorts of challenges, when balanced with the rest of the trg going on but we seem to cope. Shrewsbury is a particularly difficult nut to crack on the recruiting front as there is high employment and a good social scene, so people in the town and surrounding area tend not to have "spare time" that they could dedicate to the TA, but that then is why we are investing so much time and effort into KAPE around the town over the next year. I have just got to grips with TRHA, the recruit processing system and having been given outreach trg by the Bde Recruiting Advisory Team (BRAT), I am now playing a full and active part as the Sqn's recruiter and hope that my efforts will see the Sqn go from strength to strength.

REGIMENTAL RECRUITING *- by Capt Bath (ROSO)*

You will have noticed that there is a very strong recruiting theme running through this edition of the notes and I make no apologies for that, I have pushed the Regt hard on the recruiting front and I know that I have tested most Sqns to their recruiting limits. What I will say is that I set an ambitious goal for the Regt in the beginning of the year to organise and run a Bde level recruiting surge across the West Midlands that would include all other TA Units and the Regular Army Offices. I would suggest that this is not something TA Units do very often and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the OC's PSAOs but especially my Sub-Unit Recruiters for rising to the challenge. In the last year alone you have put 132 soldiers into trg for the Regt, identified 15 potential officers and passed over 200 enquiries to other Units and the Regular Army and for that you have my gratitude and my admiration. Well done!

36th (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col M Lansdown TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) JF Lyons**

CHANGE OF COMMAND

The Regt wishes **Lt Col Mark Smith TD, Margaret** and the boys all the best for the future and good luck in your new appointment at HQ 49 (E) Bde. The Regt welcomes the new CO, **Lt Col Mike Lansdown TD,** his wife **Jane** and family who assumed his new appointment on 16 January 08.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Regt has seen a high turnover of staff in the past few months. Amongst the permanent staff departures are **Sgt Guy Bufton** to 7 Armd Bde, **Sgt Tony Aspden** and **WO2(FofS) Nige Kenyon** who leaves on promotion to Cyprus. Also leaving the unit are a few of the NRPS "rocks" which the Regt will miss greatly. **SSgt(SQMS) Geordie Pattison** moves on to a new NRPS post in Colchester, co-located with 45 Sig Sqn. PSAO 45 Sig Sqn, **Capt Rod Allen** leaves us after long and dedicated service both regular and TA for a well deserved retirement.

WO2(DMTWO) Dave Gilbert leaves on promotion to Capt to take up his new post as a PSAO with The Rifles. The Regt would like to wish all those leaving the very best for the future.

Thankfully there are some new arrivals to take up the slack and the Regt welcomes **SSgt Paul Bury, Sgt Les Longworth** and **Sgt Matt Griffiths** to the fold.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to the CO's Driver, **LCpl Mickey Harvey** on his selection for promotion to Cpl, **Sgt Les Longworth** on his selection for promotion to SSgt and **WO2(FofS) Nige Kenyon** on selection for promotion to WO1.

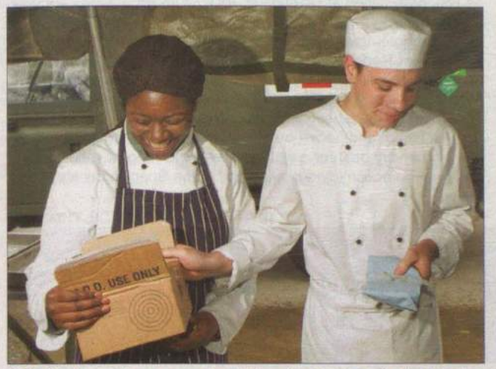
54 (EAST ANGLIAN) SUPPORT SQUADRON - ILFORD

OC	**Maj G Shelley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) R Price**

At 1400hrs on Saturday 5 April 2008, the Mayor of Cambridge, **Cllr Jenny Bailey** and MP for Cambridge, **Mr David Howarth,** joined **Brig Jim Richardson MBE,** Comd 49 (East) Bde, **Brig David Hargreaves,** Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, Hon Col, **Maj Gen (Retd) Seumas Kerr** and the CO, **Lt Col Mike Lansdown** at the TA Centre in Coldhams Lane, Cambridge to lay the Foundation Stone for the new RHQ building.

Brig Richardson lays the foundation stone assisted by Cllr Jenny Bailey while Mr David Howarth MP and the CO look on

The new RHQ is being built alongside the existing buildings now occupied by 54 Sp Sqn and will also include a new Officers Mess, Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess and QM Dept. **Brig Richardson** laid the Foundation Stone and welcomed all to the ceremony. Following the stone laying ceremony, the guests visited the recruiting stands set up by members of Sp Sqn led by the SSM, **WO2 Rob Price**. Up until now the weather had been fairly kind to us but at this moment the heavens opened and by the time everybody had assembled in the tented area, where a field kitchen was being demonstrated, an inch of hailstones had fallen. **WO2 Miller-Kight** and her chefs put on a good show and **Pte Route** received a present from the Hon Col in the form of promotion to LCpl and his new stripe was issued to him in a 24 hr ration pack box.



Pte Route receives a surprise in his ration pack while the Master Chef looks on

Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig Hargreaves**, showed a keen interest in the AGV stand which was manned by **Sgt Whitcomb** and **Cpl Evans** who is currently on Full Time Reserve Service supporting 216 Sig Sqn by providing an uplift to the Unit Welfare staff.

Brig Hargreaves visits Cpl Evans and Sgt Whitcomb in the AGV Recruiting Stand

The VIPs and guests then made their way back into the Cambridge University Officers' Mess where a curry lunch with Champagne and Bucks Fizz was laid on. The remains of the latter and an additional special feast made by the Sqn chefs were sent into the Junior Ranks Bar where it was polished off with gusto. The new building is due to be completed towards the end of this year and we are all eagerly awaiting the move which will consolidate the new RHQ and the existing Sp Sqn.

PERMANENT STAFF ADVENTURE TRAINING – EXERCISE HERMES ARLBERG DRAGON *- by WO2(FofS) Nige Kenyon*

Ex HERMES ARLBERG DRAGON was an AT ex to the Arlberg area of Austria for the permanent staff of the Regt to qualify for Basic Ski Proficiency. The initial numbers were good but due to work commitments and personal circumstances the party consisted of just 9 permanent staff. We set off from Ilford on 10 February, in our less than comfortable rather battered, smelly LDV minibus. **RSM Jim Lyons** and **Capt Simon Limbrey** were in the much more comfortable Focus! We crossed via the tunnel and headed for Elmpt which would be our overnight stop. We arrived in good time. We then got ourselves off to the Imbiss outside camp to re-acquaint ourselves with the German cuisine, which we all agreed was the best we had tasted in years. We then had a few wets in the bar and headed off to bed.

Up bright and early and with SATNAV loaded, we set off. It worked like a dream and we arrived in the early evening at our accn for the week, the Austrian Army Camp at Nenzing. We went straight in for scoff and were amazed at the culinary delight before us, pasta covered in what could best be described as tomato soup, needless to say that was the last evening meal we had in there!

The next day was our first day of skiing and we collected our hire kit from Sonnenburg and then headed off up the cable car to the drop off point midway up the mountain. This was our first challenge as we had to ski off to the restaurant area, our base for the day, some got down without falling but others were not so lucky. The first problem for our instructor, **WO1 Lyons** was that he had a group with 3 ability levels, and although he is a big lad he can't split himself three ways! The ones who had skied before, but by no means experienced were **Capt Limbrey, WO2(RQMS) Tony Wringe**, myself and **SSgt Dave Berry**. The novices were **Sgt Brian Wilkinson, Sgt Paul Wheman** and **Sgt Woz Wright**. Last but by no means least, was **LCpl Mickey Harvey** who had never skied before.

The next challenge was the first T-bar lift, again some came off unscathed but the ones that fell inevitably blamed the person who was smiling/openly mocking and leaving him in the snow, heading off up the hill on the lift. The one left in the snow was then subject to the humility of apologising to all the Austrians and Germans who were rolling their eyes and impatiently waiting behind. We had a good first day and most of us got our ski legs back. Some skied off the mountain and the rest went down on the lift.

The RSM watches as SSgt Dave Berry makes his mind up

We then met in the Kelo Bar at the bottom of the mountain and proceeded with some après ski. Four or five large beers later we staggered in our ski boots back to the minibus and went back to the Austrian camp. An early night lay ahead.

The following day we travelled to Lech and continued to improve our skills under the Badge's instruction.

Others were finding it a little more difficult to grasp the basics of staying upright and turning and stopping and listening! It was another good day but less après ski this time!

Day 3 was spent at St Anton, where the slopes were glorious, the weather fine and the 'views' spectacular. The advanced group went off and did a couple of easy Black runs, where we bumped into some REME guys who were also staying at Nenzing. One commented "Week 2 and it's good to get on the Black runs" to which **WO2 Tony Wringe** replied "Week 2! This is Day 3!"

During the rest of the week we did some serious skiing and covered loads of miles, it was a fantastic week and we all gained a massive amount of experience and came on in our skiing ability. Thanks to the excellent instruction we all passed our Basic Ski Proficiency.

45 (ESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON – COLCHESTER

OC **Maj Stuart Rowson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Tara Pun**

The first 3 months of 2008 have been another busy and challenging period for the Sqn with 3 Sqn level exs, a MATTs weekend and Ex HERMES ISONOMY 3. The series of 3 Sqn level exs were put together by our Ops team under the leadership of **WO2(YofS) Dave Monk** and **SSgt Mick Clarke**. Starting off with 2 weekends trg around Colchester TAC practising our UK Ops role the series of exs culminated in Ex RED COMM 3 where the Sqn deployed to STANTA in early March for a field ex based on a flooding scenario in East Anglia. From a trg perspective, this was an extremely successful weekend particularly as this was the first occasion in the field where our new eqpt, EDWIN, was deployed and setup by a team of our own techs ably led by **LCpl Chris Freebody.**

Ex HERMES ISONOMY 3 saw the Sqn deploy with the Regt to locations at Woodbridge Airstation, BT Martlesham Heath and (worryingly for the Dets concerned) Her Majesty's Prison Hollesley Bay. Again this was a UK Ops scenario and another successful test of the Sqn's ability to rapidly deploy setup and establish comms with what is, to many of the soldiers, relatively new and very different eqpt.

We would like to wish departing PSI's **Sgts Guy Bufton** and **Tony Aspden** good luck with their new postings and thank them for their time with the Sqn. We would also like to welcome new arrivals **SSgt Paul (Buz) Bury** as SPSI and **Sgt Les Longworth** as PSI, both based at Colchester TAC.

On a sad note, from our point of view but probably not his, our PSAO **Capt Rod Allen** has finally retired from the Army after over 30 years service, originally with the Royal Anglians and then latterly with the Royal Signals. His sound advice, patience and good humour have been invaluable to the Sqn and, in particular, the SHQ team and he will be sorely missed by all ranks. We wish him all the very best for a well deserved and lengthy retirement and trust he doesn't find playing golf in the Spanish sunshine too taxing.

37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO **Lt Col JE Sutton**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DE Cupit**

EXERCISE VIXENS CHALLENGE 22 – 24 FEBRUARY

Ex VIXENS CHALLENGE was the Inter-Sqn mil skills competition. The vehs were loaded and driven down to Sennybridge camp where after the usual briefings, putting the wpns into the armoury and other admin, we went to our accn and were delighted to find that we had a block to ourselves. That joy disappeared later when another Sqn stumbled in as we were trying to get to sleep!

In the morning, we set off to Dixie's Corner, out on the beautiful Sennybridge area but the weather was not kind to us. We were in low cloud which was scraping the ridges, so it was misty at the top of the hill, and raining at the bottom. Undaunted by the weather, or the fact that the radio didn't work, we set off to our first stand. This was an unmanned stand, which is an orienteering style control post, where you show you have found it by punching a control card with a needle punch. It was then on to our first manned stand. Here we found **SSgt Sammy Lee** at the start of the Asslt Course (which was sadly out of bounds this weekend). Our first mission was to patrol through 'enemy' territory and retrieve a casualty. The casualty in this case was a dummy, which we had to lift on a poncho and stretcher 'him' back to safety. To make sure that we treated the casualty gently, 'he' had four eggs in various pockets, and each one broken would reduce our score. At the end we had only broken one. Then on with the cross country tabbing. We picked up another unmanned checkpoint, then reached our 2nd manned stand.

SSgt Chris Moore was running the Sect Asslt portion of the day. We stopped for lunch and after a warm drink and some rations, morale started to go up. We received our orders from **LCpl Ollie Twist** and then waited for the signal to attack the building. In this case, the signal was a mortar barrage, which when it ended meant it was time for us to asslt the farmhouse. With **Sig Stitch Taylor** and **Sig Baloo Macham** giving covering fire from a bunker above the ridge, **LCpl Ratty Ratcliffe** and **Sig Smudge Jones** rushed the farmhouse, while **Ollie** and **Sig Doc Savage** backed them up. Our plan wasn't quite the DS solution, but it did get the adrenaline up as we blatted off blank rounds and it made a change from trudging up hills through thick grass in the rain. After our debrief and NSPs, we moved on to our next manned stand, which was 'Survival'. This started with a quick talk on survival techniques, with a demonstration of improvised shelters, water collecting techniques, some basic animal traps and impromptu clothing. Then it was our turn. Given a few basic items such as hessian sacks, plastic bags, string and tape, we had to create an outfit for survival as well as a wpn and a bag.

We did quite well with socks, trousers, a jacket and a hat all made out of sacks, waterproofs lashed together from poly bags and 2 wpns. The spear wasn't great but the stone lashed to a short stick made a very effective club/axe.

The proof of the pudding was in the eating, so our model, **Smudge**, had to run a short distance wearing his new clothes and when he reached a mark, he had to try to hit a target with his wpns. The spear **Sig Macham** made didn't fly straight but the axe hit dead centre. It was disappointing to have to leave that stand, as it was only scratching the surface of a subject that is rarely covered during normal trg. As we made our way across the valley towards our next checkpoint, the local hunt crossed our path, so we were briefly surrounded by fox-hounds. We approached our last manned checkpoint of the day, the observation stand. We were the only team of the day to choose this particular stand and the look on the face of the DS as we approached showed that he

Sig Smudge Smith modeling the latest in home made fashion for living off the land

was happy to be doing something at last. His joy was short-lived, as we played our joker, giving us full marks, without having to do the comd task.

The day was drawing to a close as we set off looking for our last 2 unmanned checkpoints. We had a little trouble locating the 1st, and a longish tab to the 2nd. As we headed back to the final RV, we had stuck to our planned route and timings pretty precisely. We had to pause on the final leg, as there were penalties for going in too early, as well as for being late. Finally we got to Farmhouse 16, and were able to relax with a beer and socialize with the other teams. Then it was back to the camp to do our personal admin such as heat up our rations, get a shower, and some sleep. Sunday was another hard day. All the sects had to have a team of 7, to do a 2½ mile tab, with webbing and rifle, followed by another mile carrying a stretcher. This was the finale of the weekend's activities, and as all the competitors cooled down afterwards, the points were totaled and the results calculated. We had a final parade, where the CO presented the Shield to the winners. Then it was time to head back to our TA Centres. We finished the day with smiles on our faces, happy that it was over, but proud of having taken part.

SUPPORT SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Riley**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Mansell**

Recently there have been a few arduous exs for Sp Sqn, so it was a good time for an 'educational trip' to be arranged. **SSgt Sammy Lee** took control of organising a variety of visits for the Sqn, calling in favours from his questionable past. The Sqn arrived on the Friday evening to find that the inevitable 'Values and Standards' had not escaped the trip. **WO2 Draper** was on hand to go through this MATT trg, following it with 'The Laws of Armed Conflict' – leaving the rest of the Sqn wondering what he had planned for us! The rest of the night was spent in the Junior Ranks Club. Some members of the Sqn were not told about the early reveille – until too late.

It was barely Saturday morning when we were up and mounting the minibus in our suits. **SSgt Lee** had organised a walk and talk through with the Household Cavalry and just 3 hrs after leaving Redditch, we were at Hyde Park Barracks. **LCoH Giles Tingley** had been commandeered from the Blues and Royals for the morning to show us the life, sights and certainly the smells of the Household Cavalry. We began with a walk around the stable blocks – with a recent multi-million pound refurbishment, the stables are looking better than the soldiers' accommodation!

With some of the most beautiful horses that many of us had ever set our eyes on, we began to become jealous of the Cavalry. This soon changed, when **LCoH Tingley** explained the hours and work that goes in for this old regt. Six day weeks of 18 hr days are commonplace for the first few years as a Tpr, and not forgetting the repetitive strain injuries many must suffer, judging by the polishing of their boots!

"I'm the best looking one in this picture" says horse

We were then ushered to the parade square of the tiny barracks to watch an inspection of the soon-to-go Queen's Guards. This was an emotional experience for all! The Tprs on horseback are brought to attention with their swords. From here an inspection takes place, with the usual amount of screamed orders you would expect from a ceremonial regt.

LCoH Tingley had one other part of the all purpose barracks left to show us. We were marshalled into a small room with 4 ovens, one of which was blazing away with slithers of white-hot metal protruding from it. The Farriers are highly skilled blacksmiths and after an apprenticeship of many years have the job of making horseshoes for the cavalry. These craftsmen are held in high respect and get to wear a coveted blue t-shirt instead of the coveralls that dress the rest of the Tprs.

This might not sound like a particularly technical job, but judging by the styles and types of horseshoes that can be made, they certainly earn their money. Despite the hot and physical conditions of the job, there is a dead man's shoes policy with very few places coming available for apprenticeships – although we were assured that this has nothing to do with the large pay checks that Farriers can expect when they leave the Army. From the hot and demanding claustrophobia of the Farriers' ovens, we went back to the drill square for the parade of the returning Queen's Guard. This was certainly a lot more relaxed than the initial parade but the exhaustion was clear. The Tprs had been clutching the many kilos of their ceremonial swords, helmets and body armour for hours without moving and as they left from their horses the relief was apparent.

After a morning with the Household Cavalry, Sp Sqn was in awe at the discipline, control and commitment these young Tprs have. With the amount of work that goes into every guard, not one of us envied them for a moment! The rest of the day was taken up with a visit to the Imperial War Museum – the museum that never ceases to amaze, excite and depress the best of us. After a few hours there and far too long in the coffee shop queue, we found ourselves on our way to 71 Sig Regt who were kind enough to allow us their drill hall for the night.

Next day was on to the Corps Museum. **Sig Hope** was glad of the journey ahead for some more sleep time, as the SatNav had lied to **WO2 Draper** again. Blandford Camp seemed to be further and further away from London!

Whilst at Blandford, we visited the Royal Signals Museum and soon found ourselves open-mouthed at the size of the eqpt from yesteryear. After a quick stop at the Museum shop, we left Blandford with empty pockets. The weekend not only cemented the Sqn's knowledge of the heritage of the British Army and the Corps, but also enabled us to see the traditions and practice of the Household Cavalry – a Regt with unrivalled history and unique ceremonial duties.

53 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC **Maj Cosgrove**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Webb**

CORPS RUGBY 7s – MARCH 14

A dim, overcast, day saw the team of 10 members of the Regt, both TA and Regular, attend Cardiff High Schools Old Boys RFC for the annual Rugby 7s tournament. Arriving as reigning TA Corps Champions, we had a lot to live up to.

In the last 4 years the Regtl team was yet to have a point scored against it by another TA unit's team. Some hard fought groups stage matches saw us come the closest yet to defeating a Regular team, with a 5 – 5 draw against 22 Sig Regt. This, and other matches, included several displays of individual brilliance from **Sgt Ollie Neeve** of 53 Sqn that some how failed to result

in a try. Moving through to the plate competition saw us playing teams of a closer calibre to our own. However, history was to

Sgt Ollie Neeve demonstrating previously unheard of levels of skill

repeat itself when we failed to progress past the first rounds of the plate. An early shower and a well deserved beer awaited the battered and broken bodies of the team as we finished the day still undisputed TA Corps Champions!

Sgt Gaz Morris from 96 Sqn was the highest (and only) points scorer of the day with 2 tries, failing to convert them both however. Given that before the competition started, we had only scored 5 points in total, **Sgt Morris** has clearly marked himself for a place in the starting line up next year as well!

Despite the overall results, the team kept a smile on their faces throughout earning comments from other teams for our positive approach to the entire competition.

Thanks to **Mrs Cowley** for doing the dobi!

Capt Matt Longcake, SSgt Chris Moore, Sig Ben Kingsley, SSgt Chris Cowley (Player Manager), 2Lt Gareth Evans, Sgt Gaz Morris (C), Sgt Ollie Neeve, Sig Tim Yeo and Sig Gav Ross

67 (QOWWY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj Bowden**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Bellamy**

EXERCISE TALKING BEAR 2008

On the Friday evening **SSgt John Phillips** and I, **WO2(SSM) Matt Bellamy**, were finalising tpt and eqpt for the start of a good comms ex. The PSI(T), **Sgt Del Trotter** had collected all of the necessary comms kit that we would require for the weekends trg. Hopefully this was to be, a beneficial and productive weekend.

We made our way to DMC Kineton where the trg would take place. On arrival, we split down into trade groups where we would carry out our trg for the day. On the opening brief we were told the programme for the day. We then set off to these various areas to carry out our trg.

The day consisted of Enhanced Remote Access Server (ERAS) and Video Tele Conference (VTC) trg followed by VRC 321 and mast erecting with the 8m and 12m masts. After lunch we got right back into the trg again which consisted of types of antenna that we could use and why they would be used. This was confirmed with a short test.

Once we had completed that part of the ex, we set off outside to carry on with the practical side of the lesson. We practiced putting up the various antennas that we had just covered in the classroom and this took us up to tea time. After tea we came back and dismantled the eqpt and packed it all away.

On Sunday, we began generator trg with **LCpl Frostie Frost**. He instructed the troops on the Light Field Generator (LFG) in the basic set up procedures, i.e. sighting, basic electrical principles. We went through starting procedures and the 2 types of power that the generator could produce.

Once he had covered this, we completed a practical ex with the lighting kit. We set up a length of flat twin cable, where we could practise putting up various lighting connections, so that they could see how it went together. We then got all the eqpt that we had used for the weekend out and CESd it. We then deployed back to the TAC for tea and medals and knocked off.

96 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Capt Navindra Gurung**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Bennett**

EXERCISE VON TRAPP DRAGON - *by LCpl Postlethwaite*

On 1 February 2008 we set off on a 24 hr coach trip to Austria for our annual AT - Ex VON TRAPP DRAGON. This yearly ex is organised by **SSgt Abbott** and is one of the most enjoyable ex of the year. It gives everyone in the Regt the opportunity to gain AT qualifications and use the trip to meet and socialise in a relaxed environment.

Therefore we entered into the spirit of things properly…After a rough ferry crossing and a couple of beverages later, **LCpl Ratty Ratcliffe** admitted to having a dodgy prawn sandwich which resulted in him being sick. Obviously he was just setting a trend for the rest of the week!

The week started off to a good start with most of the beginners doing extremely well until, **WO2(YofS) Bri Rawlings** decided to rest his testicles firmly against the fence in BoBo Land. He returned to the hotel looking not so happy, speaking weirdly and walking with a limp...poor guy! This was all done trying to master the snow plough. All the beginners passed their basic ski proficiency and even tackled some challenging slopes.

In the intermediate group, all was going well until **LCpl Mo Mohammed** yet again decided to make it a year to remember. On last year's AT ex, **LCpl Mohammed** threw herself down a slope on a bum board and surprisingly injured herself. This year however she went one step further! Approximately 4 days into skiing we all practised a few jumps in the half pipe.

All was going well until **LCpl Mohammed** attempted a jump which subsequently resulted in her doing a face plant in the snow and cutting her face quite badly. She escaped with only 6 stitches on her face and a nice black eye to remember her 'trip' by.

The week ended on a high with lots of laughter and some minor injuries, all in all was extremely successful and provided a very enjoyable, challenging but rewarding experience.

Each year something happens to top the last which makes everyone look forward to next year even more.

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col SJ Baker TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) AJ Wyatt**

TA 100

To mark the 100th anniversary of the TA there will be events held throughout the country between 1st April and 10th November. To start the North East of England events, on 4th April all the TA units within 15 (North East) Bde delivered invitations to their local Mayors to attend a Royal Salute and train-naming ceremony in York to be held on 14 June.

38 Sig Regt's TA 100 team outside Sheffield Town Hall with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Sheffield

In Sheffield, 38 Sig Regt soldiers marched for 100 mins, 1 min for each year of the TA, from their Manor Top TA Centre to the Town Hall where they met up with soldiers from Sheffield's other TA units. There was then a Land Rover pull competition between the units before The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, **Cllr Arthur Dunworth**, accompanied by The Lady Mayoress, **Cllr Mrs Kathleen Chadwick**, was presented with his invitation to the events in York.

CONGRATULATIONS ON COMMISSIONING

Maj Steven Ong congratulates 2Lt Alexander Dumont on the square at Sandhurst

The Regt congratulates and welcomes its 4th new Direct Entry officer within 12 months.

On Saturday 29 March, the Regt's 2IC, **Maj Steven Ong TD** was at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to see **2Lt Alexander Dumont** successfully pass off the famous square on completion of his TA Commissioning Course and to present him with his Royal Signals beret badge and rank slides.

LORD LIEUTENANT'S CERTIFICATES

The Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service may be awarded to members of the TA and other Volunteer Reserve Forces. Their award is one of the very few ways that exceptional service in the TA can be recognised.

Three members of 64 Sig Sqn were presented with this prestigious award on 12 February by the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire at Endcliffe Hall TA Centre, Sheffield in front of an appreciative audience which included **Capt Les Jordan BEM**, PSAO 64 Sig Sqn, **WO1(RSM) Andy Wyatt** and **Maj Andy Powell**, OC 64 Sig Sqn,. The recipients were **WO2 Trevor Grant, SSgt Paul Ingram** and **Sgt Zoe Schofield.**

WO2 Grant, SSgt Ingram and Sgt Schofield with Capt Jordan, WO1(RSM) Wyatt and Maj Powell

We congratulate all 3 on their fully deserved recognition and thank them for their outstanding contributions to the Sqn and to the Regt over many years.

MEDAL PRESENTATION

At Manor Top TA Centre, Sheffield on Tuesday 15 April, the Regimental 2IC, **Maj Kevan Flanagan TD** presented medals to 4 deserving recipients in front of the Regt and members of their families. After the Adjt, **Capt Abby Parkinson**, read out the citations, the 2IC presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to the Regt's former RSM, **WO1 Mark Simcock** and to **SSgt(FofS) Pete Sorrell**. The other 2 medals presented were Volunteer Reserve Service Medals (VRSM). These were awarded on completion of 10 years qualifying service as a Territorial officer or soldier. The 2 recipients were **SSgt Melanie Widdows** and **Sgt Patricia 'Trish' Pinches**.

Capt Parkinson, SSgt(FofS) Sorrell, WO1 Simcock, SSgt Widdows, Sgt Pinches and Maj Flanagan

UPDATE ON ROYAL SIGNALS TRADE REVIEW

The Corps trade groups continue to develop and great progress has been made since the last update in the October 07 edition of The Wire. The majority of that information is still valid and the aim of this new article is to let you know what has changed in the last 7 busy months. The Comm Sys Op is now fully implemented with Class 3 courses having been run for over a year and the Class 1 course ongoing since January 08.

The biggest development is the intention to amalgamate the Tech Sup Spec and Dvr Lineman to form the Communication Support Specialist within a year. It is not possible to provide all the information you would like in a small article here. The most up to date information on all trades is shown on the SOinC(A) ICS TDT Website. This is will be made available through 'Armynet' very soon. Career advice should always be sought from your chain of command, RCMOs and R SIGNALS Wing.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ENGINEER

The new Class 3 and Class 1 courses will both be approximately 9 months long. Conversion training will happen at Pre Class 1, where legacy SETs and IS Engrs will receive approximately 8 weeks cross-training prior to attending the Comm Sys Engr Class 1 course.

It is expected that both courses will attract a modern apprenticeship to level 2 and 3 respectively. Work is underway with partners from industry and the civilian institutions to identify other qualifications and accreditation, current aspirations for A+, N+, MCSA, MCSE and Prince2 Foundation are all yet to be confirmed.

The Class 3 Comm Sys Engr will receive the pay and rank advantages currently awarded to the Sys Eng Tech (High Band LCpl at Class 3) and all IS Engr Signallers are expected to promote to LCpl at their next promotion board (subject to an AFB2048/ continued recommendation for promotion).

The Class 1 course will have start standards: A candidate must have a minimum of two years field service as a Class 2 and have completed the Class 1-Part 1 Workbook. On completion of Part 1 of the course through the Workbook, R SIGNALS Wing will load the course in order of priority based upon rank and seniority.

SETs who have already passed the Class 1 entrance exam but have not been loaded on to a Class 1 course will be given priority for early loading on the new Comm Sys Engr Class 1 courses, due to start in January 2009.

DRIVER LINEMAN AND TECHNICAL SUPPLY SPECIALIST

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SPECIALIST (WORKING TITLE ONLY)

In the first half of 2009 the first Communication Support Specialists Class 3 course will begin subject to gaining the necessary approval. This is a new trade that has been designed following an extensive study into the current Driver Lineman and Technical Supply Specialist trade rosters. The trade name is only a working title at the moment and the actual name will be announced later in 2008. Both the Driver Lineman and Technical Supply Specialist trade rosters will combine into one trade roster.

The study identified that many of the training requirements of these rosters had a degree of similarity, which will be catered for in future training. Future demands were also identified, including additional IT training and the requirement for Fibre Handling skills to supplement Line skills. These additional skills will become essential in assisting with the building of deployable Headquarters in the field.

The Class 3 and 1 courses are now being designed by the DCCIS and the associated documentation can be viewed on the TDT website.

The Communication Support Specialist Class 3 course will consist of ECDL, Electronic working practices (EWP) and a 3 day package of fibre and cable handling. The trade will be provided with enough training to assist (under supervision of Class 2 and 1 trades) in daily duties within the MT and stores environment. Each soldier will also receive training to operate a Bowman Radio to VHF / Light standards. The biggest change is the driver training which will now consist of C+E, D1 (Mini Bus) and MHE (Forklift) licences.

The first posting for the Communications Support Specialist will be within the MT environment. However the trade can be employed across the Regiment on specific tasking utilising the driving qualifications gained from the course.

On award of LCpl/Class 2 in trade a soldier can progress further in their career by attending specific PET courses according to current employment. It is at this point that the Communication Support Specialist can attend the All Arms Stores Accountant course followed by a short course on the fundamentals of stores accounting. This allows the LCpl Communication Support Specialists to be rotated between the Stores and MT environment in their first assignment as a LCpl. This is also the start of a whole suite of PET courses both stores and MT orientated that can be attended according to current employment requirements.

Class 2 status will be earned on successful completion of the Class 2 competency workbook. The new Class 1 course will provide the skills and knowledge to assist in the preparation, deployment, maintenance, sustainment and recovery of communications assets by providing the logistics management to achieve this.

Post Class 1 training opens the doors to further employment opportunities between the MT and stores environments including a whole host of PET courses ranging from Health and Safety to Defence Road Safety Advisor. Provision will be made for this trade group to receive the right training when required for role.

Communication Support Specialists will have the ideal background to fill RQMS(T) and MTWO appointments.

More information can be found on this trade roster including trade models on the HQ SOinC(A) - TDT website.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Q1. I am currently a Technical Supply Specialist or Driver Lineman; do I have to attend a conversion course to become a Communication Support Specialist?

Answer. No. When implemented the name change will happen immediately. There is no conversion with this trade, a majority of PET courses currently exist and will be utilised by the trade on subsequent assignments across the Corps according to Rank and trade status.

Q2. I am already Class 1 in trade. Will I be expected to return to Blandford to complete the Communication Support Specialist Class 1 Course?

Answer. No. You are already a Class 1 in trade. Any further training required by you will be conducted during PET on arrival at your new unit.

Q3. Will my Pay be affected by the trade change?

Answer. The Authority on pay scales the Joint Services' Job Evaluation Team (JSJET) will be conducting a review on the new trade sometime in 2009. The results of their study may or may not have an effect on the Pay scale for this trade.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE SYSTEMS OPERATOR

This trade continues to be recruited from Direct Entrant (DE) and Change of Career Employment (CCE). The Corps is actively recruiting CCE candidates as they offer enormous benefits to the trade group in terms of both maturity and operational experience.

As a CCE there are excellent opportunities to work in many specialities i.e. working with National Agencies, SF, EOD to name but a few. The EW Sys Op Career Employment Group (CEG) is continually looking for bright, enthusiastic and experienced indiviuals.

All DE EW Sys Ops attend a Class 3 Comm Sys Op course before continuing onto specific EW Sys Op training. The knowledge provided through Bowman training, particularly the understanding of communications fundamentals, principles and techniques is considered an excellent platform on which to progress to EW Sys Op training.

If you are already a Comm Sys Op who has been accepted for a CCE you will be loaded directly onto an EW Sys Op course. You will join the course at Blandford for the Basic Communications Exploitation Course (BCE) Module 1 (5 weeks), followed by a second module delivered at the Defence College of Intelligence (DCI) Chicksands (15 weeks).

On completion of both modules the EW Sys Op will attend B and C licence driver training, if not already qualified, before being assigned to an EW or EOD unit.

In most cases the EW Sys Op will undertake pre-employment training (PET) appropriate to the role in which they will be employed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. Why have there been changes to the training?

Answer. The changes are made to meet the changing operational requirements of LAND and the Joint Service Signals Organisation (JSSO) as well as the demands driven by new equipment programmes.

Q2. I am currently a Comm Sys Op, how do I apply to become an EW Sys Op?

Answer. A Comm Sys Op wishing to CCE to EW Sys Op should read SOinC(A) Policy Directive No 3 which contains all the relevant information regarding the CCE process. Individuals should apply through their Chain of Command, and will be refered to their respective RCMO. The RCMO will advise on the CCE process relevant to that individual and can help in the completion of Annex C to PD 3. Should the application be successful, the individual will be loaded onto a BCE Module 1 course at DCCIS to start EW Sys Op training. The policy documentation to support the application should now available at all units.

Q3. Can I apply for CCE to EW Sys Op if I am not a Comm Sys Op?

Answer. Yes, as all applications are dealt with on an individual basis.

Q4. What is the pay and rank of a newly qualified EW Sys Op?

Answer. The newly qualified EW Sys Op will receive 'High Band' LCpl upon completion of training.

Q5. When will a Class 1 qualification course be available?

Answer. There will be a pilot Class 1 EW Sys Op course in the second quarter of 2009 at the DCCIS, Blandford. Until that time personnel who require upgrading and meet the requirements laid down by HQ SOinC(A) will be automatically upgraded to Class 1.

INSTALLATION TECHNICIAN AND ELECTRICIAN

The Trade Sponsor Steering Groups for both of these CEQs held a joint meeting in Jan 2008 and have advised the People Line of Development Steering Group that the two trades should continue to be run as separate CEQs (for the foreseeable future). Managing these two small rosters will present some difficulties but the current drivers for change were not seen as compelling enough to warrant an amalgamation at this stage.

TERRITORIAL ARMY UPDATE

Over the last two years significant work has been completed to identify the trades required in the R SIGNALS TA and the training that they are required to complete. Although there is still a lot of work to do, the guiding principles behind this work are:

Where possible, TA Trade names should mirror those of their Regular counterparts.

Where operating environments are completely different i.e. In the UK Ops role, TA specific trade names will be used.

Training that is common between trades, e.g. radio principles for RS Op(V) and ICS Op(R), should be the delivered to all relevant trades to the same specification and, where possible should mirror the training given in Regular training packages.

SOinC(A) Policy Directive 101, recently re-issued, contains a list of all current trades which are shown in the table:

	2 (NC) Sig Bde	12 Sig Gp	43 Sig Sqn (V)	63 Sig Sqn(V)
Operator Trades				
ICS Op (UK Ops)	X			
ICS Op (SF R)				X
AS Op (Sw/Ac) (V		X		
AS Op (RR/Central) (V)		X		
Radio Trades				
RS Op (V)		X	X	
ICS Op (Radio)	X			
Technician Trades				
Sys Eng Tech (UK Ops)	X			
Sys Eng Tech (Ptarmigan)		X		
IS Eng				X
Sys Eng Tech (SF R)				X
Sys Eng Tech (V)			X	
IT(e)	X*			
IT(i)	X*			
Support Trades				
Elec (V)		X	X	X
(UK Ops) Elec (UK Ops	X			
* 81 Sig Sqn (V) only				

All policy concerning R SIGNALS soldiers has been amalgamated into a single Directive – PD101.

Competencies for the trades are being input to JPA - you will see your correct trade name on your records in the near future.

The Tech Sup Spec trade is being phased out – and personnel in this trade should discuss this with their unit. In future, any soldier within a unit (with his commander's approval) can be employed in the unit stores for an agreed length of time having completed the All Arms Storekeeper Course.

In accordance with new Army Policy, soldiers will undertake Command, Leadership and Management Training (CLM) (V) at 4 stages of their career – watch out for details, which will be available from your unit. In the R SIGNALS you will be required to complete the JNCO CLM(V) (Formally known as the TA Cpls Cse) for substantive promotion to Corporal and the SNCO CLM(V) (Once known as the TA SSgt Cse, now the TA Sgt Cse) for substantive promotion to Sergeant.

We congratulate the 4 recipients for their unswerving service over so many years. Due to the nature of the Regt, it is very fitting that long service medals should be presented equally to Regular and Territorial pers.

FAREWELL

On 31 March we bade farewell to the Regtl 2IC, **Maj Steven Ong TD**. Not only did he leave the Regt but he also left the Army on that day. We thank him for his unswerving commitment and contribution to the Regt throughout his time with 38 Sig Regt, right up to his last day of service and wish him, his wife **Sharon** and their young family every happiness in the future.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON - *by Capt Hamish Fell*

OC	**Maj A J Powell**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) T Grant**

The Sqn has had another busy couple of months with 4 weekends and the usual Tuesday night trg. In addition to this, the Sqn has had individuals on the Regtl Skiing ex to Andorra, sailing exs in the Solent and walking exs in North Wales and on the Isle of Sky in preparation for Ex MIDNIGHT SUN. The Sqn trg weekend at the end of February was held at Strensall and was an opportunity for those who had not already done so to complete any outstanding Mandatory Annual Training Tests (MATTs).

The weekend was also a chance for the Sqn to celebrate the 41st birthday of the SQMS, **SSgt Paul Ingram**.

On the weekend of 6th – 9th of March the Sqn carried out a tactical comms ex on Catterick trg area. The ex was designed to practise the Sqn's voice procedure, veh navigation, field skills and specific trade skills. This was an excellent weekend which was enjoyed by all who attended. For some, the highlight of the weekend was seeing **Sig Gareth 'Gaz' Ball** open fire on the ex CivPop, later giving the explanation that they were about to raid the field kitchens stores. Ex GREEN SPRING was the Regtl ICS weekend held over the weekend 28th – 30th of March.

The ex sought to build on the previous Regtl ICS weekends by allowing the soldiers to build on their specific trade skills.

The weekend was well organised and run, with those who attended benefiting from the trg. The Sqn congratulates and welcomes a new 2Lt fresh from the factory, **2Lt Alexander Dumont**, who successfully completed his TA Commissioning Course on 29 March.

EXERCISE MARTIAL MERLIN 08 - *by SSgt(SPSI) Chris Noviss*

Although the Regt's primary role is UK Ops, the current high tempo of overseas ops means that individuals may be called upon to serve alongside Regular soldiers in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan. It is therefore important that some of our trg is focused upon developing individual low-level mil skills. Last year the Regt delivered of a very successful Basic Close Combat Skills package as part of our annual camp. Some of our soldiers were keen to build on the experiences gained from this trg and volunteered for Ex MARTIAL MERLIN, the 15 Bde annual patrol competition. The aim of the competition was to test participating teams in a variety of skills including the orders process and battle procedure, sect battle drills, Close Target Recces (CTR), Battle Casualty Drills (BCD) and signals skills. All volunteers underwent a selection and trg weekend at Altcar, from which the final team composition was confirmed. The team consisted of **A/Sgt Andy Joynson**, **Sgt Lee 'Cookie' Cooke**, **Cpl Jim Fowler**, **LCpl Ricky Griffiths**, **Sig Gareth 'Gaz' Ball**, **Sig Alex Ratcliffe**, **Sig John Smithers** and **Pte Ben Stephenson**.

The successful 64 Sig Sqn team in front of a Spartan at Catterick

The competition took place over the period 14 - 16 March on Catterick Trg Area. Our team arrived at Wathgill Camp on the Friday night and after an arrival brief, began their initial battle prep. At 0645hrs the patrol reported for the start of the competition. The first stand took place on the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer (DCCT), with a grouping and zeroing shoot followed by a scenario shoot, accompanied by some dodgy mood music courtesy of the Range Conducting Officer.

The patrol then moved by Spartan to the Bde Fwd HQ, where they received orders and conducted battle procedure. During the subsequent patrol, the team conducted a casualty evacuation under fire and a CTR of an enemy location.

They successfully transmitted an initial patrol report, fought their way out of an ambush and practised Media Handling Drills. Considering the limited preparatory trg that they received, the team performed very well overall, achieving a Silver Award for their efforts. The Regt hopes to build on this success in future competitions in the UK and abroad. **WO2 SSM Trev Grant** has his eyes firmly set on next year's Cambrian Patrol. The Signals stand was provided by a det from 64 Sig Sqn, commanded by **Sgt Don Hammett**. At this stand, teams were required to set up a HF radio and transmit their initial patrol reports. Thanks go to the crew of this Det, who acted as Stand DS throughout the competition. Thanks also go to all in 15 Bde who contributed to making Ex MARTIAL MERLIN the success that it was.

93 (EAST LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj NP Reid**
SSM	**WO2 S Hopkinson**

93 Sig Sqn is the senior TA unit in the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen. The OC, **Maj Neil Reid**, again decided to support the Lord Mayor of Blackburn's Annual Charity Ball by sponsoring a table at this year's event. Primarily as a thank you to the Borough for its continued support of the Sqn, the event was attended by all the Officers of 93 Sig Sqn, **Maj Reid**, **Capt Robin Fitzpatrick**, **Capt Paul Knight**, **Capt Adrian Moran**, **2Lt Gareth Dixon** and **2Lt Oliver Pearson**.

The Sqn was delighted that the CO of 38 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Steve J Baker TD** was able to join the Sqn's officers at this year's dinner. The support of the CO along with the Sqn was warmly welcomed by all present, with the Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen, **Cllr Maureen McGarvey** and the Member of Parliament for Blackburn, the **Rt Hon Jack Straw MP**, in particular expressing their appreciation.

The event turned out to be a very enjoyable and successful evening, with a substantial amount of money going to local charities but unfortunately it left very little time for the CO and the Sqn officers to trip the light fantastic due to the pressing commitment to travel to Donnington later that evening for a Regtl trg weekend.

39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col CM Lankester TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) MJ Petts**

SUPPORT (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CM Dawes TD**
SPSI	**SSgt GW Proctor**

2008 continues at the same hectic pace as last year with the Sqn supporting the Regt on the 2 Sig Bde Study Day, Regtl Development Weekend (RDW) and Sqn Trg Weekends. The Shooting Team are at Pirbright every other weekend in preparation for the TA Skill at Arms Shooting Competition and the LAD are busy practising for Ex SOUTHERN CRAFTSMAN, the annual REME Mil Skills Competition.

REGIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND AT KNOOK CAMP 7 – 9 MARCH 2008 - *by Sig Gill McNeil*

My first Regimental Development Weekend (RDW) since qualifying as an ICS Operator (Radio) took me to Knook Camp. The camp itself is located in a steep Wiltshire valley, which makes any form of mobile reception virtually non existent. The accn blocks were comfortable and consisted of 6 man rooms, but the ablutions and showers were located in 2 separate areas, in complete opposite directions. The real test of the weekend was remembering which block was where, as naturally none of the blocks were numbered in any logical order.

The purpose of the weekend was to give everybody some refresher trg in trade and to make sure everyone was at a minimum base level before we moved onto more in depth trg. It was also a good opportunity to gain hands on experience by setting up eqpt and brush up on the previously learned skills, which were a little rusty. After a briefing on the Friday evening and a DVD which consisted of the dos and don'ts on SPTA, it was a case of getting your head down for an early start on Saturday morning. At 0530hrs the alarm goes off and everyone turns over letting out a heavy sigh, almost in unison. After breakfast, the Regt was divided down into sects, depending on trade. My group was with the other Radio Operators and our first lecture was with **Sgt Collins** from 94(BY) Sig Sqn. Initially, the morning didn't start off too well as we did not appear to have correct connections to allow the OHP to be set up – a minor detail which was soon overlooked as we all sat huddled around squinting at a laptop in a 9 x 9 tent with wind howling all around!

After this ex, we moved swiftly on to Antennas and Propagation with **Sgt Downer**, also from 94(BY) Sig Sqn. This was a subject that didn't quite sink in when I was away on trade camp but after this lesson, things were thankfully much clearer to the extent that comms drills are much clearer and have stuck in my mind. It helped a great deal by being able to have hands on experience with eqpt and to have a talk through step by step guide, instead of having a large group of people all looking blankly at eqpt from a distance and not really have much to do with it. After a quick recap it was a case of grabbing our helmets and off to fight the elements, whilst erecting a sloping wire!

Members of the Regiment enjoy a quiet moment on RDW6

In the afternoon we moved on to Bowman with **Sgt Bird**. This was a fantastic opportunity to have an induction into the type of eqpt that we as Radio Operators will be using in the future. How much easier our lives will be when we have Bowman! It's just a pity that we still have to work with Clansman until that time; still it's all part of the learning experience! Late afternoon the groups were divided into Dets and we were given a briefing for the following day's ex. Saturday evening for the JNCOs was an evening spent in the NAAFI, while the SNCOs and Officers attended a dinner to dine in the CO, Lt Col Lankester.

At 0530hrs Sunday, morning started with the same routine as the previous day although we had to vacate our rooms, pack our kit and eqpt, have breakfast and be out on parade square at 0645hrs ready to check vehs and depart on to the trg area. I was placed with **Sgt Collins** on Silver HQ and our original 4 man det was now down to 2. Once at our destination, the priority was to establish comms but here we encountered a problem. Our VHF did not function properly and this was not down to operator failure! After going through all the necessary procedures we had no alternative but to request tech support from Radcon. However none was available at this time due to other priorities, so our main method of comms was with HF, although the continual requirement to re-tune the set proved tricky! I think it was good to see this as it makes you realise that no deployment is ever going to be perfect and that inevitably things can go wrong. The real test is working around these problems and achieving the mission. Overall a successful weekend was had by all with a few very important lessons learnt along the way.

VISIT TO THE EX HONORARY COLONEL - *by Capt Phil Smith*

It was a cold wet February morning when my wife and I departed Bristol for Fuengirola for a visit to the ex-Sqn Hon Col, **Col David** or the **Rev David Sutch** as he is now. **Col David** relocated to Fuengirola before the Sqn could present him with his going away present. As is always the case in the TA, work and weekends got in the way, so my wife **Jo** and I took it upon ourselves to deliver the present in person and at the same time have a quick holiday. On arriving in Malaga it was raining heavier than when we left UK and continued to do so for most of the week, albeit the temperature was warmer. We met up with **Col David** and his wife **Megan** at his well-attended Sunday service at his church, St Andrews. It was a great honour for me to present **Col David** with "The Empty Saddle (North Somerset Yeomanry)" in recognition of

Capt Smith presenting Col David Sutch with his farewell present

his past service to the Sqn and Regt. This now has pride of place in his alcove with all his Army mementos.

57 (CITY & COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj IS Sainsbury**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) B Newby**

57 Sig Sqn has had a busy year so far, attending several Sqn and Regtl trg weekends. In March, the Sqn attended a comms trg RDW (RDW6), which was held in Knook Camp. The weekend consisted of trade trg for the soldiers on the Saturday, followed by a confirmation ex on the Sunday morning out on the trg area. On the Saturday night, all the Officers, WOs and SNCOs in the Regt departed for a joint mess dinner, which was held in the WOs and Sgts Mess in Bulford. The dinner was a chance for the Regt to dine in the new CO and an impressive turnout ensured that all had an enjoyable night.

Over the weekend 11 – 13 April, the Sqn attended the first RDW of the new trg year, which was held at Longmoor Camp. This is traditionally always a MATTs testing weekend and this year was no exception. We were also honoured to have a visit from the Worshipful Company of Skinners, to which the Regt are affiliated. They visit the Regt whilst on trg once a year, in order to present the Skinners Awards to the Junior Male Soldier and Junior Female Soldier who are deemed to have contributed the most to the Regt over the last year. 57 Sqn are very proud that **Sig Joanne Close** from Gloucester Tp was awarded the Junior Female Award this year. Indeed **Sig Close** seemed to be the only person in the Sqn who was surprised when her citation was read out to the Regt! On the Saturday night of the RDW, a curry and charity quiz night was held for all ranks. This gave all members of the Regt the chance to relax following the CFT, which had been conducted on the Saturday afternoon. Our aim was to raise money in support of 2 Sig Regt's Corps Motorbike tour, which is raising a significant amount of money for "Help For Heroes" and the Army Benevolent Fund. In total we managed to raise nearly £250 for the cause – so thank you to all that took part.

LCpl French of 94 Sig Sqn and Sig Close of 57 Sig Sqn with their Skinners Award presented by the Master of Skinners

57 Sqn is now looking forward to a busy summer with our comms sp to Ten Tors as the main effort in May. From there we will be ramping up our comms trg in preparation for the Bde FTX in September. As always, the Sqn continues to be busy and it is fitting that the Sqn's celebrations of the TA centenary this summer coincide with the return of **Cpl Allaway** from 697 Sig Tp on ops in Kosovo.

94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj V Connolly TD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Chapman**

In February, 94 Sig Sqn held its Annual Dinner for Officers and SNCOs, 'The Hungerford Star', at Windsor Guildhall. We were honoured to have the SOinC and Master of Signals in attendance. As ever it was a fantastic evening in a historic venue. Our thanks go to the PSAO **Capt Paul Samways** for his effort in making this an unforgettable occasion.

94 Sqn have continued to support overseas ops with **Sig Daryl Mills** and **Sig Gary McVeigh** now out in Afghanistan with the Royal Irish Regt. **LCpl Dale French** has recently returned from Op TELIC 10. He started his tour attached to the Danish Mech Inf, with his work mainly being focussed at providing radio comms to the Ops Room. **LCpl French** also spent time further north in Al Hartha and Ad-Dayr. After 3 months, the Danes left theatre and he moved to join the Rifles' Sig Pl at Basra Air Station. This gave him more of a chance to get on the ground and included a 3 week patrol along the Iranian border.

Capt Ram Manickavasagan is busy trg for Ex MIDNIGHT SUN, which is an exped to Greenland organised to coincide with the TA100 celebration. There are 4 elements to the exped: sailing, mountaineering, sea kayaking and snow trekking. He has been selected to go on the first leg sailing from Gosport to Greenland. There were 2 selection weekends from which 24 crew and a few reserves were selected. In preparation, he has taken part in a week of sea trg to familiarise the crews with the Challenge 67 Yacht that they will call home for 3 weeks. Although **Ram** has sailed before and believed he had sea legs, he found out on the 2nd day that he is prone to sea sickness! Every crew member has to take a turn in the galley and he has been busy creating a hot and spicy Sri Lankan Curry for his fellow crew members. Ram leaves on 28 July and on the way he is hoping to see whales, dolphins, seals and icebergs and possibly sail into the Arctic Circle.

Captain Manickavasagan looks queasy during Ex MIDNIGHT SUN training

REGIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND 1 – INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

At the beginning of April, the Sqn attended the first Regimental Development Weekend of the cycle at the ever popular Longmoor Camp. The weekend aimed at enabling all soldiers to attempt the full complement of MATTs. These include range work, map reading and everyone's favourite CBRN. The Gas Chamber, sorry "Respirator Test Facility" allowed us all to experience the effects of CS gas when carrying out emergency drinking drills and administering Nerve Agent Pre-treatment Tablets. We were honoured to be visited by our Hon Col, **Brig Tony Verey** and a delegation from the Skinners' Company. The latter including the Master, **Mr Crosthwaite**, whose father and grandfather have both served in the Berkshire Yeomanry. This year **LCpl Dale French** of 908 Tp won the male award for his outstanding commitment and professionalism whilst on Op TELIC. It was the 2nd year in a row that the award has been presented to a member of 908 Tp. **Sgt Steve Collins** was promoted to SSgt by the Hon Col and was pleased that the OC, **Maj Vince Connelly**, chose a Regt weekend to do this, as it meant he could buy a smaller round at the bar!

Late on Saturday afternoon, the Regt got on parade for the 6 mile Combat Fitness Test. There was air of anticipation as Bergens were weighed, bricks removed and we lined up on the start line. The Ops Maj, **Maj John Williams**, was really taken by **Sig Andrea Skilbecks** pink dumbbells that she unloaded to get her Bergen down to the required weight. Thankfully this year, **Cpl**

Steve Clarke concerned that we would get bored, had recced a new and much more interesting route. This allowed us to experience not only more hills but also get used to different types of ground under foot, the section now known as 'The Beach' around Mile 5 met with much acclaim! In the evening there was an all ranks curry supper and charity quiz in aid of the Corps Motorbike tour and "Help for Heroes". **Pte Christian Hoff's** team won and more than £200 was raised for charity by the event. Sunday consisted of a 6 mile navex which allowed the MATTs skills to be played out in different scenarios whilst moving around the Trg Area. The weekend was a good one for the Berkshire Yeomanry with over 60 Soldiers and Officers on duty, including 16 on recruit trg.

The Sqn is busy preparing for the Territorial Army's Centenary, TA 100. The highlight of which will be when the Berkshire Yeomanry exercise their freedom of Windsor by marching through the town with bayonets fixed and Guidon flying. The parade will take place on 28 June at 1200hrs past the Guildhall. All past Sqn members and their families are welcome to attend.

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)

CO	**Lt Col Whichelo**
RSM	**WO2 Coates**

BRING A FRIEND – CLONAVER PARK TAC RECRUITING EVENING - *by Lt Farmer*

On the evening of Tuesday 26 February, the TAC conducted its first open night of the New Year. The event was designed to allow members of the Regt to bring a friend along for the evening's trg and also to allow members of the public to visit and gain an insight into what the Regt gets up to.

Preparations began several days before the event with the Recruiting Team setting up a wide range of displays and stands, ranging from AT to Mil Skills and everything in between. The centrepiece of their efforts was a Silver HQ set up inside an 18 x 24 Tent in the drill hall. The evening started with a reception in the JRC where members of the Recruiting Team were on hand to meet both those who had arrived with serving members of the Regt as well as those members of the public who were venturing into a TA centre for the very first time. Once everyone had arrived the visitors were given a quick introductory brief by **Lt Simon Farmer** on the TA and an itinerary for the evening's events.

After the brief, the visitors began their tour of the centre. In the drill hall the Trg Wing had a display of different wpns and eqpt, including a wide range of pictures from recent exs. This proved to be a popular stand, with many of the guys huddled around the GPMG. Also located in the drill hall was the Silver HQ and those visiting received a detailed brief from **Sgt Neill McConnell**, the Tech PSI. Meanwhile in the REME garages of the LAD, the Tiffy was demonstrating the role of the REME within the Regt. As the evening drew to a close, all those visiting were given the opportunity to chat with members of the Regt over a curry supper and a pint. This also allowed the recruiting team to collect details of those who were interested in joining. The event proved to be successful and several of those who visited the event are expected to begin recruit trg in June this year.

TA LOOK AT LIFE - *by Sgt George*

On Saturday 23 February, 69 Sig Sqn hosted 25 cadets from the Limavady, Magherafelt and Londonderry Dets at a 'TA Look at Life Day' in Limavady TA Centre. The aim of the day was to introduce the cadets to the TA in general and the Royal Signals in particular. The day was structured in 2 halves; first an introduction to the normal trg undertaken by the TA on a weekly basis and second an insight into the various trades within the Royal Signals. When all the cadets had arrived, **Sgt George** opened the proceedings with a brief on the conduct of the day and divided them into 4 groups. Each of the groups then rotated around the 4 trg stands. The first stand was a Comd Task run by **SSgt McDougall**, where the Cadets had to solve the problem of getting themselves and eqpt across the crocodile infested river. This proved to be very popular and the various groups enjoyed varying degrees of success. Let's just say that all the crocodiles went home with full stomachs. Next the groups moved onto the field craft stand, where **SSgt Murray** demonstrated the correct procedure for dealing with an enemy prisoner. **Pte Jackson** volunteered to act as the enemy soldier and surprised everyone with the depth of his acting ability – never mind the show of initiative by using his sock as a makeshift balaclava. Next **Cpl Young** introduced the cadets to the 320 radio and actually succeeded in getting them to pass messages between themselves. The next step for **Cpl Young** is to get the Sqn up to the same standard. Finally the cadets were shown a BCD lesson conducted by **Sgt Adair** with **Sig Priestly** acting as the causality, sporting a very realistic wound on his leg. As expected, the cadets were full of enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the structured trg.

After lunch the cadets visited the Sqn Trade Stands which demonstrated what the TA did on a daily basic and what trades the Royal Signals have to offer. The trade stands consisted of a CST and HF comms stand combined under **SSgt McDougall** and **Cpl Young**, a Technical and Electrical Power stand under **Sgt Dugdale** and **Cpl Sims**, a REME stand under **Cpl Wilson** and a Field Kitchen stand under **Sgt Hunter**. The Cadet open day was a great success. All the cadets went home with a better understanding of the TA and the role that 40 Sig Regt provide in the overall picture of today's Army.

REGIMENT AND NI RESERVE FORCES CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS – 24 FEBRUARY 08 - *by Maj Montgomery*

On a bright, sunny and crisp February Sunday morning, the gladiators and the rest of us from 40 Sig Regt assembled at the New Forge Country Club in Belfast. Joining us were the equally super toned, finely tuned athletes from the NI Reserve and with him and her, were the rest of the teams. The event was the NI Reserve Forces Cross Country championship which was also to include the cross country element of the Regtl XL Trophy competition (XL for the philistines being 40!). 69 Sig Sqn based in Belfast and Limavady, were tasked to organise the event and run with the admin on the day. The CO, **Lt Col Whichelo**, as the N Ireland Cross Country secretary, ensured the paperwork was sorted for the Bde event and his experience proved invaluable in ensuring we did not miss any points.

By hook and by crook, and a few by wheelchairs, the Sqns managed to assemble a team. Difficult enough with soldiers away on Op TOSCA (UN Cyprus) trg, shooting and a myriad of other activities designed to keep the majority of 2 legged individuals away from the event. Thanks to some great advance work by **SSgt Stew Mullen**, SQMS 69 Sig Sqn and **Sgt Wilson**, APTC, attached to 5 Regt AAC at RAF Aldergrove, the immediate reception went well. These 2 had been round the course several times in the preceding weeks checking how many markers were needed, what rare botanical plants needed to be sprayed with non-organic white paint, and what type of biscuit to have for the Comd 38 Bde when he turned up that morning. They then set about organising the physical markers and after issuing them with their bio-hazard fluorescent vests, sent them on their way to ensure they confused and bewildered the assembled runners soon to descend upon them. Before the main event, the Comd 38 Bde, **Brig Norton**, turned up and decided to test the course

with the CO. So off they jogged (an Olympic sprint to the rest of us) with the 'good job I'm fit' bodyguard, and duly returned nice and sweaty (well the CO had one bead on his forehead), and announced to the horror of the waiting masses, that it would be a very good test! Test of pacemakers and artificial limbs no doubt. The team warm ups, last minute cigarettes, Mars bars, and morphine injections were administered and the Brig sounded the air horn to begin the 7km run for the men and 4km run for the ladies. As they disappeared into the distance, we placed bets on who would be in first and what time. A short while later and we started to haggle over who would win and whether, for the male competition, it would be the expected 32 or 34 min first place,

Then the girls started to come in and within the first 5 runners, it became apparent that the team from Queen's UOTC would win again. Strange how many cameras suddenly appeared for the posing and souvenir photos. The Regtl Adjt, **Capt Lucy Webster**, did well considering she had just arrived after a week away in 5 star luxury in the Caribbean. Only a short time later, shouts announced the arrival of the CO, in significantly less time than the 32 or 34 min discussed. So quick in fact that he missed his chance to be photographed coming through the finish and missed appearing on the front of Cross Country International Magazine or the Regtl Newsletter to the rest of us.

The rest of the runners started to pour in, run in, jog in, walk in and as the temperature dropped, shiver in. Some heroic efforts were made and many a sprint at the end to make up that vital 1 or 2 places. OC 85 Sig Sqn, **Maj Dave Wilson** came in, went out, came in, went out over again to encourage (?) his Sqn and the Regtl runners. As **LCpl Bradshaw** arrived, we could stop worrying about the Regtl team and plan for receiving the best male team trophy. The admin team, ably headed by **Sgt Debbie Wolfe**, began their busy period and the results were quickly produced. After everyone had a chance to shower, have a brew, steal the Brig's biscuits, the winning individuals and team results were announced. **Lt Col Whichelo** won first male in the Regt and the NI TA Championships. The Regt male team also won the award for First Male Team.

The Brig presented the prizes and many more photos were taken. Despite the humorous, I hope, commentary, the day was a success. Great weather, excellent runs by some very fit individuals and teams, good reception and admin, tea and biscuits for the VIPs and free trophies to boot! My sincere thanks to everyone who helped make the day go so well and especially to **Sgt Wilson** and **SSgt Mullen** for their time and efforts.

SENIOR VOLUNTEER WARRANT OFFICER'S DINE OUT
- by Sgt Agass

So it came to pass that the old and bold set forth from Clonaver. Armed with passports, a 24 hr ration pack and **Sgt Wendy Cush**, they ventured up country to Limavady to partake in victuals and imbibe with the 6 fingered members of 69 Sqn to say farewell to **WO1(SVWO) Lloyd Cammock**, who contrary to popular belief was not joining the Chelsea Pensioners but retiring from the TA. After days travelling through snow, wind and rain and an impromptu return trip to Clonaver because the RSM forgot his Mess Dress, we arrived in fine fettle and were greeted to a superb meal, good company and entertainment. Much to **Sgt Wendy Cush's** and **WO2 Dirty Den Watts'** disappointment there was no debauchery but there was dancing and the dreaded Karaoke. The evening was complete with a blizzard as we travelled south to Belfast. **Sgt Agass** took this opportunity to write his name in the snow whilst everyone else slumbered. Blankets and St Bernard rescue dogs have been ordered for the next trip.

WO1(SVWO) Lloyd Cammock (left) receiving his farewell gift from the WOs and Sgts Mess

EXERCISE MEDICAL BRIDGE REHEARSAL 7 – 9 MARCH 2008

Ex MEDICAL BRIDGE is a MACC ex that permits the Ambulance Services of Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland to ex their pers in emergency drills and procedures. The ex is enabled by mil assistance from 3 Units in Northern Ireland: 40 Sig Regt, 253 GS Med Regt and 204 Field Hosp. Further assistance is provided from the Joint Helicopter Force (NI), the Irish Army Air Corps the Police Service of NI, the NI Fire and Rescue Service and the Coast Guard. Amputees in Action also take part and provide very realistic CAS Sim, much to the shock of the medics and ambulance staff taking part. Ex MEDICAL BRIDGE has proven to be an excellent vehicle enabling 40 Sig Regt to deploy and ex the UK Ops ICS and C2 roles. The ex rehearsal was conducted in Ballykinlar Trg Centre (BTC) in South Down and was structured around 2 major incidents. The first incident was the evacuation of a village hospital and the second involved casualties appearing on a beach in various states of despair. To quote that old cliché, if it's not raining its not training – it certainly was! A cold wintry start that confirmed the Regt were on ex in Ballykinlar.

A 999 telephone call initiated the start of the scenarios which sparked the rollout of the comms assets of 40 Sig Regt; all operating on a much accelerated time line. The IRT from 233 Sqn 10 Sig Regt deployed to Ballykinlar and established the initial mil footprint, a relief in place was conducted by REEBOK 381 manned by the tech team of 66 Sp Sqn who had soon established a SILVER HQ and a Regtl Comd Post where **Maj Ian Kyle** and **LCpl Gribben** demonstrated their map marking skills. Very soon clerks were clerking, techs were teching, Ops were Opping and the Ops Maj, **Maj Andy White** was doing his normal thing. A wide range of UK Ops eqpt was deployed and exercised. Bowman, 320s, 321 INMARSAT, ERAS, Telular and NSTN were all established and put through their paces to varying degrees.
69 Sig Sqn under the capable direction of **Maj Monty Montgomery** deployed CST 401 to the Beeston Village Hospital incident (where most of 69 Sqn caught the infectious disease the Medics were combating and all developed finger trouble) in BTC and FFR dets to Police GOLD, Mil SILVER and Excon.
85 Sig Sqn rolled out after **Maj Warry Wilson** to the Receipt Staging and Onward Integration area (RSOI) at RAF Aldergrove and established Mil BRONZE with CST 402 and FFRs to 38 Bde HQ and the beach incident in BTC. After the arrival and processing of the Sp Bn. **Maj Warry Wilson** decided to enter stealth mode and use Dr Who's TARDIS to appear at Ballykinlar.

LCpl Hutchinson collecting some essential supplies for the Ops Room

Comms were soon established thanks to the efforts of **YofS Dean Rudd** and **FofS 'Birthday Boy' Stansfield**. Valuable hands-on trg and the passage of comms traffic continued throughout the weekend. **Lt Col Whichelo** must have thought the Officers were getting it too easy as he blasted of with CAST Officer trg first thing on the Sunday morning which soon had every one firing on all cylinders.

MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION 28 – 30 MARCH 08

Lt Col Whichelo educating the Officers

Saturday 29 March saw the start of our annual Mil Skills Weekend and the last trg event of the current year. Traditionally this is a challenging weekend and the climax of the XL trophy. The competition was organised by the PSIs – led by **SSgt Nordon** and backed by DS staff from the Sqns. It was a typical day in Northern Ireland; the rain was lashing down like stair rods and the wind reached gale force causing extra discomfort to the teams and admin staff alike. The morning was a round robin of stands including the dreaded asslt course, first aid, shot gun and observation stands. The weather forced the closure of the climbing obstacles on the asslt course on safety grounds and unfortunately the remaining obstacles soon became waterlogged and the teams looked forward to a hot meal, supplied by the Regtl Chefs who had set up a field kitchen as part of their trg programme. Fortunately the weather dried up for the afternoon stands, zeroing, stalking, CBRN and ambush. The teams took full advantage of the opportunity to take their aggression out on the enemy during the ambush stand. It took some time to collect the brass after the fire fight. The afternoon events finished with an asslt course challenge between the Sgts and Officers – the Sgts won by some 2mins 30ses.

The first day finished with a quiz and bar in the Range Rider. The teams were joined by teams from the DS and HQ, but their scores will not be mentioned to save embarrassment to all concerned. Sunday, Day 2, had only one main event – the march and shoot. The teams all successfully completed the speed march and falling target shoot challenge. After a quick tally of scores the Hon Col, **Col Henderson** presented the tankards for the weekend – the winning team was 69 Sig Sqn Limavady Det. The participants enjoyed the weekend and the wet weather was soon forgotten as the Regt lunched alfresco, again courtesy of the Chefs. With bags of competitive spirit between the teams it created a weekend that was enjoyable for all involved.

The Regt 2IC, Maj Finlay at the launch of TA100 at Carrickfergus Castle

LAUNCH OF TA 100 IN NI

The launch of TA100 in NI was synchronised with the TA100 National Launch. It took place on 1 April at Carrickfergus Castle. At set times, guns were fired at various locations across the UK. The CO, 2IC and Adjt were present for the Ceremony. Over the next months, there will be numerous national and local events to mark the anniversary of the Centenary Year. We are all looking forward to our unit event which is a Beating Retreat and All Ranks Dinner on 3rd May 2008.

HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE RECEPTION – ROYAL GUESTS

On the evening of Tuesday 18 March, members and partners of 40 Sig Regt, both past and present were invited to Hillsborough Castle for a reception with the Secretary of State. They were joined by representatives from all the TA units in NI. To the surprise of most of the TA soldiers, they were greeted at the castle by **Her Majesty the Queen** and **Prince Philip**. Everyone very much enjoyed the evening and all had the chance to speak personally with both **The Queen** and **Prince Philip**.

SSgt and Mrs McCrea and Sgt and Mrs Herridge meet Prince Philip

REGIMENTAL ORIENTEERING COMPETITION - by Maj Wilson

Twenty four runners from across 40 Sig Regt braved a torrential downpour in order to compete in the Regtl Orienteering Championships at Lagan Valley Regional Park on the outskirts of Belfast. This was organised by Lagan Valley Orienteering Club (LVO), a civilian club whose cadre of expert orienteers were bemused to be confronted by the motley collection of runners, dog walkers and headless chickens that made up each Sqn's orienteering team. **Sig John Boyd** of 69 Sqn in Limavady attracted particular bemusement for his imperious arrival at registration, sporting a Russian hat and a fat Cuban cigar. Having arrived in style, he then headed out onto the course wearing shorts and shades in total defiance of the cold, wind, rain and brambles and apparently oblivious to the shaking heads all around him. Two courses were on offer. Most competitors preferred the Orange course (2.7km, 90m climb, 14 controls) to the longer and much more technically demanding Green course (5km, 130m climb, 22 controls). This proved to be a sensible preference, as the latter event was apparently routed through Passchendaele. Or so it appeared to the survivors, as they crawled out of the woods several hours later, caked in mud and soaked to the skin. When the results came through, it emerged that a heavily hung over **Maj David Wilson** (OC 85 Sqn) was the fastest Regtl competitor on the Green course, just ahead of the CO, **Lt Col Fred Whichelo**. The Orange course belonged to the ladies, with **SSgt Cathy Barker** (85 Sqn) finishing ahead of the Adjt, **Capt Lucy Webster**. Interestingly, both completed the course in the company of dogs but were curiously reticent when asked who was doing the map reading. With **Sgt Matt Gill** finishing 3rd on the Green course, 85 Sqn emerged as comfortable winners in the Inter-Sqn competition. Congratulations

to all those who participated in spite of the miserable conditions and special thanks to **Stephen Gilmore**, **Fred Hamond** and **Daphne Hamond** of LVO for planning and organising the event.

85 SIGNAL SQUADRON UPDATE - *by Maj David Wilson*

Since moving from Bangor to Lisburn in April 2007, 85 Sqn has faced a difficult time, losing some 75% of its pers in the transition to a TA Centre that was not ready for their arrival. However, with recruitment increasing and a refurbished classroom and changing area almost ready for handover, things are very definitely on the up. The New Year is traditionally a time for renewal and this January, 85 Sqn was delighted to welcome a new PSAO in the form of **Capt Chris Davis** and an AO in **Miss Pamela Swain**. Their efforts have already made a significant and welcome difference to the much neglected admin of the Sqn. Long may these improvements continue! On Tuesday 26 February 2008, the Sqn was honoured to host a visit by Comd 2 Sig Bde, **Brig David Hargreaves**. This served 2 purposes: enabling the Sqn to showcase the progress made over the previous 10 months and allowing the Comd to tick off another TA Centre he had never previously visited. We all hope that the Brig enjoyed his visit as much as the Sqn enjoyed the curry in the mess at the end of the night!

CORPS OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION 4 – 6 APRIL 08 - *by Sgt Gordon*

Our mission this year was to win CORPSOSC and this was evident from a very demanding trg programme produced by **Maj Chambers**, OC Shooting Team, to ensure that 40 Sig Regt maintained their status as NISAAM and TASAM Royal Signals Champions. The team for this year was: **Sgt Colin Gordon** (Team Capt), **Cpl Johnny Moore**, **LCpl John Colgan**, **Sig Gary Beattie** and **Sig Davy McClenaghan.** Individuals were **Sig Darren Alexander**, **Sig Andrew Clarke** and **Sig Philip Gage.**

Practice day got off to a slow start with the ranges not opening until 1000hrs but by close of play all the guys were confident going into the competition on Saturday. First match of the day was the FIBUA and with a team average of 166 this set the standard for the day. It soon became evident that the trg had paid off with our 2 young soldiers, **Sig Beattie** and **Sig McClenaghan**, who only completed their recruits' course in October, matching the scores of the more experienced members of the team! The other 2 shoots, Association and Roupell, proved just as competitive with the young soldiers taking the lead this time and **Cpl Moore** having a disastrous score in practice 1 of the Association which he managed to make up for in the Roupell.

Confirmation of the day's results put **Sig Alexander** in a clear lead with **Cpl Moore**, **LCpl Colgan** and **Sig Beattie**, also in the top 6 to shoot the Roberts Cup on Sunday morning. Sunday 6 April started with a totally unexpected heavy snowfall for 2hrs, delaying the day's activities until 1000hrs, 2hrs behind schedule. The CO and **WO1(SVWO) Finlay** arrived in time to see our 4 guys on the Roberts Cup Match. With the CO's luggage going astray at Heathrow he was not dressed appropriately for the conditions so **Maj Chambers** kindly

Unexpected Arctic conditions on 6th April!

(reluctantly!) donated his gortex jacket due to the freezing conditions.

Sig Beattie coming off the Roberts with a score of 35 hits, an exceptional achievement for a young soldier who only completed basic training 6 months ago. Don't mention **Sig Alexander's** faulty targets which only registered 21 hits out of HPS 50 due to the snow. He is still having nightmares about it, as he hit 39 out of 40 on the same range the day before! Next was the Falling Plate knock out in which we entered 2 teams with **Sig McClenaghan** joining the B team. After eliminating all the others the A and B team met in the Signals final. The A team then progressed to the Inter Corps final but had to settle for 2nd. It was a memorable experience for the CO to be there and witness the best achievement ever for the Regtl Shooting Team. He has since asked for the team to coach him up to the same level in the coming months! Team trophies were awarded for Rifle Team, Champion Unit, FIBUA Match, Roupell Cup, Association, Pistol Team, Falling Plate. Individual awards were Champion Rifle, Champion at Arms, Best B Class, Best Young Soldier, Ind Pistol, Ind LSW. Special thanks from **Maj Chambers** and myself for all the hard work and dedication from the team to what has been an outstanding performance this year. The bar has been raised now for CORPSOSC! Trg continues prior to NISAAM with the team looking forward to qualifying for TASAM at Bisley again this year.

The team display their silverware with the CO and WO1 Finlay

71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT

CO **Lt Col CS Tallents TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) P Joyce**

VISIT BY THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF DRAPERS

The Master and the Clerk of the Drapers, our affiliated Livery Company, kindly visited the Regt in February for an update on our activities. The Master, **Col Stephen Foakes TD** (an ex CO of the Regt) and the Clerk were great fun to host. A chilli supper followed the presentation of Royal Warrants to **WO2 Springer**, **Keeble** and **Twose**.

Master and Clerk of the Drapers' Company with the Reebok and crew

47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Smith**
SSM Gapped

The Sqn took part in the annual Lafone Parade and service at St Paul's in remembrance of **Maj Alexander Lafone**, a Victoria Cross recipient and member in an earlier guise of the Sqn, who fell at Beersheba, Palestine during the WW1. The ceremony went without a hitch with the exception of the pained faces of **Cpl Craig Langley** and **LCpl Pat Coleman** as they struggled to breathe whilst bound in the finery of the original Middlesex Yeomanry uniforms.

LCpl Coleman in original Middlesex Yeomanry Uniform

The Sqn have also been brushing up on their mil skills with the advent of Ex YEOMAN WARRIOR. Building on the well established scenario of the breakaway countries of Readingly and Basingly, Sqn members deployed on a range of expeditionary warfare styled exs. **OCdt Rosie Ewbank** found herself in comd of a small but highly charged Pl stuck in an FOB on the edge of Bramley trg area. Through the weekend, the FOB came under constant attack stretching the small force to their limits. All was not lost thanks to their SF advisor in the shape of SPSI, **SSgt Dave Steadman** who ensured that enemy forces, made up of officers and SNCOs from the Sqn with further reinforcement by 5 Sig Sqn, never managed to gain the upper hand. Special mention must go to **SSgt Cheshire** and 5 Sqn's **WO2(SSM) Taylor** who managed to make the wreck of the helicopter actually appear to fly, thanks to the considerable amount of pyro on offer! Thanks must go to 5 Sig Sqn for their contribution to making the ex a success.

On the first Regtl Trg weekend, the Sqn won the arduous Regtl log race despite having the smallest team. The Sqn also managed to prove that although we don't ride horses or have a nice big Reebok, we are more than capable of putting the AGV Javelin antenna the right way up! February saw another mil skills weekend; this time located in the wild provinces of Longmoor. Charged with the rigours of comd, **OCdt Ewbank** again found herself in comd of a slightly larger Pl (reinforced from 68 Sig Sqn and 265 Sp Sqn's LAD) stuck on the borders of the OIBUA village. The action was fast and frantic with random attacks on the walls of the Pl's FOB coming night and day whilst Middle Eastern daily life sounds were broadcast from an interesting collection of audio appliances and PSI (T), **Sgt Lee Elliot's** IPOD (we wonder if all his music is as bad?)

If this wasn't disturbing enough, someone had left the enemy a large dressing up box with various garments and wigs (to the delight of the 2IC who found he could have hair once again). The friendly forces were reinforced with a Gazelle courtesy of 669 AAC Sqn which permitted them to conduct recon sorties on the enemy's position in the local mosque. The local police station came under attack on several occasions and the friendly Pl was

Cpl Craig Langley negotiates with the tribal leader aka Maj Mike Smith

obliged to lend a hand to restore peace, despite being bombarded with wood and potatoes. They were so enthusiastic that they came back for a second go. The ex came to end shortly after **SSgt Cheshire** blew himself up during a routine patrol leaving the Pl no choice but to attend to the multiple causalities before self-extracting out in a blaze of glory. Thanks go to 68 Sig Sqn, 265 Sp Sqn's LAD and 669 AAC Sqn for their assistance. **LCpl Gav Brown** and **Sig Keith Kapadia-Mills** have returned from Op TELIC and it is great to see them back. **Sgt Jean Lambert** has been awarded the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal for 11 years' exemplary service and congratulations also go to **Cfn Paul Marshall** for successfully completing his recruits'

course. Lastly, the Sqn is pleased to welcome **Lt Gary Taylor** who joins us as OC Y Tp.

68 (INNS OF COURT AND CITY YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Dodd**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Healey**

ALPHA TROOP EXERCISE

Being a new recruit to the Sqn, I was challenged when I arrived onto our first Tp ex on the Aldershot trg area. The aim of the ex was to enhance our leadership skills and to improve our battle skills. The first night was one I will never forget – I was catapulted into complete madness. When we arrived, I was the last to get out of the Land Rover. I was freezing, I was confused, it was dark and I couldn't see my hand held out in front of me. Beneath the stars we patrolled tactically to seek out the enemy. Under the watchful eye of **Lt Moor**, we felt our way along the paths and through the bushes. Once we had seen and observed the enemy, we could patrol back to our harbour area. The night was long and cold, I felt comfort in the fact that I was not alone. The next morning we were back out on patrol, when we discovered a rolled Land Rover. The driver was covered in blood and the passenger was irate, walking round and round. We had never dealt with something like this before as the bandage job by **Sig Irwin** demonstrated! **Sig Grieg** tried to control the passenger but being such a gentle character himself, it took some time to calm the shocked soldier. I was asked to send the situation report so I took a deep breath and nervously I sent the message over the radio. **Cpl Hughes** announced our first test was over. We laughed at all of our errors but we were just trg and we will improve.

Our next lesson was on pairs fire and manoeuvre, which was followed by sect battle drills with **Lt Moor**. **Cpl Dawes** led by example; he demonstrated what we were meant to do. It was really easy to follow his example, it was clear that this was just revision for him. As the day went on the comd tasks got harder, the assits got bigger and the distance to travel to reach the enemy got longer. **Cpl Warren**, completely switched on, used the LSW to hold down the enemy positions. Even with a sore knee, this was a man ready for action. **Sig Mohamed** a normally softly spoken man developed a roar of rage when confronted with the enemy; he became confident when he led us into the attack. Then I saw the asslt course; it was huge. The distance was vast and I was going to have to lead the fire teams through this. I don't know where the courage came from but it did come. We stormed the enemy, suppressing their fire and closing in on their location. Taking them by surprise, **Sig Mohamed** got around the back of them and we had every corner covered. Then just when we thought it was over our ex comd decided that we would have to save all the injured casualties. Not only save them but carry them on a stretcher up a steep hill to safety. Did the weekend develop us? Yes, we demonstrated we had the physical stamina, the determination, the ability to comd and we didn't shy away from our responsibility. We worked as a team to achieve the objective and I came away more confident in my abilities.

70 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Picton**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Liddle**

Firstly congratulations to 3 of the Sqn's newest recruits, **Sigs Jack Darley** and **Tom Darley** (brothers) and **Josh Pearson** on successful completion of their recruits' course in February 2008. During the course, **Sig Jack Darley** was awarded best PT recruit and **Sig Josh Pearson** got Best Drill and Best Turned out recruit. Sadly for the Sqn, **Sig Josh Pearson** is due to join the Regular Army, 7 RHA, later this year. **Cpl Ian Braizer** successfully attended the Royal Signals SSgts course at Blandford in March, the following is a short report on his experiences,

"Arriving at Blandford on Saturday morning both myself and **ASgt Kelly Delf** reported to the DS for admin. We were given our rooms in the Mess and told to report to the gym in 30 mins for a CFT (if the time had been any shorter we would have been doing it in suits!) A total of 32 were booked on the course and we didn't even have time for a hello before we raced off. The course was hilly and so muddy in places that even just standing was difficult. We got to the end and not all were left.

We were then straight into the classroom for lessons. These were very intensive and covered everything from Duties of a SSgt, Defence Writing to Defence of a Comms Site. There was very little down time, which is to be expected of a career course such as this, and this would get even less as the course went on. Later in the week, we would have a series of tasks Personal Leadership Development (PLD) i.e. log race/burden carries which were actually good fun as they got you outside. Towards the end of the first week we had Ex SHAKEDOWN. This was an ex based around occupying an area then setting up defences. This was an intensive 2 days with little sleep. After returning from the field and another day in the classroom we had an orders test, then on the Saturday, a day off. We went out into town for a 'bonding' session. Next day was the final ex. As soon as we deployed on the ground it started snowing resulting in a white out. Over the next few days we all worked constantly either digging, setting up defences or on patrols. On the last day we had a series of sect attacks and finally we were on the tpt home. All that was left was the kit turn around and the end of course dinner. Overall I found the course challenging but very rewarding.

EXERCISE MIDNIGHT SUN TRAINING

Sgt Richie Marsh and **Cpl Ross Nugent** have been on the build up trg for Ex MIDNIGHT SUN, the TA Royal Signals ex to Greenland. They have spent 2 trg weekends in Snowdonia and a week of trg on the Isle of Skye. The remoteness and snowy weather of Skye provided an unique trg experience, practising navigational skills, rope work, ascending and using ice axes and crampons. They were also taught some mountain rescue techniques for descending with casualties.

Ex MIDNIGHT SUN training on the Isle of Skye

The Sqn has also being preparing for a freedom parade in Chelsmford. Ably organized by **WO2(SSM) Sam Liddle**, the Sqn has started arms drill trg. The Sqn officers, namely **Maj Julian Picton** have also been practising sword drill, much to the amusement of some members of the Sqn. **Capt Kirk Humphries** and **Lts Rawden Leigh** and **Alex Taffs** have yet to take part!

265 (KENT AND COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Simon Palmer**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Keeble**

In February, the Sqn deployed to Hankley Common for its annual inf ex organised by **Capt Andy Church**. During the ex, the Sqn officers and seniors enjoyed their first mess dinner of the year organised by **WO2(SSM) Keeble** to dine out the ever popular **SSgt Mick Goodwin**. As it was close to St Valentines Day, the dinner naturally had a romantic theme with everyone having a thoroughly enjoyable time...and in the case of **SSgt Kev Young**, too much of a good time. In February, the Sqn deployed to its second home at Longmoor on Ex SHARP COURAGE. Carefully planned by the SSM and **SSgt Trevor 'Taff' Evans** with the help of the seniors, the soldiers were put through their paces in veh recognition, navigation, comms, battlefield casualty drills and shooting. Sect comd, **LCpl Brett 'Bomber' Harries** skilfully took charge of his sect and ensured they didn't miss out on any physical trg by tabbing them halfway across Longmoor trg area before arriving at his intended location. **LCpl Jim 'Jumbo' Sutton** displayed all his skills on the range by hitting the target from all angles and distances. At the end of the weekend, it was **Sig Lloyd Dellaway** who impressed the DS the most and was rewarded with the Top Soldier award. The Med Det was also busy showing off its skills, **Capt Sean Wardle** and **SSgt Tony Eastley** took a medical display for the 8th (Brampton) Scout Group. Children from the Beaver Colony (6 – 8 year olds) and the Cubs (8 – 10 year olds) got to grips with the eqpt used by the medics. The children were shown around an Army Ambulance, shown how to apply bandages as well as learning how to securely strap one of their own onto an Army stretcher.

The Sqn also saw **Cpl Nick 'Fidel' Castro** and **LCpl Steve 'Taff 2' Williams** qualify as BCDT instructors while **Sig Jon Lines** and **Pte Andy Turner** both successfully compleed their 2 week CMS(R) course at Grantham. Also congratulations to **LCpls Harries** and **'Smiler' Sutton** on gaining excellent passes on their RSCC in March. The end of March saw the traditional end of trg year party with the theme of 'Superheroes'. With plenty of Batmen, Spidermen, Supermen, Batgirls and even a Bananaman, Bexleyheath was a safe place to be that night. It also saw **LCpl Williams** collect the SSM's Shield for best performing soldier over the previous year. Finally good luck and best wishes from the Sqn go to **LCpl Geoff 'Pikey' Porter** and **Sig Aaron 'Specky' Pinchbeck** on their mobilisation for Kosovo.

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS)

OC	**Maj S Clarke GM QGM***
SSM	**WO2 J Krikorian**
OC Ops Tp	**Lt A Jeyes**
OC Comms Tp	**Capt E Macleod**

INTRODUCTION

The Sqn has been busy since our last submission to *The Wire*. We have continued to deliver op sp to our 11 dets across the globe and conducted continuation and Sqn level trg. We have also taken on new commitments within the UK and abroad, further diversifying the employment for Special Comms Operators. The Sqn Annual Camp took place last September and involved the majority of those (TA and regular) not already deployed overseas. The Special Comms course has been running since October and is due to come to a close at the end of March following completion of the overseas validation Ex GLOBAL LYNX; this year exercising out of Cyprus, Sofia and Bucharest.

VOLUNTEERING FOR SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS

If you want a new and stimulating challenge, volunteer to employment in Special Comms. Speak with your line manager and complete PD206 then send it to: Training Cell, 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn (SC), Water Eaton Road, MK3 5HQ. You will be loaded on one of the UK or Germany based briefing courses where your suitability will be assessed and you can find out more about Special Comms. The hardest part is filling in the application, don't hesitate, do it today.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING COURSE (SCBC) DATES FOR 2008

We now have a new look assessment course, called the Special Communications Briefing Course (SCBC). This is a mandatory step in volunteering for Special Comms (SC) and will identify the suitability of individuals for employment within SC. Two new SCBC dates have been added to this year's calendar:

12 – 14 May
9 – 11 June
7 – 9 June (Germany)
28 – 30 July
1 – 3 September

The SCBC is a three day briefing and candidate suitability assessment course. Each course will finish at the end of the third day.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS COURSE 2008

The Special Comms Course will begin on the 27 October 2008. Following a pass on SCBC candidates will be loaded onto Phase 1 of the course. Phase 1 lasts 8 weeks, split into 2 modules, and is designed to train and prove fundamental skills required for Special Comms continuation trg. Module 1 focuses wholly on basic mil orientated skills, while module 2 teaches wider Defence and comms skills. Phase 2 is the "special to role" phase and is where the students learn the new skills that turn them into a Special Comms Operator.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS COURSE 2007

On 17 October 07, the selection course started with 16 students. The course, run by a Sgt (Course SNCO) and 2 Cpls (Course Instructors), is broken down into 2 main phases. Phase 1 is the "In house" trg phase and lasts for 10 weeks. Over the 10 weeks of Phase 1, the students were taught and assessed on various subjects such as first aid, map reading, presentation skills, typing, and many more. It has been a busy 10 weeks with the majority of the time being spent in barracks but on top of the busy schedule there have been 3 exs.

EXERCISE SPORADIC LYNX

Ex SPORADIC LYNX is a 2 week ex designed to develop the SC course students' skills on the ranges and also to assess them in a field environment. Students are split into different dets and sent to remote locations to provide comms and various other tasks. On 12 November, the course deployed to Folkestone on Ex SPORADIC LYNX. The ex was split into 2 weeks. Week 1 was spent on Hythe ranges where the students developed their personal drills with the Sig Sauer. As the week progressed their accuracy and wpn handling improved to a suitable level, which

enabled them to move onto more advanced drills (under supervision of the DS). Over the weekend a PACEX was carried out in preparation for Week 2.

On the Monday of Week 2, the students where split into 4 dets: 1 x Field Comms Det (FCD) and 3 x Special Project Units (SPU). The FCD took on the role of Base and was co-located with the DS (Comms Ops) at Park Farm. This enabled the DS to instruct Base to move on the 3 outstations to new locations. Each group rotated through Base at least once through the week. Each SPU deployed with various types of Satcom eqpt, 9x9 tent, 12x12 tent, generator and G1098 eqpt, so in theory a mobile station could be quickly erected and comms quickly established. It is fair to say that each SPU was moved regularly throughout the week with each student given the role of det comd. On the Friday of Week 2, the course and DS moved back to Bletchley in preparation for Ex STRIKING LYNX.

EXERCISE STRIKING LYNX

Ex STRIKING LYNX is a 'Battle Camp' style ex designed to revise, teach and assess SC course students on inf skills such as harbour drills, patrols, sect attacks etc, in order to prepare them for progression on the SC course and also their CLM. This year the ex was organised by **SSgt 'Vinny' Walsh** and was carried out on SENTA. The course arrived at Sennybridge around 1400hrs on Monday 26 November 07 and was put through its paces by carrying out a 10km insertion march with full kit. After a full ex briefing the students carried out 2 days of revision and trg as well as live firing and night navexs. Due to factors such as weather, terrain, lack of sleep and constant assessment the next couple of days proved difficult as the students moved into the tactical phase of the ex. With more patrols, ambushes and sect attacks, the guys had to dig deep to stay alert. After a period of enforced rest in the early hours on Friday morning the half sects moved into a lay-up position ready to carry out the final asslt. After swapping to live ammo, the final asslt was under way, with **Sgt Andy Stephen** providing realistic sound effects with his flanking fire (GPMG). After a gruelling asslt, a de-brief was given before the students and DS travelled back to Bletchley to prepare for the next week of trg.

EXERCISE ANNUAL LYNX 07 - *by WO2 J Alderslade-Flowers*

1 (RBY) Sig Sqn (SC) recently returned from Ex ANNUAL LYNX 07, based in the UK and Ascension Island. The first phase of the ex was based in the UK with **SSgt Mark Lawrence** taking a field det to Bulford, **Cpl Anna Yates** taking one to Bramcote and Cpl Rachel Morris taking the third to Stafford. This phase of the ex was carried out in slow time to enable new members of the Sqn to be trained on the eqpt and to refresh and remind the older hands. All dets comprised Regular and Territorial soldiers, working closely together. **SSgt Lawrence's** location was small, affording only sufficient real estate to accommodate the masts and det but it included accn, whereas **Cpl Yates's** location was much larger and accn amounted to a draughty 12 x 12. However, **Cpl Morris** obviously won the draw with a large field and accn. Communication was good throughout the daytime but became challenging at nightfall as those of us who have been in comms for years know oh so well!

The second phase of the ex was based on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. The main body moved out late afternoon on the weekend in the middle of the 2 week ex and flew overnight to Ascension Island from RAF Brize Norton. Arrival to Ascension was in bright morning sunshine to be transported to Travellers Hill camp for accn and briefings. The island itself is the tip of a volcano and has an area of about 35 square miles. Terrain varies from lunar (lava rock) to a small amount of very unusual flower vegetation to sub tropical and tropical at the top of Green Mountain. It is well known for its wildlife. In particular, green turtles dragging themselves up the beaches at night to dig nests to lay their eggs.

Historically, the island has a great deal of history in comms, but of particular interest to the Sqn is that 602 Sig Tp, the predecessors to 1(RBY) Sig Sqn (SC) were based there for a while. 602 Sig Tp and 1 Sig Sqn, 39 Sig Regt (V) amalgamated in April 1995 to become the Sqn we are today. Once briefings were over, the afternoon was started with a **SSgt Lumsden Gordon** style familiarisation, come magical mystery tour of the island, including Georgetown with one hotel and the only town on the island, to beaches with cemeteries, to the American Base on to English Bay and Comfortless Cove (a disturbing name indeed!). Later that afternoon the Sqn were put through their paces by **Capt Fisher** and the PTIs in completing the Army Swim test back at camp.

During the time in Ascension the Sqn were honoured with the presence of our Hon Col, **Maj Gen (Retd) W Robins** and Bde Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig D Hargreaves**. This afforded both the Sqn members and the guests a chance to get to know one another in slow time over good food and a few drinks. Acclimatisation over, the next 2 days were spent on the ranges. Live fire and manoeuvre were the main objective. The ranges were located near Two Boats. As the name suggests, there were 2 boats there, despite the fact it is inland! The first day started with grouping and zeroing and then went on to individual fire and manoeuvre practices through narrow passages of lava rock and sand - ricocheting rounds being of specific concern in this terrain. Further practices were fire and manoeuvre in pairs, culminating in 4 man fire team attacks. Despite the beating sun and tropical heat, everyone enjoyed themselves and a huge sense of achievement was felt by all.

Next – the infamous Dew Pond run. This is a 7 mile run from sea level to the top of Green Mountain. The Sqn set off from the beach early Thursday morning by dipping their hands in the sea and then had to run/walk the 7 miles to the top of the mountain to the Dew Pond to dip their hands in the water there. All runners/walkers were successful and the winner was **LCpl O'Connor**, **Sig Collins** came second and **Cpl Chalmers** was third. This led nicely into the AT phase of the ex. A number of activities were made available to the Sqn, including Scuba diving, mountain biking, hill walking, golf, a sea trip around the island plus a number of others. The Scuba diving proved to be a popular choice as 'try dives' for the novices were being offered as well as full dives - the waters around Ascension being full of fascinating marine life. Other chose to explore the beauty of the island, either by walking or mountain biking and found themselves bumping into each other as the island is fairly small.

Others chose to play golf on what is reputed to be 'the worst golf course in the world'. Since gaining this title, apparently a worse one has been constructed in Japan, but this is man made, of course! It certainly stood up to its reputation when **SSgt Gordon**, having not had a golf club in his hands for some 11 years or so, played his specialist 'reverse shot' – his ball ricocheted off a lava rock and landed behind him! It's all down to science, apparently, the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of refraction.

Others spent time touring the island and found particular interest in one beach where oysters were trapped in the rocks. Unfortunately, despite great efforts none of the shells were prised free to check out the possible contents. This beach also had a blow hole. Common sense says that if you get too close to try and take a picture - you get wet. Sadly, **Cpl Gareth Clarke** was a bit short on common sense that day and spent the remainder of the day in damp regret. This brought our trip to Ascension to a close. The last day was spent in preparation to return and the Sqn travelled overnight Saturday night to arrive at RAF Brize Norton in the early hours of Sunday morning. The return trip to Bletchley was quiet, kit was turned round and then all pers were dismissed in good time to get back to their families.

NEDERLAND INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION
- by Cpl Colin Teo

Shooting competitions? Anyone been on one lately? Ones that didn't involve 10 hr drives across 4 countries, unfamiliar and unzeroed wpns with range orders given in a different way to good old UK? Well, we did and thoroughly enjoyed it too, apart from the driving bit. It all began at 0400hrs Friday morning in Bletchley, with the team turning up to board the minibus to take us onto the Eurotunnel, through France, Belgium and into Holland for the shooting competition arranged by the Dutch Reservist organisation – the Nederland International Shooting Competition or NISC for short. This took place at Haarskamp in Holland and consisted of competition shoots with the Glock 9mm pistol, the Diemaco M16 and the FN FAL. We arrived at Haarskamp in the evening (thanks to the sterling efforts of **Cpl Clarke** who drove us safely and speedily across Europe and back) and were placed into teams – 1 Sig A and 1 Sig B, with myself attached to a German team from Freiburg. There were a few teams like this, consisting of members from more than one country. NATO was pretty well represented, with guests from Switzerland and Russia. Notable exceptions were the US and Canada.

After the evening meal, there was a brief followed by wpns familiarisation. Dutch range orders are slightly different to ours; the familiar "load" followed by "make ready" were replaced by a "load" and "load and make ready". Not too different, but it still raised eyebrows amongst the Brits. The wpns; the Glock handled similar to the Browning with no safety catch, the Diemaco had the magazine catch on the opposite side to the SA80 and the safety is a fire selector as well, and the FAL is not quite the SLR, hold open is in a different position for one thing.

Did any handle like like the SA80? Not even slightly! The disciplines were to be carried at 30m for the Glock, 100, 200 and 300 m for the rifles. So how did 1 Sig Sqn do on the Saturday? Good for a first attempt. We put forward 2 teams of 3 and they came 22nd and 30th out of 46 teams. Considering the standard of some of the competition, this was no mean feat. For instance, one German reservist team does weekly shoots. There was some fog on Saturday morning which meant we couldn't do the 200 and 300m disciplines – which is just as well considering none of the wpns were zeroed for us! A plus was that there was no brass picking or wpn cleaning afterwards – all being done by our Dutch hosts who really did look after us well.

The day ended with a slap up meal in a nice restaurant with some absolutely fab food which was thoroughly enjoyed by all and sundry. Being good chaps, we all sacked it early as we had to drive back to the Channel Tunnel, which we did in good order – we were actually back in time for tea. All in all, it was a good experience and one to be thoroughly recommended.

Those that participated were

Capt Macleod
Sgt Neillins
Cpl Clarke
Sig Larman
SSM Krikorian
Cpl Chalmers
Cpl Teo

1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215)

OC **Maj RDW Rumsey**
RSM **WO1 A Caulfield**

DISTRICT GUIDING CENTENARY VISIT

The Sqn recently assisted in one of its more unusual tasks; the local affiliated Guiding unit was celebrating its centenary and in commemoration of this had decided to move its Charter in as many different modes of tpt as possible across the County. Naturally this was a job for the trusty ASV 436 having nearly been in service this length of time itself! The Sqn was more than happy to oblige and so it was a wet Sunday morning when **Sig 'Gav' Proffitt** and **LCpl 'Matt' Grochowina** moved the armour onto the Parade Square, much to the shock of the single living-in members still asleep in their beds. The official handover of the Charter was completed and lots of photographs taken with the OC, **Maj 'Rich' Rumsey**, finding himself surrounded by the more enthusiastic of the Guiding leaders, whose spirit didn't seem to be dampened by the cold weather. The Charter was then signed and transported to Stonehenge for the next leg of its long journey across Wiltshire.

The handover of the Centenary Charter

Sig Proffitt wonders if the Brownie would make a better job of driving than him

EXERCISE FIRST TRY SABRE TROOP TRAINING

Given the Sqn's recent Op TELIC 10 tour and post op leave, it had been a while since Sabre Tp had built the Bde Main HQ and it was decided that a tp level trg ex should be conducted in order to practise this skill in slow time. This proved initially to be 'very slow time' with most members of the Tp never having done it before. The tents were dug out and the moths shaken off under the direction of complex corporal, **Cpl 'Lyndsey' Deal**. After some trial and error and lots of yelling from **SSgt 'Fozzy' Foster**, Bde Main was up – which just left the dreaded football pitch sized cam net. All was going well until the combined efforts and weight of **Cpl 'Scotty' Scott** and **LCpl 'Jim' King** saw the BFT collapse under them, to yells from the Tp of 'who ate all the pies.' However all was not lost, the damaged poles were replaced as were the larger than life culprits who were replaced with 'lighter' members of the Tp. As the week went on, the build got slicker and problems were ironed out resulting in a very successful ex.

LONG SERVICE AND GOOD CONDUCT CEREMONY

After a very busy period, returning from an op tour, including a huge amount of well deserved leave and getting used to living back in the on-going redevelopment of Tidworth Camp, it was time to recognise the efforts of 4 personalities within the Sqn. Not just for their efforts during their time at Tidworth but over their entire career, **Sgts Callander**, **Jones**, **Mead** and **Cpl McMahon** received their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals. The medal presentation was held in the new and only temporary home for 2 years, of the WOs and Sgts Mess; the bar was open and a curry lunch was laid on. Once everyone was in position, the ceremony began with the OC **Maj Rich Rumsey** reading a brief history of the LS&GC medal. He then handed over to the 2IC, **Capt Harriet Cairns** who read a citation for each of the recipients. After each citation was read the Bde Comd, **Brig J I Bashall** presented the medals to each individual and their long suffering partners, who were also present, received a bouquet of flowers. After the obligatory photographs, it was off to the bar for a pint and a curry. The first official function held in the redeveloped WOs and Sgts mess was a roaring success and a good time was had by all.

The LS&GC recipients and their wives after the presentations

SQUADRON SWIMMING GALA

A swimming gala kicked off this year's Mercury Cup which is the Sqn's Inter-Tp sports competition. The rules ensured everyone took part and there were races for all abilities. Events ranged from the traditional 50m crawl to the "Crufts Relay" in which swimmers had to swim doggy paddle, picking up a weight from the bottom of the pool half way.

Thankfully there were no major incidents during the event, but the initial pace of the competition, with minimal time between races did almost cause a few heart attacks and collapsed lungs! The first surprise of the event happened in the 50m backstroke when the favourite, Sqn 2IC **Capt Cairns**, went up against OC Bengal Tp, **Lt Chris Anderson**. As both were ex-county swimmers the heat was on, but **Lt Anderson** pulled it out of the bag. The best finish of the event had to go to **Cpl 'Huw' Morris**, who came from a quarter length down to win the "Save the Dummy" race, whilst towing the aptly selected dummy **LCpl 'James' Martin**. He managed this feat in the last cms of the pool, beating SHQ Tp much to the consternation of the OC. It was a superb event enjoyed by all and the Tps are now looking forward to the 7-a-side football tournament after Easter. In the end SHQ Tp won the gala, much to the disbelief of event organiser **Lt Anderson**, with Bengal Tp 2nd, Sabre Tp in 3rd and Sp Tp bringing up the rear. All bets are off for the footie!

SOLENT SURVIVOR

With an early start to the morning, the would-be sailors left Tidworth with a sense of being a pirate for a week. **Cmdr Straughan** was the skipper we managed to steal from Blandford for the week. We set sail from Gosport early in the afternoon with pretty much no wind, so it was a slow sail. Our sights were set on Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, and by late o'clock we made it. Unfortunately it was too late for any restaurants to be open, so we had a healthy meal of beer and crisps and then headed back to the yacht for a well earned sleep. The next morning was an early start as we were off to Poole. The weather had picked up so the sea was a little rougher. This didn't help our lunch go down well and ended up with **Cpl 'Grommit' Wallace** and **Lt Anderson** feeding the fishes. The rest of the crew weren't feeling that much better, which made it so much more worth while.

On the Thursday we headed off to Portsmouth for our final night. It was all steam ahead as we were being chased into port by *HMS Lancaster*. Luckily we won as she was just a little bit bigger than us. After a good night sampling the local pubs and clubs we headed back into Gosport on the Friday morning for a quick turn around and a sleepy trip home.

LCpl Jones and Sig Arbon too busy posing to realise they are on a collision course with the buoy

1 MECH BDE HQ & SIG SQN (215) – SQUADRON DINNER NIGHT

On Saturday 15 March 2008 we held the first Ladies Dinner Night since our return from Op TELIC 10. We had got together to say goodbye to the many personalities within the Sqn who are to move on to pastures new or in 2 cases have already moved. The pers who are jumping ship are: **WO1(RSM) 'Tony' Caulfield** to be posted to 11 Sig Regt, **WO2(RQMS) 'Terry' Bickerstaff** moving on promotion to be RSM 11 Sig Regt, **WO2(YofS) 'Tim' Vanandel** who has already moved on promotion to WO1 to the USSO Team at HQ SOinC(A), **SSgt 'Snowy' Snowdon** on a well engineered move to Aborfield, and last but not least **Lt Chris Anderson** who is also off to Blandford again to serve with 11 Sig Regt. This auspicious occasion will be remembered for many reasons, not only the goodbyes we said to our colleagues but also for the fact that the venue was hosted within the salubrious surroundings of the new WOs and Sgts Mess.

The night itself started as usual with a couple of beers and socialising with good company at the bar before getting the 5 min call for dinner from the very busy Mess Manageress. Once seated Mr Vice, the one and only **Sgt (Master Chef) 'Lee' Richardson** RLC said grace and for his sterling efforts throughout the night managed to be fined only one bottle of port. Not to be out done the PMC, **WO2(FofS) 'Chris' White** led the way in style by accumulating at least 4 port fines which grew as the night went on.

The PMC, **WO2(FofS) White**, the PEC, **SSgt 'Chris' Deal** and The Committee are to be congratulated for their time and effort in making this occasion such a success and for the hard work that always goes on behind the scenes to set the standard for all our future social events in The Mess.

4 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204)

OC **Maj PR Griffiths**
RSM **WO1(RSM) A Maylett**

204 Sig Sqn has now entered the 5th month of Op TELIC 11, where the tempo of ops has picked up considerably. We have also had a big change around of personalities. A special congratulations and farewell goes out to the newly commissioned RSM, **Capt Cyril 'Ben' Batley** who is replaced by **WO1 Andy Maylett**.

WO1(RSM) Batley hands over to WO1(RSM) Maylett

The Sqn also said a heartfelt goodbye to the 2IC, **Capt Fiona Watson** and the Ops Officer, **Capt Ben Price** and welcomes **Capt Andi Davis** as 2IC and **Capt Georgie Hood** as Ops Officer, who have both settled in already to the busy pace of Bde life in Basra. Our 'deserters' were dined out of the Sqn with a formal 3 course dinner including toasts and a can or two of real beer. We wish them all the best of luck.

TIGRIS TROOP

OC **Lt S Rice**
Tp SSgt **SSgt TG Woodall**

OPERATION MYSPACE - *by Cpl Luke Buley*

Op MYSPACE took place in Camp Beuhring on 10 March. MYSPACE, the social networking website in conjunction with the US Armed Forces, organised an evening of performances from US artists including The Pussycat Dolls, Disturbed, **Jessica Simpson**, DJ Z-Trip and Filter (I don't know who they are either!). Hosted by comedian **Carlos Mensia**, the event was broadcast live on Myspace.com, the first ever HD live concert to go out over the internet.

The day leading up to the concert was eventful. In the morning I was lucky enough to see the arrival of The Pussycat Dolls. I wasn't stalking them, as such, I just happened to be on the roof at that time, with a Personal Role Radio to keep the rest of the Det informed. Watching them practise was an insight into the plan for that night's performance – all I can say is the desert was about to get even hotter. After the Pussycat Dolls, **Jessica Simpson** carried out her sound check, murdering Robbie Williams' 'Angels'!

During lunch I had the highlight of my tour. I glimpsed the Pussycat Dolls leaving the dining hall and asked **Nicole**, the lead singer, if I could get her and the other 'Dolls' to sign my poster. Their PA said that they were in a rush, but **Nicole** agreed to do it as I had a cute accent! Whilst they were signing the poster **Ashley** (the long blonde haired one) told me that my beret was cute, so I told her she could wear it – lucky I had washed it a couple of nights before. While she was wearing it, I got a picture with all of them but in the excitement I didn't realise they had used their own camera and not mine. I felt so used. After having only a moment to calm down, **Jessica Simpson** then walked into the cookhouse and once again I asked if I could have her autograph. She signed a picture of herself and then hugged me and gave me a kiss on the cheek. I would like to publicly thank **Cpl Craig Rees** for nominating me as 'head counter' in DFAC 2 that week.

In what can only be described as a cataclysmic coincidence, the 'not so hairy' **Sgt Dave Walker**, IC Synergy and 'not so tall', **Lt Sam Rice**, OC Tigris Tp, happened to fly down from Basra that morning to carry out a "crypto check". Obviously they had to visit the PX and Baskin Robbins during these duties whilst listening on the PRR for situational awareness. At one point all 3 of us were even lucky enough to meet **Tom**, the founder of Myspace.com and organiser of the event and his very attractive lady friend. The show kicked off with 'Disturbed' who rocked the crowd. Unfortunately 'moshing' wasn't allowed and the US MPs pulled any 'crowd surfers' out of the sky. It was the first concert I've been to where M16s and M4 Carbines were waved by the thousand to the pulsating beat. Laser markers completed the party atmosphere whilst there seemed to be an ongoing competition to see who could injure who, by throwing cylumes the hardest. DJ Z-Trip baffled the audience by performing a set with tracks like Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire', with a hip-hop beat. Words can not describe the magic he performed.

Finally, the Pussycat Dolls performed the main event. Suffice to say they weren't wearing much and danced around the stage like crazy. Saying any more than that wouldn't do it justice. The event was hugely patriotic and pro-American, as you would expect, but it was organised for them so I'll let them off. The one person who acknowledged that us Brits where there was **Nicole**, my new best mate!

IRAQI ARMY HF RADIO TRAINING - *by Cpl Andrew Fazackerley*

204 Sig Sqn has until recently, had 2 senior Cpls embedded with the Monitoring, Mentoring and Training (M2T) BG, helping to bolster the Iraqi Army's Signals capability. Latterly this approach has altered following a surge of ops in Basra led by the Iraqi Prime Minister himself, spearheaded by Iraqi troops and supported by Multi-National Corps in Baghdad and British troops in Basra. The main effort is now Military Training Teams (MiTT) and the Sqn is integral to supporting this new phase.

Reconstruction of the Iraqi Army comms took another step forward this month with the 14th Div being issued a Harris HF Radio capability. Training the Iraqi Operators fell to the M2T NCO for the Sqn, **Cpl Fazackerley**, with supervision from **Maj Youngman** G6 MiTT.

The trg commenced with a visit to the Contingency Operating Base at Basra Air Station for 15 Iraqi Army operators, led by **Lt Ali**. It was a unique experience trying to teach through an interpreter but one soon forgets about the pauses and uses the time to think what to say next. The Iraqi Operators were curious about where my name came from but after about ten minutes of explanation from the interpreter, the lesson proceeded! After teaching the component parts and how to set up the eqpt, we moved onto the masts that had arrived with the Harris Radio. My 2 helpers from the Sqn, **Sigs Andrew Bradley** and **Lauren Mcwhir** demonstrated the mast erection process and then it was time for the Iraqis to show us what they had learned. It was all hands to the pump and they soon had the grasp of both masts and antenna.

Teaching the Iraqis the Harris Radio with the help of an interpreter

The next day involved a short helicopter trip to Camp Mac. **Maj Youngman**, the Ops Officer, **Capt Ben Price**, the Bowman YofS, **SSgt Chris Alston** and I arrived to the shiny new camp and a very generous greeting from the Iraqi Army. The day was spent watching a full pl of operators led by **Lt Ali**, setting up the eqpt. The next visit to Camp Mac also involved the Harris Trg Team from Baghdad to set up the data comms over the Harris radio. The Trg Team consisted of **Master Sergeant Klins** US Army and **Lt Faras** Iraqi Army and me. We were met by a parade of Iraqi soldiers who presented arms to us, thinking we were part of an inspection by **Gen Mohammed**, GOC 14 Div and various VIPs from Baghdad. After getting stuck into the set up and trg of the Harris eqpt, **Gen Mohammed** invited everyone to the Officers Mess for lunch. As we walked into the Mess, we were greeted by sheep's eyes looking at us – it turned out they were part of the lunch. Seated on the General's table, we felt compelled to eat what was put in front of us! Once lunch was over it was back to work and by the end of the day 14 Div had secure data flowing over HF to Baghdad. The Iraqi Army were so impressed that they presented all of us with gifts and invited us back for more food. It was an experience I will not forget in a long time.

EUPHRATES TROOP

OC **Capt JM Osterloh**
Tp Sgt **Sgt T Smith**

SUPPORT TASK IN OMAN - *by Sig James Reid*

After a 7 hr flight, **YofS Marcus Pollitt**, **Alan**, the civilian chief PMR engineer and I finally landed at RAF Seeb in Oman. The severe heat was quite a surprise following the last 4 months in Iraq's winter period. After meeting the RAF Sgt for whom we were installing the PMR, we were given a tour of the airbase and shown where we would be staying. We spent the first afternoon settling in and got to work the next morning. Our task was to install a PMR antenna and making sure the handsets were all working. The PMR was required because of a near accident involving a Merlin helicopter and a veh on the ground because of a lack of comms. We installed the eqpt and the results were excellent; we achieved comms all around the airbase. This meant that, for instance, they could get hold of off duty pers in their accn on the other side of camp. I was surprised to hear that this had previously been a problem as most hotel rooms are equipped with phones nowadays! All that remained was for them to be given some trg with the radios as well as waiting for the frequencies to be sent down from Basra so the eqpt could be activated properly. Trg was delivered mainly to the senior ranks who could then in turn pass the knowledge on.

For our next job we assisted the Merlin CP who were battling to achieve comms with the aircrew out at sea. They were not getting the range they thought possible with a HF antenna. **YofS Pollitt** and I identified that in fact the antenna was facing completely the wrong direction. We re-measured and re-orientated the antenna and tested the new set up by 'radio checking' my Euphrates Tp counterparts who were still slaving away in RADCON in busy Basra. The result was a success. Now that our work was complete it was time to take a well deserved break. After sampling the delights of the camp swimming pool we were excited about the Oman Dive Centre we had heard so much about. After driving along roads surrounded by mountains in the middle of nowhere, we suddenly stumbled upon the Dive Centre and the only word I can use to describe it is 'paradise'. It really was a world away from life inside the COB in Basra. The restaurant served delicious food and there was a swimming pool with steps leading down onto the beach. The heat was unbelievable as I lay on the sun bed catching all the rays I could. We then hired out some snorkels and took to the water. I was a bit apprehensive at first as one of the RAF lads had told us he nearly stood on a massive stingray and we all know what happened to **Steve Irwin**.

However I was swiftly told 'to stop being a girl and get in the water'. The snorkelling was a bit of a disappointment as we expected to see all sorts of tropical marine life and all we saw was sandy water. Not put off, we sampled the night life in Muscat. We were escorted to all the drinking establishments by a couple of the civilian contractors who were ex-Royal Signals. A big night out in Muscat could cost you a fortune with the prices at £4 a pint! It was a good chance to relax and to wind down a bit and we found the people of Oman to be very friendly towards the British. It was a fantastic chance to get a short break from Iraq and do something a little bit out of the ordinary.

7 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)

OC **Maj Carter**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Greenwood**

Sig Barsby at work

- by LCpl Eaves

The Sqn have endured a difficult few weeks due to the regrettable death of **Sig Barsby**. He was killed in a car crash on Monday 3 March 2008 in Hohne, Germany.

His enthusiasm and high spirits will be sorely missed by many throughout the Sqn.

207 remains as busy as ever. We all travelled down to Theatre Barracks to begin the next phase of pre-deployment trg and take over some new toys. The Bulldogs and its "robogun" were thoroughly tested by the guys. There were many interesting lessons given by the DS, followed by us going through serials as if we were out in TELIC. Lessons were learnt and rounds were expended in a really good ex phases. Live tracer and simulated explosions made it a lot better than a lad in a shemagh jumping out at us!

Sig Barsby at play

Staff Wedge was instrumental into rallying the troops to "get some rounds down" with many eager followers in the shape of **Sig Holden** and **Sig Barsby** and **LCpl Eaves** – who told zero to "wait out" while he got the rest of his rounds off! The Sqn finished the ex on high spirits and prepared to go on leave. We are now preparing ourselves for the last bit of the pre-tour trg – a Mission Rehearsal Ex in Bavaria.

The Sqn says goodbye to **Cpls Riches**, **Bamford** and **Berry** and a big welcome to everyone posted into the Sqn since Christmas and also to those augmentees from 262 Sig Sqn who have arrived as part of our uplift – Floreat Jerboa.

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261)

OC **Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 A Morris**

There have been a number of activities and exs taking place during the past few months. After a quick turnaround from Ex PRIME TAURUS, it was onto the next ex to support both a Bde CAST and elements were also deployed on Ex DRUID DANCE and WESSEX WARRIOR. The Bde CAST took place at Warminster and was very much IT heavy, with **Cpl Paul Young** and **Sgt Paul Brown** taking the lead with the build. During this ex, it must be noted that **Sgt Mooney** got recommended for his OBE (Old Boys Establishment) as he ordered 40 heavy tog quilts for the Staff. He subsequently got recommended for the Golden Blanket award too! However he did use the excuse that all the quilts needed quality control testing. With the ex in full flow, the Sqn hierarchy stepped up into the fray and took over some key positions within the planning cycle.

Ex DRUID DANCE and WESSEX WARRIOR are Bde level exs that test the C2 structure from Formation HQ to Sect level. Operators of the Sqn were deployed in sp of the Ex DS as driver operators, providing secure Bowman comms over SPTA. With all the pers having to be totally self sufficient, **LCpl McCarthy** decided to utilise his newly acquired Jungle Survival Skills, with his trusty Hennasy Hammock and light weight sleeping bag, he set about making himself at home. Unfortunately in the late winter his choice of sleeping arrangements meant he had a few cold nights! Help however was always at hand with **LCpl Wallace** constantly having a brew on!

ROYAL SIGNALS OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION 2008 - *by LCpl McCarthy*

After a rigorous trg camp of 1½ days, 261 Sig Sqn's shooting team were prepared for the Corps Operational Shooting Competition at Pirbright and Ash Ranges starting on the 7 April.

The competition consisted of various complicated matches, which meant that 50% of the whole competition was spent trying to interpret the match instructions! The highlight of the competition for many was the Combat Snap shoot which involved a fire team moving to a firing point over obstacles. Most of the competitors not taking part in the combat snap gathered round to watch the comedy "attempts" of teams getting over the obstacles. There were some heavy landings and even a small amount of unconsciousness which met with the usual cries of sympathy from the assembled crowd!

Most of the matches involved a lot of movement between firing points and varying target distances. On a couple of occasions, every soldier's dream was incorporated – respirators donned and running down the range. It wasn't all hard work though. There was a Heckler & Koch range where a variety of modern wps were available to fire and there were some Lee Enfield "Big Boy" 303s which were surprisingly accurate, even though they dated from 1909. **LCpl Globe** and **LCpl Gilbert** showed some natural ability on the Clay shoots and will hopefully go on to represent the Corps later in the year. **Sig Shelley** did very well to keep hold of the kicking 12 bore which was as big as she was and even hit some good clays.

LCpl Gilly Gilbert killing clays

As a minor unit, we managed to finish as the runner up and even took some medals home. **2Lt Calder** showed us all how to shoot the 9mm pistol by winning the Best Young Officer Pistol award and coming 3rd in the Pistol overall.

2Lt 'Smug' Calder with 'dead' Fig 11

All involved enjoyed the long week on the ranges and are eager to get in some more comprehensive practice ready for the next competition where we hope to give the reigning Gurkhas something to worry about. As well as being enjoyable, the competition and trg gave all shooters some valuable experience of marksmanship under varying conditions, which is not to be found on a simple APWT.

QM'S DEPARTMENT - *by Cpl Ashcroft*

Over the last few months we've had some good news and goodbyes, most of which went to **Sig Kaleca** who having had a new addition to his family, was posted on promotion to 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt. We are also saying goodbye to **Sig McCourt** on her posting to 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, and we are welcoming **Sig Shelley** straight from Blandford who brings with her a new and fresh keenness to taking over an extremely busy expense account.

The month of March was an eventful month, exceptionally bad weather and the first meet of the 11 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn golf society. The match was played at the attractive, but tough "Pine Ridge Golf Course". The event organiser was **Sgt Greenwood**,

who likes to think he's the next **Tiger Woods**, but really can't play for toffee. The ringers turned up with all the gear and set the standard high, with a number of dazzling 1st tee drives. The longest drive challenge was on the 9th, where QM **Capt Lothian** hit an absolute cracker of a drive about 250 yards which was superb considering the high winds, only to be beaten by **Sgt Greenwood**, who got lucky with the wind behind him and smacked it an extra 20 yards, giving him the winning hit. The event was a complete success and all the golfers are looking forward to the next one in April.

In April, the QM's Dept were busy getting everything ready for the Board of Officers. Luckily for us we had a few good men/ladies in the relevant Ts to identify and count the right kit. To make sure it went smoothly, everybody was under the ever watchful eye of **RQMS McKenzie** who was all over it like a tramp on chips. All in all it went well and the Dept is now busy dealing with the fallout of the findings with **Sgt Mooney** and **Cpl Ashcroft** burning the midnight oil to get the accounts reconciled before the next ex. Then all should be ready for a new and fresh start to a busy year ahead.

EXERCISE SNOW WARRIOR - *by Sgt Lee Stafford*

On 9 March 08, 8 members of 261 Sig Sqn departed to Wertach, Bavaria for participation on Ex SNOW WARRIOR. This is an AT package that incorporates both Alpine and Touring Ski disciplines. After 17 delightful hours passing through various European countries and as **Sig 'Anne' Priestly** pointed out, a rather large city called Luxembourg, we finally arrived at Haus Magnus which was to be our home for the next 2 weeks. After some arrival briefs, kit issue and being placed in our provisional ability groups, it was time to sample some of the local Bavarian hospitality. The next morning after the usual AT admin and last minute disasters, made more difficult by some rather cloudy heads, we headed out hoping for a good first day's skiing. The first action was to make certain that everyone was placed within the correct ability group, double checking that nobody had been 'blagging' or misleading the previous day. Unfortunately **SSgt(YofS) Charnley** didn't perform quite as well as he should have. After attempting to put his skis on the wrong way round and then stacking it on a particularly tricky flat bit of the slope, it was decided for safety reasons that moving groups would be a better option than spending a lot of time in hospital.

During the course of these first tentative days, there were inevitably some tremendous high speed and out of control stacking, the most memorable was **LCpl 'Nath' Lemmon**, who after gaining confidence on one of the easy slopes, set about trying to break the world speed record for downhill face skiing. The result in probably the best face slide ever performed in Bavaria with a good part of his cheek being left up the side of the mountain.

Following the initial phase of Alpine it was time to progress onto Ski Touring, much to the delight of **Sgt Lee Stafford**, who although had already sampled this discipline before couldn't quite get over the feeling of loathing every time the locals shouted words of encouragement from the fully functional ski lifts. That said, the breathtaking 'away from the crowd' views and the fresh untouched powder of off piste skiing, undoubtedly made up for all the sweat and tears. It was during this phase that essential life saving skills were also instructed, including Avalanche Awareness and drills, searching and probing and emergency shelters including the infamous 'Snow Hole'. During this time, **Sig 'Ash' Pechey** introduced the idea of using a ski pole to spear any wildlife that might be used as food. Unfortunately as Bavaria is short of Polar Bears, the only thing he could use as a target was his instructor! The following day, with tired legs we loaded up and headed off on the monumental journey back across Europe for Aldershot, after which all concerned will agree, was a worthwhile learning ex.

102 LOGISTIC BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (262)

EXERCISE HALBERD CHALLENGE 08

Ex HALBERD CHALLENGE was a mil skills competition run on behalf of Comd 102 Log Bde designed to test junior officers and their teams in a range of events over a physically arduous course. This year's event was organised by 8 Tpt Regt RLC in sunny Otterburn Trg Area and ran from 4 - 6 April.

Each team was made up of 4 pers and had to include a junior officer and a female. The 102 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn team was led by **Capt Duncan Reader** with **Sgt Lee Kidd**, **Cpl Marc 'Kenny' Everett** and **LCpl Liz Mitroloupou**. **LCpl Darren Davidson-Page** was the team's reserve. The team arrived in Otterburn on Thursday 3 April. Zeroing the rifles during the afternoon was followed by the ex brief with the scenario delivered that evening by 8 Tpt Regt DS. Following the brief, the start times for all the teams were drawn with the Sig Sqn allocated 1100hrs for the pre-deployment kit inspection.

Arriving for the kit check 5 mins before, the weather was still holding out concealing what was shortly to be blowing our way from the north. Scoring very well on the inspection we were straight into the competition starting with a short 5.5km march and shoot along the range road. From here we had an hour's wait until we could board the Land Rover for the next serial. 15km along the range road the second serial was the IED stand; jumping out of the back of the veh and spreading out to run through our 4 C's. We received our next 3 grid references over the radio and we were then informed that we had to tab in with all our kit. Our individual kit consisted of fully packed webbing and Bergen in addition to a patrol sack, which weighed more than the Bergen itself. The total weight was around 40kg per competitor. In addition **Cpl Everett** had the joy of carrying the team radio weighing another 9kg for this first leg. A quick map recce indicated the route to the harbour location was just over 12.5km, along undulating roads followed by a cross country climb to the second check point. By the half way point the decision was taken to redistribute our kit to enable the team to make it to the harbour location as quickly as possible. Carrying 2 rifles, 2 patrol sacks and a fully loaded Bergen and webbing proved to be fairly heavy. As often happens on reaching the top of a hill, the forestry block which bordered it had been cut down, thus concealing our paths down the hill to the harbour. There followed an emotional attempt to cross this deforested area, finally making it to the new edge of the forest. In all, 3 hrs were spent working our way over this hill and through the deforested and forested areas – all good fun!

On reaching the harbour at 2000hrs, an egg banjo later and spirits were back on the rise. After her feet were examined by the medic, **LCpl Mitroloupou** was taken off the ex and **LCpl Davidson-Page** was shipped out just in time for the collapse of the weather. Resuming our march at 0400hrs, the terrain was covered deep in snow with a howling wind coming in from the north; **LCpl Davidson-Page** was soon beginning to feel broken in. After 15km the first stand of the morning was a comd task so it gave the opportunity for a quick breather. As the day wore on each leg was typically in the region of around 10km working our way up to the top of the hills to score points on the unmanned check points then dropping down into the valleys for the manned stands. The stands included a ground brief, BCDT, comms, reaction to contact and CBRN.

By the middle of the afternoon the majority of the snow had melted. Having now worked our way around the north we were heading south along the eastern side of Otterburn range danger area. By the time we arrived at the comms stand, the clear skies were coupled with a rapid drop in temperatures. We learned that so far 3 teams out of the initial 12 who deployed had dropped out of the competition. We all agreed that if we could avoid further injury and stay the course, the final extraction march might leave us as one of the few teams left in the field. Two hills and a ridge later we arrived at the contact stand, dishing out a couple of magazines and smoke grenades, we patrolled off down the track and over the bridge where we came under contact. Attempting to extract out by ordering **LCpl Davidson-Page** to throw smoke, he limbered up for the all important throw. He managed to hurl it all of 80cm and we watched in horror as it dismally rolled off the bridge and settled behind us, covering us all in its smoke. Following a more accurately placed grenade, we were at last moving along the track and out of the contact.

The light was fading quickly as we approached the CBRN stand; ill fitting gloves caused the majority of our problems whilst grappling to strip and reassemble our rifles and then clumsily holding our pens to attempt the written test. On completion of the CBRN serial the kit and the suits were very thankfully taken off us, giving a significant reduction in the weight of the patrol sacks. The second harbour was reached at 2330hrs followed again by a fantastic warm meal courtesy of the RLC chefs. By this stage 4 teams had now dropped out of the competition and the decision was thus taken by EXCON to significantly reduce the distance which had originally been planned for the final day by removing an extraction march carrying the full issue of eqpt. On leaving the harbour, all of our water bottles and *Camel Packs* had frozen solid and it was near impossible to drink anything. However, the clear sky indicated that the weather would be on the up throughout the day; but this was Otterburn after all, so we didn't hold much hope.

The final stand was a mil written test which we reached around 1100hrs on the Sunday morning. On commencing the test it was sunny but as we left the building 30 mins later we were confronted by 2 inches of snow and freezing wind. We had naively thought that we would be finishing the competition in good weather. The final event involved a 5km tab into the asslt course which was located inside Otterburn camp. By the time we arrived the course was looking a bit grim as all the obstacles were covered in snow. Just to make sure we were thoroughly cold before we started we were required to wait for 40 mins in a holding area as we had arrived early. A final burst of aggression saw us crawling through a freezing stream and successfully hauling ourselves (plus a 20kg ammo box and a large artillery shell case) over all 12 obstacles. After 48 hrs on the move in either sub-zero or snowy conditions, the team had completed the 80km course and 12 stands covering a range of mil skills. For our efforts we finished 3rd on points out of the 12 teams and could now settle down to a well earned curry supper in the NAAFI bar on Otterburn Camp.

EXERCISE MERCURY WARRIOR - *by Capt D Reader*

262 Sig Squadron deployed for our annual battle camp in Haltern and Sennelager Trg Areas from 4 to16 February 2008. The aim of the battle camp was to aid NCOs to reach the required standard to successfully pass either their JCLM or SCLM as well as revise basic mil skills and prepare Sqn members for situations they may experience during future op deployments. The ex was split into a number of phases. Initially the troops rotated through stands designed to bring them up to the basic level required for patrolling, delivering orders, occupation of harbours and reaction to incidents. The weather during this initial 3 day phase was particularly grey with an endless intermittent drizzle.

As luck would have it, by Thursday the weather had cleared as troops under the command of **Lt Amy Jankiewicz** deployed into their harbour location for the 48 hr field phase. The sects were tasked in turn with a number of patrol scenarios from basic re-supply to recce patrols of suspected enemy locations. The Enemy Sect was active throughout, ensuring that the exercising Pl was always on its toes. The Enemy Sect – though manned by the downgraded pers from the Sqn – was reported at times to have some rather athletic 'Militia' members withdrawing from contact – one wonders!

After one or two compromises of the harbour location with resulting moves by the Pl, the enemy failed in their dawn attack on the Saturday. It was then time to pack up and withdraw to the range accn for a further round of lessons. The stands now took the troops through reaction to IEDs, sangar duties as well as basic drills to be carried out when searching vehs.

A short range package began on the Monday taking Sqn members through the APWT – some taking slightly longer than others to pass. The ranges finished off with the Fire Team Assessment; a short march and shoot over 2 miles followed by an advance along the range by each fire team. All of the four Sects completed the course in the required 20 mins. By the finish some individuals were a little worse for wear than others.

Capt Reader, Cfn Orchard and Sig Holmes on Ex MERCURY WARRIOR

On completion of the range package the whole Sqn moved to 'Tin City' for the final phase of the ex. This phase split down into FIBUA, Base Security and CBRN.

The weather had been remarkably dry through out the week but the clear skies had resulted in a plummet in temperatures. This phase was the only time I have ever been cold wearing full CBRN, Combat 95 and a *Softy* jacket. **Cpl Bartlett** led the CBRN stand with **LCpl Pyott** while **Sgt Tiplady** and **Sgt Mee** instructed FIBUA and base security.

You can never have too much Fuller's Earth!

On the conclusion of the final 48 hr phase, all the troops could feel satisfied. They had achieved a considerable amount of trg covering a wide area of different drills and practices and were now looking forward to a relaxing 2 days off.

12 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228)

OC **Maj RJ Watts**
RSM **WO1(RSM) RD Burrows**

After a long and much needed Christmas leave 228 Sig Sqn returned to work in the last week of January ready for the busy trg year ahead. The Sqn also ran 2 successful AT expeds in the February and March; the culmination of months of hard work and organisation by those taking part leaving the Sqn ready now to focus on the year ahead.

EXERCISE ACE TIGER SHARK 22 – 29 FEBRUARY
228 SIG SQN SUB-AQUA EXPEDITION TO THE RED SEA, EGYPT– *by LCpl 'Patch' Adams.*

It all began on a damp Friday morning. The group of 24 sleepy soldiers met up outside 228 Sig Sqn HQ, Ward Barracks at 0400hrs, a time we thought only existed in the afternoon! A quick head count was taken and eventually we were off to Gatwick Airport. Before we knew it we had arrived and checked in and after weeks of dive trg and countless meetings we were finally off! On arrival in Egypt, we were taken by coach to the quay where our boat, *Blue Horizon*, was. When we got there, people were struggling to keep their chins off the floor so it was a quick briefing and then dinner, after which our time was our own but we were advised to get an early night so after a few(!) nightcaps, we retired to our cabins. Although **CSgt Devlin** managed to fall off the gang plank to the boat and had a quick dip in the harbour before bed!

Waking up at 0530hrs for breakfast was again emotional but made a little easier knowing that we would soon by doing what we really wanted to be doing… diving! Although we had barely left the harbour before **Cfn Ben Pocock** felt the urge to feed the fish, it is debatable as to whether that was him finding his sea legs or if the Sambuca nightcaps from the previous night had disagreed with him. The Red Sea lived up to its promise of abundant sea life and crystal visibility and amazed everyone. Five days of awesome diving on some of the Red Sea's reefs and wrecks was the best I have experienced and it became a competition between the divers who had seen the most on each dive, with lionfish, moray eels, sea snakes and clown fish becoming quite commonplace on each dive. All of us novice divers came away with a qualification and had some great dives, averaging about 22 each during the week. Unfortunately I earned myself the name 'Polaris Patch' for obvious reasons and remain to this day idle chatter of the team. The last evening was upon us only too quickly and we although we did not want to leave, we made the most of it however and went out for dinner and drinks. The last day was spent relaxing in the sun and packing our kit, counting down the hours before we would have to leave. It had been quite possibly the best exped I have been on and our thanks go to **Capt Kelly Rhodes** and **WO2(RQMS) Si Kenny** for making it possible.

Sgt Roderick and Cpl Haley find narcosis hilarious

228 Sig Sqn and attached exped members on board Blue Fin in the Red Sea

EXERCISE TYROLEAN ACE TIGER – *by LCpl Haley Condon*

With the new trg season underway, a bit of time was set aside for members of 228 Sig Sqn to enjoy some skiing in Austria, which was organized by **SSgt (YofS) Nicky Roberts**. We travelled to Austria by a coach which we shared with members of 37 Sig Regt (V). Our journey started at 1500hrs on Friday 1 February when the coach arrived to pick us up and full of anticipation for what lay ahead, we boarded the coach. Twenty three hours and a number of service station stops later, we finally arrived at our destination, St Johan, Austria. On arrival we were shown to our rooms and then horror of horrors we were back on the coach this time only for 5 mins as we went to collect our eqpt from the ski hire shop. We returned to the hotel for a number of safety briefings and then it was off to sample some of the hotels facilities. We all met up for dinner in the hotel restaurant that evening and then retired to the bar for a few sociable drinks and an early night!

On Sunday morning the group were up bright and early and raring to get to the slopes. After the YofS had carried out a head count and **SSgt Tim Allen** had shouted down the microphone to check all 37 Sig Regt (V) were there, we set off to the slopes. On arrival at the slopes we broke down into our 2 groups, the Beginners and the Advanced skiers. The Beginner group where under the instruction of **SSgt Dave Allan** who was kindly loaned to us from 31 Sig Regt (V). Due to the lack of another mil instructor, the Advanced group where instructed by **Emma Brooke**, an ex member of the Corps, who is now working as a ski instructor out in Austria.

The Beginner group headed off for "BOBO" land and started learning the basics, while the Advanced group, as they liked to be known, headed off to show **Emma** what she was dealing with! We all met up for lunch and to exchange stories and then it was back to the slopes. A few falls and a couple of bruised egos later everyone was safely back at the hotel. We then had a bit of time to ourselves to make full use of the hotel's swimming pool and sauna before meeting up for dinner. Each evening a concurrent activity was laid on and Sunday evening was Ice Go-Karting.

This is not an activity for the faint hearted and we soon saw the competitive side of a few members of the Sqn, in particular **Cpl Chris Jacks** REME and **Sgt Chris Lyons** RLC. A few crashes later it was time to return to the hotel and to the bar to discuss the day's events.

On Monday morning, the Beginners returned to the slopes of St Johan while the other group, who had apparently regained their ski legs, headed off to the slopes of "Fiberbrunn" to find some more challenging runs. The Beginners group were all progressing well, apart from poor old **Sig Gilly Gilman**, who tore some of the ligaments in his knee after a fall on the blue run. After a trip to the local doctor poor **Gilly** was told he could not ski for the rest of the week. The evening's activity was a visit to a fire and ice show where we were shown how the professionals ski. We also had the chance to go sledging and try out Ice-Climbing which is a lot more difficult than it looks. The rest of the week saw us all move onto more difficult slopes preparing for the Basic Ski Proficiency (BSP) test on the Friday. We skied hard during the day and made the most of the evening entertainments, even enjoying the compulsory lectures we had to attend to gain our qualifications (well maybe not!). Thursday night was karaoke night with **Lt Nick Purdy** and **Capt Nelson Reynolds** singing a tribute to the 'Hoff'. We also had some friendly competition with the TA group at the Karaoke evening; obviously our singing was far greater than their attempt. On Friday we all achieved the BSP (Alpine). All the Beginners managed to ski down a black which was the highlight of the week for them. **LCpl Nicky Lewis** was really showing us how it was done. We ended the week with an après ski show. Before we knew it, it was time to be climbing back on the coach for the exciting trip back to Bulford.

Lt Nick Purdy, Capt Nelson Reynolds and Sgt Chris Lyons – Karaoke

Advanced group lunch break

16 AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (216)

OC **Maj Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Brown**

EXERCISE BLAZING DRAGON - *by Lt Nick Cole*

Ex BLAZING DRAGON was a skydiving exped which took 10 soldiers from 216 Para Sig Sqn to California in December 2007 for 3 weeks. Having already completed a day of ground trg at Netheravon the previous week, the group departed from Heathrow early to be met by the instructors at Los Angeles LAX airport later that night. After a 2 hr road move we finally arrived at Perris Valley Skydive Centre, south east of LA, where we settled into our comfortable bunk house accn on the DZ in preparation for our first day of jumping.After spending the morning checking our documentation, re-practising drills and to the lads' amusement, recording videos promising not to sue the Centre in the event of our deaths, we were ready to begin jumping.

Sig James McKernan practising body positions during ground training

Each day normally ran to the same programme, with the group meeting at 0830hrs for refresher trg with the first lift getting up around 0900hrs. The final lift of the day was around 1630hrs and would be followed with a group meeting, where the instructors would pass on their comments over a beer in the bar.

The group progressed well in the first week with the AFF students averaging a minimum of 2 jumps per day and the FS students getting in as many as 5 per day. The title of 'sky mong' was awarded to **Cpl John Smith** who had to repeat several levels and was encouraged on more than one occasion to take up golf instead. The second week went even better, with some of the novice soldiers completing their AFF courses and then progressing onto the FS1 course.

Cpl Briony Wheal exiting the door

All in all this was an excellent exped and well received by all those on it. All had to make a substantial financial contribution towards the exped but agreed it was well worth the cost, with most spending the same amount again at least on clothes, beer and skydiving eqpt in preparation for their next trip.

Expedition personnel and instructors

OP HERRICK 8 - *by Lt Matt Holloway*

The first main body formed up outside Sqn HQ on a wet and cold Tuesday morning. With a 55kg baggage allowance on the RAF flight, nobody had packed light. After loading up all of the kit and pers, we set off for RAF Brize Norton. Having been allowed to report directly to Brize all seemed to running smoothly with no real delays. This was until we arrived at Kandahar Air Field (KAF). The OC Sqn and the Ops team were staying overnight in KAF to meet their opposite numbers from Joint NetCen. Their bags had been loaded on to a special pallet so they could be separated from the rest – this pallet was so special, it was left at Brize! After the onward flight to Camp Bastion (BSN) were put into transit accn for out first real sleep since we'd left the UK. After an uncomfortably hot lie-in, people started to stir just before lunch time ready to taste our first meal in the cookhouse. The first thing that struck me as we ventured out of the accn into the daylight was how blindingly bright the sun was. The glare from the white dusty surface was unbearable. People quickly retreated to fetch their issue sunglasses.

Our arrival in theatre was probably timed just right, even if it was 2 weeks earlier than we were expecting. The weather had just started to get warmer and we'd have a couple of weeks to acclimatise ahead of us. The remainder of the first day was taken up with lectures pertinent to our arrival in theatre. Our stay in BSN was relatively short, only a morning of ranges and another afternoon of confirmatory trg stood between us and deployment to areas across Helmand. With all of the trg complete, the Sqn dispersed to its various operating locations. Our flight to Lashkah Gar (LKG) was our first chance to get a brief glimpse of the country as we flew over compounds and small fields of crops and goats. LKG MOB itself was a surreal experience for those who had not been before. Based within the middle of the city but behind thick walls with its own garden it's easy to forget the realities of where we are. We are now nearly a month in and starting to settle into more of a rhythm. All the RLDs have now taken over and Main Tp are working for the 52 Inf Bde staff eagerly awaiting the Flag day.

ARMY INDOOR ROWING CHAMPIONHIPS
- by Sig Tom McEnaney

216 Para Sig Sqn Rear Party were not content with just supporting the deployment to Op HERRICK 8 – they wanted a challenge. **SSgt Wilde** saw this as an opportunity to enter the Army Indoor Rowing Championships at Aldershot. The team was not hard to select from such a small pool. Essentially there were just 5 pers who wanted to and could attend. The first event of the day was the individual 2000m discipline.**Capt Tom Prentice** was first up for the Sqn, followed by good performances by **Sgt Jerry Springett** and **Sig Tom McEnaney**. However, the only silverware that the Sqn won on the day was due to a good row by **Sig Townsend** who took home the Under 20 Lightweight crown. **SSgt Wilde** was able to row one of the top 3 times of the day to take 2nd place in the 30 – 39 Heavyweight Category in a time of 6mins 29secs. First on the Ergo in the relay event was **Capt Prentice** who pulled a good steady time from the start. Taking up the pace after the frantic change over, **Sgt Springett** was able to carry on despite obvious pain and **Sig McEnaney** kept up the momentum, not distracted by the sweaty seat. **SSgt Wilde** powered us home in a competitive time of 12mins 56secs for the 4 x 1000m event. 216 Para Sig Sqn held the lead until the last heat when we were disappointingly narrowly beaten by ATR Pirbright.

19 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (209)

OC **Maj TJ Downes**
RSM **WO1(RSM) S Fidler**

The Sqn's focus in recent months has been the development of its SOIs and the build up to a Bde FTX in June prior to the Bde's move to Northern Ireland in the summer. Despite the hectic work programme, there has still been time to squeeze in some extramural activity. Prior to Easter Leave, **Capt Tom O'Neill** took a group of mountain bikers to Hamsterley Forest whilst **LCpl 'Rowey' Rowe** used his newly acquired MLT qualification to take a group of soldiers onto Reeth Moore for a day. The Sqn football team have also been enjoying considerable success in recent months and look forward to playing in the upcoming quarter final of the Yorkshire Services Cup.

EXERCISE PANTHER'S CUB – TROOP AND SQUADRON LEVEL TRAINING 11 – 15 FEBRUARY

On an extremely cold but fortunately dry Monday morning, both comms Tps deployed into the field for a period of Tp followed by Sqn Trg. Due to unforeseen ex commitments, the original MEI based on a 2 weeks period of trg had to be compressed into a week, meaning the Tps had a lot to do in 5 days in order to accomplish the necessary trg objectives. Days 1 – 3 involved the setup of both Main and Fwd HQs under the watchful eye of **Lt Tony Glover** and **Capt Tom O'Neill** and the development and rehearsal of various SOIs, from siting and recce through to defence and tactical moves. Towards the end of Day 3, the Sqn phases of the ex started with a full change of control undertaken between Main and Fwd, and the QM's department providing a real time rolling replenishment, made more interesting by the unexpected double booking of the trg area and a large contingent of armed police wearing wrap around shades getting copious amounts of rounds down. All in all a successful ex, made all the more rewarding for A Tp when B Tp discovered that their makeshift field kitchen had been producing excellent bacon and egg butties all week, courtesy of **SSgt Ady Clarke**.

EXERCISE DRUIDS DANCE / WESSEX WARRIOR 20 FEBRUARY – 7 MARCH

Following the cancellation of Ex GRAND PRIX in Kenya, the Sqn was tasked with providing a full Bde HQ set up at Westdown Camp in Salisbury. With **Cpl Russell** acting as the new Complex full screw, the set up went smoothly prior to receiving the Staff.

The first full week of the ex saw the staff undertaking 2 full planning cycles and entailed a relatively straightforward shift pattern for **Sgt Del Spry** and the troops in the HQ.

Week 2 saw the tempo pick up considerably as the plan was put into action in real time and some real graft was put in to ensure the staff had full CIS capabilities at all times.

Of course, not everything went quite so smoothly away from the HQ and whilst **Sig Nat Lacey** was relaxing in her ex dressing gown on her rebro, a series of 'bogging ins' led to an interesting night for the other rebro crews and **LCpl 'Dicko' Dixon** scored a perfect 10 for his double somersault – in an FFR!

All in all, a successful and enjoyable ex for the Sqn and a valuable opportunity to test the developing SOIs.

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200)

OC **Maj Andy Coulson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) F Fensom**

The Commander cuts through the ribbon to officially open "The Gauntlet" bar at 200 Signal Squadron

Brig TA Beckett, Comd 20 Armd Bde and Paderborn Garrison, was invited to officially open the new 200 Sig Sqn Bar on Friday 29 February 08. The refurbishment was a project that started after the Christmas break and Phase 1 was completed in 8 weeks. The bar area and room facilitates and caters for a variety of functions such as Sqn conferences, Tp meetings, wives' coffee mornings and Sqn social gatherings. Phase 2 of the planning is to convert the Pool Room into a more relaxed comfort area where you can watch TV, have a chat or just sit and read a book, similar to the comforts of your own home. A Charity Fund raising event organized by **WO2(FofS) Gordon Tibbetts** was held in The Gauntlet on Friday 14 March. The aim of the event was to raise €1000 to purchase an Abel-Net Kopfer for the children at St Christopherus Kindergarten for disabled children who have speech and physical difficulties. The Abel-Net Kopfer will improve the quality of life for the children allowing them to communicate basic thoughts to their carers to let them know when they are hungry and thirsty etc. The evening far surpassed our expectations and after 16 lots were auctioned off, some at very high prices, and bar profits were taken into account, the total sum should reach around €3000. This will give **WO2(FofS) Tibbetts** great pleasure when he is able to present 3 machines to the kindergarten. The evening was a great success and thanks must also go to **LCpl Poole** and his bar staff, and also to **Sgt Tony Kirkham** and his staff, not only for an excellent meal but providing their time for free.
Capt Smith organized a Basic German course for members of SHQ. The course tutor, **Jenny Anderson** arrived on Monday to start the 4 day induction course. The course was very informal and as introductions were made around the class, it was apparent that that we could all order bratwurst and chips along with a beer and maybe another beer! Wednesday was a field trip day and our mission was to visit the local market in Paderborn and use German to converse between ourselves and come away with a list of answers to the questions that had been set for us. After a grueling day at the market we were then invited to a Café just off the square, to charm the young waitress with our newly found foreign tongue and order Coffee and Cake. It was then back to the class in the afternoon for another session. It was noticeable how confidence had grown through the week and we were more open with the language.

Mr Glen Mansell from BFBS Radio 2 starts the evening with the first auction item. WO2 Gordon Tibbetts looks on to ensure that everything is going to plan

PRESENTATIONS

Two members of the Sqn were presented with medals by the Bde Comd, **Brig TA Beckett**. **Sgt McChesney** was presented with the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and **Sgt Sutton** was presented with a medal in recognition of his part in Op SWIFT RELIEF, part of an emergency op to assist local people in the aftermath of the earthquakes that devastated part of Pakistan last year. The Comd also congratulated **WO2(RQMS) Greenwood** on receiving his promotion.

52 INFANTRY BRIGADE AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (258)

OC **Maj Tom Crapper**
RSM **WO1 Mark Wilford**

The end of the deployment to Afghanistan has now occurred, and all pers are back in Gamecock Barracks safe and sound. The tour has been entirely successful from a comms point of view and we look back upon a very busy year with considerable satisfaction. Not only have we converted the Sqn from its role as Area Systems to that of Bde Sig Sqn and conducted pre-deployment trg but we have also created a HQ infrastructure and deployed with it to one of the most demanding ops of recent times. We now look forward to our new role as 52 Inf Bde HQ & Sig Sqn with relish and although we will remain in Gamecock Barracks, our relationship with our new Bde HQ will continue to flourish. The new role marks a real opportunity for the Corps and provides all pers with yet another career choice.

OPERATIONS OFFICER - *by Capt Andy Limb*

The Sqn Ops team deployed on Op HERRICK 7 as the Task Force (TF) Helmand J6 cell in September 07 and have now come to the end of their tour. They have been kept more than busy by the demands of operating the Sqn in a busy op theatre and of supporting a large HQ. This is especially true of the Ops Officer, **Capt Andy Limb**, who although not based in Kandahar, managed to keep Tim Horton's Donut shop in good business. The Sqn's Rear Link Det Tp has been deployed all over theatre in small packets supporting the TF's Force Elements (FE) by providing comms back to the TF HQ and providing general soldiering sp functions as required. The Sqn's Main Tp has been employed supporting the TF HQ itself. This is rarely a glamorous role but nevertheless an essential one which the Tp have carried out with professionalism and pride. Meanwhile, Sp Troop have facilitated LKG MOB and TFH FE through the growing QM's department. A small Sqn HQ element also deployed to execute admin functions, in the shape of a 2IC and a Chief Clk. The Bde RSM has also been kept on his toes maintaining discipline and coordinating ceremonial events throughout the tour.

We are currently enjoying a 2 week long period of normalisation back in Nuneaton before disappearing for POTL until mid-May. The Sqn has many plans for the remainder of the year, including AT events, sports, military and special to arm trg, liaison work with Bde HQ and numerous ceremonial and social functions, including a medals parade at Edinburgh Castle and functions with the local Royal British Legion branch, which have been particularly supportive during our tour in Afghanistan. We are also due to convert to BCIP 5 by the end of the year and are aiming off for this already, although a lack of eqpt with which to do this may yet present significant difficulties! The Sqn also intends to forge its identity over the coming year and to embrace the challenges of falling back in to a trg and consolidation period until its next deployment on Op HERRICK 12 in 2010.

MAIN TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Bunting**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Griffiths**

The tour is over now, and we are really looking forward to some leave and a chance to parade in front of Edinburgh castle. During our tour, we continued to provide Royal Signals operators wherever there was a requirement and to add to the list of FOBs we already manned, we have had both **LCpl Parvin** and **LCpl Singer** based in FOB Dehli. We also had to provide a 2 man team to man a new FOB. We sent **LCpl Wait** and **Sig Bashford** purely to find out if they have enough fluff to warrant a beard between them. Also deploying for the 2nd time this tour was Op MERCURY, a small team designed to recce bases around Helmand Province. The aim was to identify any major comms requirements and make recommendations, which were then be put to J6 back at Bde to allocate the resources they saw fit.

The Op MERCURY team in FOB Edinburgh, Sgt Lutkin, Lt Bunting, Cpl Chadwick and Cpl McCallum

Back at Lashkar Gah the rest of the Tp were keeping fit. Everyone was on the powder, except for **Sgt Stu Houghton** whose special slimming tablets from the American PX seemed to be having anything but a calming effect. There was a PFT every week which enabled participants to take the scenery…the burn pit, the helipad, the effluence pit and the adjoining road appropriately named due to its location and pungent fragrance…I'll let you do the maths! Also on a daily basis, **Cpl 'Taff' Colwell** held a PT session on the new helipad, which consists of a pretty comprehensive thrashing of sprints and shuttle runs.

Cpl 'Taff' Colwell taking a PT session, with Sig MacNally in tow

Last but not least we welcome our 3 new Sigs, **Sigs Sam Race**, **McNally** and **Jenna Saunders** who settled in very quickly into the J3 Ops room.

RADIO TROOP

Tp Comd **Lt Cunningham**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Coxon**

Things remained busy as ever for Radio Tp, including the preparations for handover to 16 AA Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (216). However, right up to the last minute the majority of the Tp were still on the ground at their relevant RLDs, including **Lt Cunningham** who has not been seen since the beginning of the tour! **Sigs 'Ben' Penson** and **'Fitz' Okoye** remained busy on IRT and did an excellent job clocking up the air miles. However ever since **Sig Robins** finished on the IRT he has been in grave danger of developing bed sores due to his 15 hr monster sleeping sessions. **LCpl 'Geri' Haliwell** was last seen mixing with the aristocracy spending a week with **Prince Harry** and liaising with the press who came to film him whilst on the ground. After his week long stint, **'Geri'** returned to the FOB, receiving all the glory while **LCpl 'Tony' Talbot** and **Sig 'Raj' Saund** continued to do all the graft without the benefits of a camera crew! Over the last 6 months all the RLDs within Radio Tp have been employed in a variety of roles. For most of the operators the tour will probably be a once in a life time experience and as tours go, I think they'll be relieved to get away from the fierce tempo of ops.

SUPPORT TROOP

QM **Maj Ace Burdge**
RQMS **WO2 Watts**
SQMS **SSgt Edd Howard**

On Arrival in August 07, it was apparent that plenty of hard work was going to be needed to get things running as smoothly as they are now. One day, when the QM **Maj Burdge** and **WO2(RQMS) De De Watts** said "we've had a great idea", we knew from the outset it was going to be a lot of hard work by the blokes to make it work. Now we have become a fully functioning SQMS dept looking after the daily admin requirement of 10 other Depts and a 400 strong HQ staff. All this was made possible by the 4 other members of the SQMS Dept, **Sgt Matt Lee, Cpl Ty Christian**, **Cpl Brad McCallum** and **Sig Bikash Gurung.**

The Sqn MT and LAD as ever has been a hive of activity, headed up by **Sgt Dave Howe** REME, **Sgt Place** and **Sgt Dave Pendelton**. To ensure morale is kept high at all times on camp, the Tp chefs **Cpl Mick Davies**, **LCpl Jim Porter**, **LCpl Nick Sissons** and **Pte Danny Oates** have worked hard to ensure that meal times are a treat, producing some of the best food eaten in the Army. Another vital element of the Tp is the Buzzard Helicopter Landing Site crew, **Sgt Hall** and **LCpl Brooks**. By the end of the tour these 2 helped move thousands of troops and hundreds of tons of stores around theatre. Definitely a job well done! Last, and by no means least, a mention for **SSgt Sean Whelan** and **LCpl Gareth Glasgow –** our very own AGC "human resource administrators". You can't call them clerks apparently!

The QM's Dept – anyone need a removals team?

OTHER UNITS

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

Sqn Comd **Maj AS Johnson**
USM **WO2(SSM) Tresidder**

THE GRIFFON CUP – COMMANDER'S CROSS COUNTRY 12 MARCH 2008 - *by Sig Cross*

The Griffon Cup Commander's Cross Country is an event staged between Infrastructure and HQ Sqn and Service Ops Sqn. Both teams are made up from Akrotiri, Episkopi and Dhekelia based pers. The event is held annually, primarily to promote team spirit among soldiers and airmen in a joint service environment.

This year's event was held in Episkopi and was staged around the infamous 'Dam(n) Hill'. The 8km cross-country route proved to be both challenging and exciting for all those who took part. The Ladies were first to set off and all appeared focused at the start line. Five minutes later, the men burst off the line and pretty soon could not be seen for dust.

Crossing the line in first place, **Capt Chris Moody** set the bar with an impressive 33mins. A close 2nd was **Sgt Wayne Stewart** with a time of 36mins and in 3rd place was **Sgt Mark Vinten**, just behind by a few secs. First over the line for the ladies with a fantastic time (that made most of the men look slow) was **Sig Daisy Dougherty** of 42mins and with an equally impressive time of 43mins was **Sgt Andrea McNeil**.

With all 36 runners completing the event, it was then on to the JR's bar for the prize giving and a light buffet. Overall winners of the competition were Infrastructure and HQ Sqn with 155 points and a close (?) 2nd with 55 points was Service Ops Sqn. CO of CCU, **Wg Cdr Chris Featherstone** presented the top 3 runners with their medals and **Sig Matt Clark** proudly lifted the trophy for the winners.

AKROTIRI TROOP

Tp Comd **Capt Paul Williams**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Tony D'or**

The last few months have been very busy in and around Akrotiri. At last the manpower within the Tp has started to rise to near full strength, allowing us to complete a lot of outstanding tasks and projects. April 1 also brings more delights with the start of new MATT trg year, so far this week we have completed a PFT, CFT, APWT and BCD while still managing to complete a large number of RFCs and faults. Welcome back to **Cpl Baz Barnisavu** and **LCpl Reggie Hammond** from sunny Blandford. The nightmares of your Class 1 projects will go in time!!

Well done to all of the Inst Techs in the Tp who recently refitted Air Ops, a very large and high profile project that really showed everyone the level of skill and versatility within the Inst Tech trade group. A very big and a well deserved congratulations to **SSgt(FofS) Paddy Ferguson** and **Sgt Steve Cooper** on their recent selection for promotion. We look forward to 81 Sig Sqn (V) who will be coming to Cyprus in June to conduct more installations and project work in and around the station.

2008 PAPHOS HALF MARATHON - *by Sig Matt Clark*

On 16 March 2008, 11 members of CCU took part in the annual Paphos Half Marathon. The temperature was sizzling at a searing 26 deg C and as the starting gun fired, the team set off alongside 184 runners on the 13.2 mile route. Right from the beginning the pace seemed fast on what was a very much a flat route. **Capt Chris Moody's** confidence was high from his mid-week success in the unit's cross country event in which he finished 1st but the key question was could he perform on the international stage?

The route consisted of a 6.6 mile run out of the city and the exact same route back to the home straight. Although not the most interesting route, it gave runners the opportunity to cross over with other members of the team and to notice who was really out of their comfort zone. The exertion was well worth it at the finish line and all competitors were rewarded with a t-shirt and medal. The whole team put in an excellent performance and everyone crossed the finish line feeling a great deal of satisfaction – some had never completed that distance before! Once again it was OC Dhekelia Tp, **Capt Chris Moody** finishing 3rd in the men's 18 – 39 age group and CO ISS CCU, **Wg Cdr Chris Featherstone** finishing 2nd in the men's 40 – 44 age group, who stood out from the rest.

Overall the day was a huge success and the team from CCU proved themselves to be strong contenders even in such a competitive field.

Lt Miller, Wg Cdr Featherstone, WO2 Tresidder, SSgt Fisher, SSgt(FofS) Floyd, LCpl Sturdy, Capt Moody, Cpl Caddy, Sig Clark and Sig Goodluck.

DHEKELIA TROOP

Tp Comd	**Capt Chris Moody**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt 'Kips' Fisher**

The month of March has been a busy one for Dhekelia Tp. Summer is now upon us and the increase in temperature is extremely noticeable. With the weather so kind, it seemed like a good time for a large percentage of the Tp to embark on the RMQ course. **SSgt(FofS) Floyd, Sgt Sankey, Cpl Rennie, Cpl Bate, Cpl Heap** and **Cpl Murney** all passed and will now be able to play a key role in future range days for the Unit. We now also have 2 fully fledged Mapric instructors in **Cpl Brewington** and **LCpl Sturdy** and a new HGV driver in **Sig McFegan**. **Sig Matthews** on the other hand is extremely close to completing the Royal Signals leadership course.

Dhekelia Tp also played a substantial part in the Paphos Half Marathon, which is reported elsewhere. Out of a unit team of 11 runners, 8 were Dhekelia Tp members. This just reiterated the point that Dhekelia Tp is probably the fittest Royal Signals tp in Cyprus.

Apart from the odd course and International running triumph, it's business as usual in Dhekelia with constant faults being dealt with and maint carried out. Dhekelia Tp will now look forward to the visit of a comy from the Army Cadet Force and the annual CYPSAAM in April.

EPSIKOPI TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Dusty Miller**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Ian Farrow**

Episkopi Tp has been involved in a number of events with all pers taking a turn to organise a structured Sports/Fun Day for each month. Events are planned well in advance but last month's Skiing Day didn't look promising due to the lack of white stuff in the mountains. Then days before our skiing, the skies opened and snow fell on the Troodos Mountains. This allowed us to glide gracefully down the slopes on our sledges.

The guys were given the opportunity to learn or improve their skills with our in house Ski Instructor **SSgt 'Taff' Lougher.** There was also a chance to make a poor attempt at Snow-boarding. A coffee shop was available at the base of the mountain for those that just fear the general texture of snow on an incline. **Sgt Andrea McNeil** decided this 'extreme sport' was just "not for her" after approaching the top of a small slope. The Tp meanwhile sped down the slope on sledges and skis with such prowess that the next Olympics are a possibility!

This month's event took us to Happy Valley for a Horse Riding adventure – Cowboys and Indians fancy dress. I believe **Sig 'Billy' Elliot** may have received the wrong invite turning up looking more like Noddy than a cowboy. The look on the Riding Instructors' faces when we tipped up was priceless; I believe the horses were also quite impressed with our Western attire. A good laugh was had by all as we trotted around the Happy Valley grounds on our wild frontier. The afternoon's riding was finished off with a BBQ followed by a trip to the CCU bar to carry on the adventure. We look forward to the next event – "Mediterranean 'Shark' fishing"?

Congratulations go to **LCpl 'Pops' Larkins** on the birth of his firstborn child, He and his wife **Claire** have named her **Scarlet**. We wish them all the best with the sleepless nights.

Welcome to the new arrivals **Cpl Lee Thompson, LCpl Neil Bielby** and **Sig Dave Tannock**. These arrivals see the Radio Cell manning double but they still stand in the shadows of our elite Inst Techs. We welcome back **Cpl Bob Wells** from his almost annual tour of the Falkland Islands, his almost "native home". The last we heard he was due to marry a local penguin he had grown quite fond of.

CCU EAGLES FOOTBALL TEAM - *by Lt Dusty Miller*

The Episkopi based unit football team comprising players from Infra and HQ Sqn and Service Ops Sqn have just completed a very successful season. The team plays in the WSBA Minor Units League in which 12 teams from Episkopi Garrison and RAF Akrotiri compete. Having made an impressive start to the season back in September, the team has gone from strength to strength and have been crowned not only League Champions but Cup Winners as well. In completing this impressive double, the team won all but one of its games this season.

Lt Dusty Miller, SSgt Ian Farrow, LCpl Mark Thompson, Sig Mark Billingsley and **Sig Paul Cross** have all played on a regular basis this season, with **LCpl Thompson** just one goal away from being top scorer a remarkable achievement for a midfielder.

The team wishes to thank all the supporters who made the trip to Akrotiri for the Cup Final. Their combined presence was certainly heard from the pitch and clearly rattled the opposition. We are now looking forward to a short break over summer before newly qualified FA Coach **SSgt Ian Farrow** gets to put into practice some of ideas.

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (CYPRUS)

CO	**Lt Col CJ McIntosh**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Fleming**

This has been another enjoyably busy period for the Unit, which has spent time honing its mil and navigation skills in the field, parading for the Chief of Defence Intelligence, raising money for various causes and preparing for the events of the summer. We welcome the new Unit 2IC, **Sqn Ldr Chapman**, who replaces **Sqn Ldr Thorley**. The unit will see several more prominent pers departing in the coming months.

EXERCISE PURPLE WARRIOR 25 – 29 FEBRUARY 2008

The unit deployed on a mil trg package to Pyla Ranges during February, scaling down to minimum manning to allow the ex to go ahead. Mustering suspiciously quickly after the 0330hrs call-in, we endured the obligatory MCCP (which the Admin office seemed to enjoy) and got down to business. The ex comprised 2 teaching phases and 1 overnight ex. **Flt Lt John Rees**, OC Defence Sect, was responsible for the organisation of the ex and chose to concentrate on basic and relevant soldiering skills. The first phase involved a deployment to Pyla Ranges where the Officers and WOs carried out a Combat Estimate, enabling the troops to establish a Forward Operating Base (FOB). Once in the FOB, the troops were back to basics with lessons on field living and navigation. The troops took part in a navex during the daylight hours to practise their skills and were put under pressure in a night time navigation covering a distance of 15km in pairs. Some pers were sorely tested but morale remained high among those who didn't get lost. The second teaching phase of the ex incorporated an in depth look at inf integration and covered both the Resident Inf Bn's and RAF Regt's role alongside wpns, tactics and surveillance.

The troops were able to get involved in a Navy ex involving *HMS Dasher* from the Navy Cyprus Sqn based in Akrotiri, the SBA Police and 62 Sp Sqn RE. We boarded *HMS Dasher* and a combat sp vessel to observe a number of scenarios involved in Naval Force Protection including simple confrontations such as fisheries patrols or illegal smuggling as well as the more serious confrontations involving the use of wpns and sometimes even the threat of suicide bombings. Naval Officer, **Lt Dan Todd** from JSSU described the importance during the current world climate for the Navy to practise its drills as the tragedy on the *USS Cole* was a classic example of the vulnerability of Navy vessels when approached by perceived hostile boats.

The ex culminated in a night ex where the troops had to defend the FOB and were subjected to indirect and direct attacks from the enemy, with numerous evacuation and patrol exs to contend with. No-duff Cypriot joy-riders on the ex area added spice to the proceedings, keeping those manning the 2 VCPs on their toes. It was challenging and realistic stuff and thoroughly enjoyed by the troops. Just a shame that the enemy always seems to have more fun, though...

FIRMIN SWORD OF PEACE PARADE 7 MARCH 2008
- by Capt Paul Whillis

Raising funds for charity and organising community events is a major part of life for the unit – part of what the CO calls 'The Ay Nik Spirit'. These efforts were rewarded by the presentation of the prestigious Firmin Sword of Peace by the Chief of Defence Intelligence, **Air Marshal SW Peach CBE**, in a parade at Mercury Barracks on 7 March 2008.

The Firmin Sword of Peace is a forces-wide award given in recognition of services to charity and for community relations. It is recognised as one of the highest awards that can be made to a Service unit of the United Kingdom for humanitarian activities. Due to the unit's isolated location, JSSU (Cyprus) has long recognised the importance of forging and maintaining strong ties with local towns and villages. The award, given for the first time to a Joint Service unit, is recognition of the charity and community work carried out in 2006. During this year JSSU (Cyprus) raised £23,000 for good causes, demonstrating the excellent *esprit de corps* that exists throughout the whole community. 'Silver Child', a charitable project introduced at the start of the year, raised almost £6,000 for the Great Ormond Street hospital and local Forces' children; the ladies' cycle challenge, organised entirely by non-mil members of the unit, resulted in a £2,300 charity donation.

In addition, numerous events organised by the Unit provided perfect opportunities for people from mil, expatriate, Greek and Turkish backgrounds to come together and share common interests. Two clear examples were the annual Ayios Nikolaos fete and music festival. A children's football league, again organised and run by unit members, gave children and parents from Service and Cypriot backgrounds the opportunity to integrate.

Weeks of preparation saw tri-Service pers from each of the Unit's three Sqns mastering wpn drill, furiously bulling boots and shoes and striving to achieve an immaculate turnout. Having worked hard to reach a high standard and notwithstanding the obligatory iffy final rehearsal, the parade itself proceeded impeccably. **Air Marshal Peach** congratulated those who had worked so hard to win the award. Charitable and community work continues at the same frenetic pace for the unit; JSSU (Cyprus) aims to add another sword to its armoury in the near future.

The UAO, Capt Byrne AGC saluting Air Marshal Peach CBE. Lt Col McIntosh, Capt Green and WO1(RSM) Fleming looking on, with 2 and 1 Sqns in the background

JSSU(CYP) LADIES NETBALL TEAM FASHION SHOW – 15 MARCH 2008 - by SAC Samuel

The Fashion Show took place on Saturday 15 March at the Mercury Theatre, Ayios Nikolaos. The evening was organised to help raise funds towards the Ay Nik Netball Team tour. All the ladies looked stunning in their catwalk dresses, kindly loaned by **Mrs Annette Gardner**, the proprietor of the local shop, *Glamour*. All dresses were unique, so no danger of suffering the nightmare scenario of 'same dress – same function'. Team Captain **LWtr Hannah Robbins** was the commentator for the evening and did a

fantastic job, balancing just enough comic relief to help relax the ladies and emphasise the quality of the dresses.

The show began with Event Organiser, **Cpl Jenny Beck** taking to the catwalk, looking slightly more nervous than expected, understandable considering the fantastic support shown for this event and the stress of having to co-ordinate the function on the night. The dress was rather 'Tinkerbell' themed and despite being mocked remorselessly, looked fantastic. The outfits throughout the evening were amazing, with colours from pale duck egg blue to striking crimson red, many having added details such as sparkles, patterns and embellished flowers to enhance the style and quality.

Ay Nik Ladies' Netball Fashion Show

All team members took to the catwalk and despite the obvious nerves on the first outing they all still looked very glamorous and their confidence soon grew. The models were **Cpl Jodi Williams**, **Claire Pryce**, **Dawn Rowley**, **Sarah Britton**, **Rachel Mitchell**, **SAC Mary Griffiths**, **Sgt Di Ward**, **Jane Stowell** and **Cpl Becky Lincoln**. By the time they were in their second outfits of the night the nerves were nowhere to be seen and it was hard to get them off the stage.

To highlight the occasion, all the team were escorted to the stage by members of the Unit Football and Rugby Teams. The lads made every effort to complement the ladies, looking very James Bond. The gents who escorted were **Flt Lt Rod Babington**, **WO2(SSM) Oz Rowley**, and **Cpl Steve Haswell**. Some of the more shy members were helping out behind the scenes. **Dawn Rowley** deserves a massive well done as she not only had to deal with the nerves of being a model but also had to discard her crutches and endure severe pain following a recent injury suffered on the netball court. The even has excellent support from local businesses who donated prizes for the raffle helping to achieve a final total €1440, so a massive thank-you to all who supported and well done to the team for the whole event.

CROSS COUNTRY ROUNDUP - *by Cpl Becky Lincoln*

JSSU (Cyp) had another good year in the All-Island Cross Country with some very high positions. On a number of occasions the unit had runners in the top 10 positions in both the male and female leagues. The season started really well with some very strong runners and good numbers attending the races. As always, work commitments, deployments and postings took away some of our best runners for next season e.g. **Sgt McCallum**, **Sgt Traynor**, **JT Evans** and **SAC Robson**, who we are sorry to lose but wish them all the best for their future running. Although on some races the team was a bit thin on numbers, the final results were still good for the unit. Both the male and female teams came 2nd in the final league results.

As individuals the unit also came away with some good results, with **WO2 Cutmore** winning the V1 league and **Cpl Lincoln** winning the female 18 – 39 league.

JOINT SERVICES SIGNALS WING (DIGBY)

CO **Wg Cdr TL Quigley MA** RAF
USM **WO2(SSM) J Sowden**

90TH ANNIVERSARY RAF DIGBY AND THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

It is by a quirk of history that RAF Digby pre-dates the birth of the RAF by 3 days making it the oldest RAF station still in existence. This means we had a double celebration for the tri-service community stationed here. A full 3 days of events took place to celebrate both birthdays in style.

On 28 March **Sir David Pepper KCMG** and **Air Marshal Peach CBE** received a guard of honour consisting of RN, Army represented by Royal Signals and Int Corps and RAF. After a 3 day drill boot camp in the Digby snow and hail storms by the SWO and USM the honour guard was in fine order.

The highlight of the parade was a fine piece of ceremonial drill from the SWO where the honour guard moved from a D formation into 3 ranks and then into 2 all within their own timing and without words of command, well done! On the general salute we lost our Red Arrows fly past who preferred to take a certain young Prince home but RAF Cranwell came through and provided a Kingair fly past to mark the salute. **Air Marshal Peach** then opened the new integrated welfare facility, a new high/low rope climbing wall and then followed with a medal presentation. Meanwhile **Sir David** was put into mil fatigues and courtesy of **Sgt Mick Hepworth** who thought it was funny to give him a Sgt rank slide thrust **Sir David** into the middle of a battle lesson,

The General Salute

extracting a casualty under enemy fire! **Sir David** did not let the team down and emerged through the smoke and chaos covered in mud with the casualty in tow and empty magazines, an outstanding effort! It was then onto the 25m range for some hands on with both the SA80A2 and the 9mm pistol.

On 30 March, RAF Digby re-dedicated its very own WWII Sector Ops museum with a day long event with WWII re-enactors and

Cpl Reid and Sir David Pepper extracting a casualty from the fire fight

vintage military veh stands. The museum has been renovated over the years by a tri-service team of volunteers and as well as offering a pristine Sector Ops presentation covers the history of RAF Digby from the beginning. The day was well attended by veterans and serving members of the station. This memorable day was rounded off with a ceremony of thanksgiving at the Canadian War Memorial and a fantastic fly past from **Sqn Ldr (Retd) Paul Day** and his privately owned Spitfire in a perfect blue sky.

Sqn Ldr Day roars past the crowd below

On 1 April the station celebrated the 90th anniversary by parading for a photograph in full service dress. The USM managed to keep his remaining hair while getting JSSW(D) into formation despite some of our RAF friends not understanding left from right and front from rear! After our photos the station then paraded at the gym where an all ranks dinner was held. Later the party got into full swing with a rock band and disco into the early hours.

SOINC(A) VISIT

Having just recovered from the anniversary, we then hosted the SOinC(A). It was an informal visit and the unit dined the SOinC(A) in the Officers Mess with the WOs in attendance (well someone had to provide intelligent chit chat!). The next day he was given an insight into the adaptive role of the EW Sys Op in this tri-service environment. Later the SOinC had lunch with the JNCOs followed by a tour of 224 Sig Sqn. The day ended with an informal brief to the troops on his future thoughts and the direction the Corps is heading.

Overall an enjoyable visit and we look forward to the next one, many thanks to **Maj 'Palf' Palfreyman**, the Adjt, **Capt Becky Jacques** and **WO2(YofS(EW)) Steve Roche** for organising it.

1 SQUADRON

OC **Maj Southam** Int Corps
2IC **Ft Lt Johnston-Davies** RAF

ARRIVALS

We would like to welcome **SSgt(YofS(EW)) Jay Waites** and **Cpl Karl Newton** to the Sqn.

DEPARTURES

We bid a fond farewell to **WO2(YofS(EW)) Steve Roche**, who will be hanging up his beret for a knotted hankie as he goes to work at Scarborough.

1 SQN CHARITY 'FUN' RUN TO SWORD BEACH, NORMANDY
- by Cpl Mick Stephenson

On 8 February, 3 members of the Royal Signals, **WO2(YofS(EW)) Steve Roche**, **WO2(YofS(EW)) 'Tel' Gardiner** and **Cpl Mick Stephenson**, formed the core of a 12 man group taking part in one of the most physically demanding challenges of their combined mil careers in order to raise £3000 for charity. The target: to run and cycle in 1 hour shifts until the team covered the distance from RAF Digby to Sword Beach in Normandy, approximately 800km away. The reason behind this apparently insane physical task was to raise money for the Waddington Suite at Lincoln County Hospital, where a Sqn member, **SAC Darren Swift** recently underwent treatment. This would allow the purchase of an essential vital signs monitor, used by chemotherapy patients whilst undergoing treatment.

As 0730hrs approached, the team of 1 Sqn's finest athletes met in the JRs Mess for breakfast and to pick up their 'sports' lunch pack. Thoroughly fuelled and carrying their white cardboard boxes full of a sandwich and a chocolate bar, the team met over at the station Gym. Once there, we began to warm up and make ourselves familiar with what we were aiming for and the reasons behind it all. With minutes to go, **Sgt 'Biff' Mearns** gathered the team together and briefed the outline of the day's activities. The 12 of us were divided into squads of 4, and would start with a run, cycle or rest. The running team's target was to cover 10km during their hour on the treadmills, with the cyclists aiming to cover at least 20km during their stint on the bikes. Those on rest were free to offer encouragement to those in physical duress, although before long, this would clearly turn into the typical squaddie banter! With some very random music playing on the Gym's antiquated Hi-Fi system, the 0900hrs start time was now soon approaching.

Five minutes before the official start, **Darren Swift** (the 'Egg on Legs') took to the treadmill to complete the first 100m to remind us of the whole reason behind this challenge, At the stroke of 0900hrs, Team A consisting of **Flt Lt Johnston-Davis**, **WO2(YofS(EW) Steve Roche**, **Sgt Ryan Bridges** and **Cpl Mick Stephenson** set the treadmills to 10km/h and began. At the same time, Team B, **WO2(YofS(EW) 'Tel' Gardiner**, **PO Mark Gent**, **SACs Martin Zwart** and **Matt Robertson** set off pedalling with a 20km distance between them and an hour's rest.

Throughout the course of the day, 20km on the cycles seemed an easy target to achieve, and distances of around 35km were recorded in some 1 hr sessions. Just 10 mins into the event, one of the treadmills simply stopped, almost catapulting the 2IC into the plasma screen TV! With some quick thinking by the event organiser **Sgt Mearns**, both **Flt Lt Johnston-Davis** and I went outside in the emerging sunshine to run round the 800m PFT route until the hour was up. It felt like I had déjá-vu seeing the start line over and over and over again. With 1000hrs fast approaching, Team C started to limber up. In order that a similar treadmill incident didn't happen to them, both **SSgt Phil Pilsworth** and **Sgt Mearns** wisely opted for the outside route and promptly headed off to relieve the existing team, leaving **Cpls Helena Dixon**, **Mary Ford** and **SAC Dave Gordon** to use the runners, whereas Team B took a well earned hour long rest before

it was their turn to run. My Team were ecstatic to finish the run, but then we were faced immediately with the cycles without any rest period at all, this moment of excitement was instantly broken. We soon settled into a steady pace and clocked up some impressive mileage. As the day progressed, the teams continued to run, cycle or rest. We received visits from the CO **Wg Cdr Quigley**, who wished everyone well and then completed 6km herself, in addition to members from other sects within JSSW(D) who came down to show their sp. This made a huge difference to those taking part. With a final push, and the time fast approaching 1400hrs, the team were way ahead of schedule. At change over, less than 9km remained. This was fantastic, since the planned finish time had been 1630hrs. To end the days event, and with everyone walking like John Wayne, everyone decided to take to the PFT track and completed one honorary final lap with **Swifty** at the head.

On March 26 with the event completed, the blisters healed and the vast amount of sponsorship money collected, a small group of the participants in the 'fun run' along with the CO and the USM **WO2(SSM)'Yorkie' Sowden** were proud to join **SAC Darren Swift** at Lincoln Hospital to present a cheque to the Waddington Suite with an outstanding sum of £3294.27. Once Gift Aid is added this sum will increase to over £4000. In closing, **Darren Swift** would like to take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt thanks to all those who participated and supported throughout all the charity events. From the swear box, the quiz and to the blistering 'fun' run.

2 SQUADRON

OC **Capt Thomspon**
2IC **Flt Lt Wyatt** RAF

ARRIVALS

We would like to welcome, **Sgt Neil Howarth** returning from JSSU (Cyprus). **CPOCT Joy Ashley** has taken over as the 2 Sqn Co-ord replacing **SSgt (YofS(EW)) 'Cazza' Thompson**, the job will be done properly now.

DEPARTURES

We bid a fond farewell to **LCpl Kubicsek** who is leaving us for 224 Sig Sqn on 7 April.

DEPLOYMENTS

LCpl 'Charley' Farley deploying to the sunny Falkland Islands for a few months penguin watching. **Sgt Keegan** has deployed to Baghdad, because he got fed up with the British weather and **Cpl 'Emma' Margetson** returns from Iraq with a suntan.

2 SQUADRON SKIING EXPEDITION – EXERCISE LOUP GAROU DE MONTJOIE (DRAGON) - *by Cpl Munford*

We departed camp on the evening of the 21December 07 with a nice 18 hr journey to look forward to. We finally arrived in Les Contamines. Our accn happened to be right at the base of the ski lift – brilliant! We got our kit issued before having the evening to ourselves to find the pub and get some dinner before settling into our bunk beds!

The next morning we got our only late start of the exped whilst the instructors went to recce the pistes and make sure the beginners (not to mention the rest of us!) wouldn't be hurtling themselves down any black runs on the first day! We were split into 2 groups – those who had passed the basic skill proficiency and those who hadn't. The newbie's had their first introduction into the snow-plough while the rest of us had a shake out ski to find our ski legs again.

The trip to the bar was not what had been expected, as most of us had not been prepared for €5 a drink, whether we were on beer or coke (which made the choice easy!). At least the locals were friendly.

Day 2 on the piste and the newbie's were developing confidence, perhaps a little too much confidence. We spent most of the day on a green run mastering the plough-turn. After numerous wipe-outs (some of which were hilarious) we started to see the fun side of it all. Christmas morning we paraded in fancy dress costumes including Batman, Popeye, some cows and a pregnant nun! Ski games involved makeshift sled races and the dreadful human slalom. The super-biffs managed to keep the pros on there toes! but only just.

As you can expect we had an eventful day, **LCpl 'Si' Hayes** managed to perform a double back somersault and kick himself in the back of the head. Unfortunately it was not hard enough to earn himself a ride in a helicopter but he still managed a trip to the hospital and a war wound to impress everyone with. The advanced skiers managed to simulate a helicopter – an activity that involved spinning each other down the mountain in pairs!

On Christmas evening we were treated to a lovely meal. We were put up in a traditional French restaurant that doesn't employ chefs! Instead you bring raw meat and cook it yourself on a slab. We ended the evening in a local bar with traditional French music (sort of) courtesy of **Cpl Uytendhal** and his guitar.

Fancy Dress on Christmas morning for the expedition

On the morning of Day 5 the advanced group were thoroughly briefed and primed by **WO Paul Coll** in the art of ski touring (skiing up a hill). The first group got halfway up the hill before attempting a more challenging route and failing dismally. However the second group were more successful (hind sight is a wonderful thing!). Everyone seemed comfortable with the techniques involved, and although alien at the start some soon found that they actually enjoyed it! Meanwhile the super-biffs were set loose, armed with their BSP (Basic Ski Proficiency). We hit the red slope for the first time followed be a few wipe-outs from **LCpl Charlie Farley** and **LCpl Tim Recce** who tried to avoid someone who stopped in the middle of the piste only to end up loosing their own skis in the process. Needless to say a few polite words of French were exchanged.

On the final day of skiing **Greg**, one of the snow god instructors took us for our warm up. For some reason **Greg** insisted that we spent most of the time warming our vocal chords rather than our legs. The intermediate group suffered a morning of thigh busting snow-ploughs, skill and prowess tests included a 360. A hard morning for the intermediate group but they all passed this element of the ASP (Advanced Ski Proficiency) – just the written test to go! The beginners were taken for a free-ski led by **SSgt 'Jimmy' James** on red runs and then a select few having a shot at a black run! **SSgt James** even managed to get **Cpl 'Steph' Armsby** to overcome her fear of chair lifts by dropping her in the deep end and giving her no choice! Mission complete!

It's Saturday morning and time to go home already! We start the day bright and early so we can pick up the bus and scrub the apartments in time for the room inspection and a 0900hrs departure. This was the start of the long drive back to the UK, luckily the traffic was light, as was the humour. Most of the journey was spent watching cheesy DVDs, reminiscing and discussing some of our famous wipe outs until we arrive back at RAF Digby to see in the New Year.

DEFENCE SCHOOL OF INTELLIGENCE CHICKSANDS

CO DSI **Lt Col Easter**
OC SIGINT Wing **Maj Trethewey**

This article introduces a new era to what was the Royal Signals Special Operator (RSSO) career employment qualification.

Not only are we now called Electronic Warfare Systems Operator (EW Sys Op), a name more befitting our primary role, but the trade-trg course has also been subject to changes. The course has been streamlined from 31 to 20 weeks and updated to reflect 21st Century comms environments.

The first 5 weeks are conducted at Defence College of Communications and Information Systems (DCCIS) Blandford and cover basic comms theory trg.

This culminates in a final exam with those successful students moving to SIGINT Wing, Defence School of Intelligence (DSI), Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC) Chicksands.

Capt Burrell addressing friends, family and members of staff

At Chicksands, students undergo a further 15 weeks of intense theory and practical trg on the Basic Communications Exploitation (BCE) course. On successful completion of the trg, a return to RSS, Blandford sees driver and mil skills trg being undertaken. Upon successful completion, promotion to LCpl and posting to their first working unit follows. The first students have already completed the Chicksands phase and are well on their way to becoming JNCOs.

Sig Kelly receiving his course certificate from Capt Burrell RN

On completion of the course friends and family were invited to SIGINT Wing, where the students delivered a presentation consisting of some of the concepts they had covered during their time at SIGINT Wing and Blandford. The day culminated with the guest of honour, **Capt Burrell** RN (Director of Training DISC), presenting course certificates and giving some warm words of encouragement to the course members.

Also in attendance were **Mr Chris Howe** and **Mr Paul Burrows** from the Association of Old Crows (AOC). The AOC is an independent, non-profit, international professional association promoting public understanding in the science and practice of Electronic Warfare (EW) and related disciplines.

For a number of years the AOC has recognised the importance of all the EW trade groups across the 3 Services and has awarded the most improved student on a BCE course with a cheque for £50 in recognition of their achievements.

The cheque was awarded to **Sig Kennedy** for his efforts throughout the course. The majority will soon begin their assignments to 14 Sig Regt (EW) or 11 Explosive Ordinance Disposal Regt, RLC.

This is definitely a new and positive chapter for EW Sys Op trg. The young EW Sys Ops that graduate now are far better prepared for the demanding op environments that await them.

THE SANGCOM TEAM

On the work side of life the team seems to have been firmly in the eye of the UK with visits by the GCS IPT, ACDS (Ops), Head of Paradigm, Policy and Defence Relations (South) to name but a few. The G6 branch has been overly active with **Maj Dave Ball** turning out what seems to be dozens of Operational Requirements. It's just a shame that it takes so long to get them endorsed, approved and funded but then, why should we expect the Saudi procurement system to be anymore effective than that of the UK! However, enough of work what about the social side of life in the Middle East? One of the advantages of being in the middle of the desert is the ability to head off into it and enjoy the scenery and a surprising amount of history. In recent months the Team has had a number of desert driving days and weekend camps. There have also been more adventurous trips into the Empty-Quarter and to the 'Lawrence of Arabia' Hejaz Railway.

HEJAZ RAILWAY BATTLEFIELD TOUR

On 12 October, 5 intrepid SANGCOM explorers and their wives set off to visit the section of the Hejaz Railway between Madinah and Madain Saleh, and the ancient Nabatean burial sites in Madain Saleh. The aim of the trip was to:

a. Participate in desert camping with the plan of spending 4 nights under canvas.
b. Travel along the section of the Hejaz Railway between Madinah and Madain Saleh.
c. Conduct 3 studies of the WW1 mil raids on the railway by British led raiding parties.
d. Explore the Nabatean burial sites of Madain Saleh.

During the approach to Madinah, **Maj Dave Ball** thought he was losing BBQ coals from his roof rack. He was in fact running on a flat tyre and pieces of tyre were flying off bombarding the rest of the convoy.

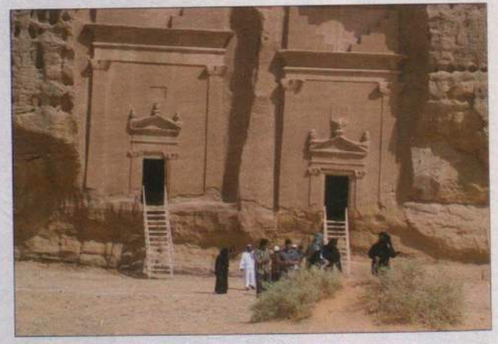
I guess we will turn right then!

Unfortunately the trip did not meet all of its aims as the team was thwarted by the overly protective nature of the local Gendarmerie! Having overnighted in the desert just outside Madinah and driven around the ring road to avoid the 'Muslims-only' area of the town, the team was halted at a checkpoint and advised that the security situation would prevent them travelling along the old railway and camping out.

Despite the best efforts of the ~~fluid~~ (sorry!) fluent Arabic speakers of **Maj Scott Steven** and **Maj Pete Stoddart**, numerous calls to the British Embassy, Defence Attaché and via translators to the local Police Chief, the team was forced to accept a blue-light escort all the way to Al Ula outside Madain Saleh. Here they were forced to spend the night in the Madain Salah Hotel with hot running water, clean sheets, prepared food and televisions showing the England/France World Cup semi-final and Scotland/??? football. Why is it that the wives were suspicious? Despite this it was possible to view some of the old railway stations and to get a feel for what it must have been like.

The team on the old railway track

The third day was spent at Madain Saleh which has very similar rock carved tombs to those at Petra in Jordan but even here 2 police officers were in close proximity throughout.



The Tombs at Madain Saleh

Madain Saleh also offered an excellent opportunity to see the main railway station of this region which was used as a pilgrims stop over in the early 20th century.

SANGCOM Team members and their Ninjas

The following night was spent camped just outside a police station. One of the highlights of the trip, on the 4th day involved an excursion into the desert while the police were diverted by the need to sign paperwork when a police boundary was crossed. Following a pleasant drive off road, the convoy returned to the tarmac 3 hours later and were recaptured by the authorities. That evening the team was 'released' and allowed to camp out in the open in the desert but as dusk fell the blue lights could be seen patrolling up and down. The team were frustrated by the police presence and control of movement but took comfort from the protection afforded and adjusted plans accordingly. The trip was considered a success although the main objective, to travel along the railway route, was not achieved; all participants enjoyed the experience especially the opportunity to drive along the motorways at 100mph whilst not worrying about the flashing blue lights behind! A great trip with plenty of memories...

MANCHESTER UNITED IN RIYADH!

Monday night 21 January and 4 SANGCOM Team members (**Lt Col Ian Hunter**, **Maj Dave Ball**, **Maj Stu Gillespie** and **Maj Pete Stoddart**) set off for the King Fahid Football Stadium to watch Manchester United play Al Hilal, the cream of the Saudi footballing fraternity. The kick-off was announced at the stadium as 1930hrs and the ticket stated 2000hrs; however in true Saudi style it actually was 2030hrs so no surprise there then – as always remain flexible. The full Manchester United first team squad was on show and to a packed house of 40,000 screaming Saudis and a small British element proceeded to show off their immense talent. Ronaldo and Teves both scored excellent goals but Al Hilal fought back and, shock of shocks, the score at half-time was Man U 2 – Al Hilal 3. The darling of the crowd and Saudi National Team captain, **Sami Al-Jabar** scored a penalty just before the whistle. The second half was rather dull in comparison to the first and the game ended 2 – 3 with the Manchester United sub **Danny Welbeck** sending a penalty sky high in the last minute, oh what drama!. In true Saudi fashion an excellent evening concluded with a "Wacky Races" drive home from the stadium.

CONGRATULATIONS, ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Congratulations to **A/Maj Neil Taylor** on his selection for substantive rank, **WO2(FofS) Draper** on his selection for promotion to WO1 and **Maj Stu Gillespie** on his selection to attend French Staff College. Farewell to: **Lt Col Tony Sarginson** and his wife **Susan** who have departed for retirement to run a Kennels and Cattery, **Maj Kev Townsend** and his wife **Sandy** who have departed for the GOSC at Corsham and **Maj Andy Rickman** who has departed for HQ Land. We wish them all a happy future. We would like to extend a warm welcome to **Lt Col Ian Hunter** and his wife **Clare**, **Maj Neil Taylor** and his wife **Debbie**, and **Maj Pete Stoddart** and his wife **Jo**. We wish them all a successful time in the desert.

SPORT

CORPS SQUASH

ROYAL SIGNALS INDIVIDUAL SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS 7 – 11 NOVEMBER 07

The Royal Signals Individual Squash Championships were held at the Blandford Garrison courts and the local JP's club over 7 – 11 November 07. While the entry numbers were slightly down on recent competitions, it was the first time in many years that all the established Corps players were available and fit. Encouragingly, we saw an increase in the number of younger entries emphasised by the emergence of **Sigs Jones** and **McGrath**, who as former junior internationals have enhanced the Corps squad; the latter having only recently competed Phase 2 trg.

The Championships went to plan except that the Blandford courts became unplayable as the heating system failed on a particularly cold Blandford week. Luckily the Corps has a good relationship with the local Blandford squash club JP's, who allowed us to play the later stages of the championships in their excellent facilities.

The seeding generally went to order and a number of old foes renewed long standing rivalries. In the first Open semi final, **Sig Nick McGrath** beat **Sig Rich Jones** in a tight match and subsequently defeated the same opponent in the Under 25s final by the same 3 – 2 score. In the other semi-final **Maj Dean Richardson** defeated his old foe **Maj Steve Bason** 3 – 1 in a match which doubled as the Over 35s final. In the Corps Open final, youth prevailed as **Sig McGrath** won his first Corps title in a close match against **Maj Richardson**.

In the plate and team events there were a number of entertaining and close matches. **Capt Ian Piears** and **SSgt Ian Pengally** played out the plate final which conveniently doubled as a playoff for the Corps No 5 slot. **Capt Piears** maintained his hold on his position with a strong performance that belied his history of injuries and age.

10 Sig Regt won the team event and **Cpl John Ford** was unanimously selected as 'most improved' player. Mention should also be made of **Capt Dave Petty** and **Capt Mick Swift** who both played with skill and determination and pushed a number of established players to the limit.

The Corps team for the Inter Corps competition was based on the week's results and was widely considered the strongest team the Corps had fielded for many years.

No 1 **Sig McGrath**
No 2 **Sig Jones**
No 3 **Maj Richardson**
No 4 **Maj Bason**
No 5 **Capt Piears**
No 6 **SSgt Pengally**

INTER-CORPS SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS 12 – 14 NOVEMBER 07

The Inter-Corps Squash Championships were held at the Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre over the period 12 – 14 November 07. Royal Signals arrived at the Championships seeded 2 and with high hopes of denting the RLC's unbeaten run since 1994. Despite the loss of the former Corps No 1, **Dave Gallagher**, to civilian life, the team was strengthened by the inclusion of **Sigs Jones** and **McGrath**. The blend of youth and experience would prove crucial in a traditionally demanding competition but importantly allowed the older members to bat lower down the order.

The first match was played against the REME who also boasted several new players. Despite this, the Corps proved too strong at the top order and won convincing 4 – 1. In the afternoon the Corps was pitted against an AAC side that contained 2 full Army players and who had their own high hopes of finishing top. In an

extremely tight match in which 3 of the individual matches went to the fifth game, the Corps narrowly lost 3 – 2. Particular mentions should be made of **Sig McGrath**, who in his first Army squash exposure pushed the Army No 3 before losing in the fifth and to **Maj Bason** who triumphed in the fifth game against an opponent who had previously held sway.

The second day saw the usual close match against the RE. They had considerable strength in depth and would prove a stern test throughout the seedings. The Corps started with losses at No 3 and 5 but strong performances by **Sig Jones** and **Maj Bason** (winning 10 – 9) in the fifth, ensured an overall 3 – 2 victory. The afternoon match saw the Corps beat the RA 4 – 1 which saw a fine performance from **Maj Richardson** and a debut win for **SSgt Pengelly.**

The final day saw the 2 two seeds match up. The Corps still harboured an outside chance of catching the RLC but would have to force an over-whelming victory. As it turned out the RLC fielded their strongest side and despite running them close in 4 of the games, the Corps lost 5 – 0. In particular **Capt Piears** put up a brave performance before losing by the narrowest margin and **Sig Jones** let slip a big lead against the Army U-25 champion.

Division 1 - Final Results

v REME	Won	4 – 1
v AAC	Lost	2 – 3
v RE	Won	3 – 2
v RA	Won	4 – 1
v RLC	Lost	0 – 5

ARMY INDIVIDUAL SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS
23 – 25 JANUARY 08

The Army Individual Squash Championships were held at the Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre over the period 23 – 25 January 08. Following on from their strong performance at the Inter-Corps event, **Maj Bason**, **Maj Richardson**, **SSgt Pengelly**, **Sig Jones** and **Sig McGrath** all entered in various events.

All players performed admirably, although particular mention should be made that **Maj Bason** took the first game off the Army No 1 and former professional player **2Lt Sam Miller**. As the competition progressed, 2 Signallers reached the final of the Army U-25 competition where **Sig Jones** defeated **Sig McGrath** in a reversal of the previous month's Royal Signals result. This was a fine game and a considerable achievement for both the players and the Corps which promises for some future titanic battles between the two. In the Over 40s competition, **Maj Richardson** reached the final before losing 3 – 2 to **Sgt Burke**, the current Combined Services champion.

Maj Richardson, runner up in the Army Over 40 Competition

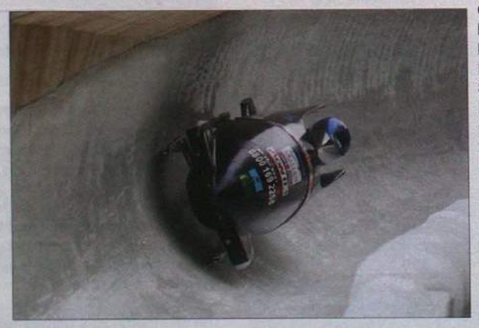
Sig Jones, winner of the Army Under 25s Competition

As a result **Maj Richardson**, **Maj Bason**, **Sig Jones** and **Sig McGrath** were selected to represent the Army in the Inter-Services Championships hosted by the Royal Navy at *HMS Temeraire*. Full results of this are available in the Soldier magazine.

INTER-SERVICES BOBSLEIGH CHAMPIONSHIP

The Inter-Services Bobsleigh Championships were held between 27- 28 February 2008.

This years Army Female team was unique in that its members were all from the Royal Signals. **Cpl Jackie Davies**, **LCpl Paula Walker**, **LCpl Alicia Jarman** and **Capt Belinda Robson** made up the two 2-man Bobsleigh teams. The Championship is held over 2 days, consisting of 4 laufs. The combination of both pairs times count therefore no mistakes could be made.



By the end of the first day, the Army's combined time was 7 secs ahead of the RAF and RN teams. **Cpl Davies** and **LCpl Walker** both drove exceptionally and the Army took 1st place by a large margin. **Cpl Davies**, **LCpl Walker** and **LCpl Jarman** all represent Great Britain at Bobsleigh. **Cpl Davies** originally started as a brakeman and represented Great Britain at the 2002 Winter Olympics. She then went on to learn to drive but decided to brake at the next Olympics in 2006 due to making a fantastic team with the current GB1 driver, **Nicola Minichello**.

After the 2006 Olympics, **Cpl Davies** has been concentrating on driving and has been very successful and was selected to race on the World Cup circuit. She came 3rd at the British Championship this year and 2nd at the Army Championship.

LCpl Walker also originally started as a brakeman and is a natural athlete in this sport. In September 2007 she started to drive and has had a very successful year on the European Cup circuit, placing 5th in the World Junior Championship. At the young age of 20, she is definitely a future prospect for the Great Britain team. She placed 2nd in the British Championship and 1st in the Army Championship. **LCpl Jarman** started braking this year for **LCpl Walker**. She has also had a fantastic novice season. She jumped straight back into the sport after a nasty crash, showing courage and determination. She finished the season off by pushing a personal best time.

SPORTS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

On 26 February 2008, at the RAF Club in London, **Sgt Sophie Morris** was awarded Combined Services Sports Woman of the Year Award by **HRH The Duchess of Cornwall**.

Sgt Sophie Morris with the Combined Service Sports Woman of the Year Award

Sgt Sophie Morris joined the Corps in 1993 when she aspired to do well at everything that was put forward to her. She has represented the Service for over 12 years on the track, road and cross country and has finally achieved her potential at international level. She has worked and trained hard both mentally and physically, managing to balance a military career with being a mother of 2 young children.

Her citation for the award included the following achievements:-

CROSS COUNTRY

1. Represented England in 6 nations match held in Spain during February, including Kenya, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Ethiopia. Placed 12th overall and 2nd English female.
2. Represented the South of England in Brussels Euro Cross event.
3. Placed 12th in the UK World Cross Country Trials in Liverpool in November 06.
4. Placed 12th in the Inter-Counties Championships March 07.
5. Inter Services Cross Country Champion.

ROAD

1. Represented GB in the World Road relay championships in Japan and placed 6th.
2. Represented England in the International Boulder Colorado10km and placed 18th overall.
3. Ran the fastest leg in the South of England road relays (Sonia O'Sullivan was 2nd).
4. Ran the fastest leg in the National Road relays (Hailey Yelling was 2nd).
5. Ran 4min 47sec for the road mile in Bristol in August 07 beating the previous record set by Jo Pavey.

TRACK

1. In the 3000m at Crystal Palace Grand Prix in July 07 she missed Dame Kelly Holmes' Army record by 1 sec.
2. In the UK Athletics Championships she was placed 2nd in the 5000m behind Jo Pavey.
3. She broke the old Army 5000m record by over 40 secs.
4. She was Inter-Services 1500m and 800m champion.

CORPS ORIENTEERING

The Corps Individual Orienteering Championships took place at Hankley Common Trg Area on Wednesday 9 April, followed by the Inter-Unit Team Championships at Longmoor Trg Area on Thursday 10 April. Both events were very well supported by individuals and teams from a cross section of Corps units.

The team competition saw 8 Major units, 7 Minor units, 5 Ladies teams, 4 Under-25 teams and 7 Adhoc teams vying for the silverware in their respective categories. The Men's individual competition was missing **Maj Rhid Jones**, **Capt David Macklin**, **Lt Des McGuckian** and **WO1 Mark Emmerson** leaving it to **Capt Mark Bentley** to challenge **Cpl Jamie Ranson** for the overall title, but **Jamie** managed to hold on to his Men's Open trophy.

With **Maj Mel Rayner** heavily pregnant, the Ladies' trophy was definitely going to a new home. Pre-competition odds would have seen the battle being between **Capt Sarah Clifford** of 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, **Cpl Steph Bogart** of 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt and **WO2 Paula Marshall** of JSU Corsham – all of whom have recently represented the Corps.

On the day though, it was **Capt Jo Barr** of ATR Pirbright who held off a challenge from **Cpl Julie Tucker** of 21 Sig Regt to become the Corps Ladies' Open Champion. The Major Unit

Capt Barr, the Ladies Open Champion 2008 receiving the trophy from Brig Hargreaves

team competition didn't produce any major surprises, 11 Sig Regt held on to their trophy and 2 Sig Regt held off 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt to take the runners up slot. Both the Ladies and the Minor Unit competitions were very open affairs with good victories being achieved by 21 Sig Regt Ladies and 34 Sig Regt Permanent Staff. The full results are as follows:

INDIVIDUAL PRIZE WINNERS

Men's Open Champion	**Cpl Ranson** – 11 Sig Regt
Ladies Open Champion	**Capt Barr** – ATR Pirbright
M21 Winner	**SSgt Heaps** – 10 Sig Regt
W21 Winner	**Cpl Tucker** – 21 Sig Regt
M21 Runner Up	**Capt Fogarty** – 2 Sig Regt
W21 Runner Up	**Capt Clifford** – 1 (UK) ADSR
M35 Winner	**Maj Ing** – 11 Sig Regt
W35 No runners	
M35 Runner Up	**Sgt Ebanks** – 11 Sig Regt
W40+ Winner	**WO2 Marshall** – JSU Corsham
M40 Winner	**Capt Bentley** – 21 Sig Regt
W40+ Runner Up	**Lt Col Streete** – 31 Sig Regt (V)
M40 Runner Up	**Capt Griffiths** – 34 Sig Regt
WU25 Winner	**LCpl Gormley** – 14 Sig Regt (EW)
M45+ Winner	**SSgt Holcombe** – HQ 4 Div
WU25 Runner Up	**Sig Tanner** – 14 Sig Regt (EW)
M45+ Runner Up	**Lt Col Heritage** – PJHQ
MU25 Winner	**Sig Vijay** – 11 Sig Regt
MU25 Runner Up	**Sig Keshav** – 11 Sig Regt

TEAM PRIZE WINNERS

Major Unit Winners	11 Sig Regt
Ladies Team Winners	21 Sig Regt (AS)
Major Unit Runners Up	2 Sig Regt
Ladies Team Runners Up	31 Sig Regt (V)
Minor Unit Winners	34 Sig Regt (V)
U25 Team Winners	11 Sig Regt B
Minor Unit Runners Up	Royal Signals RMAS
U25 Team Runners Up	1 (UK) ADSR

CORPS ORIENTEERING TRAINING CAMP 2008

The Corps Orienteering Training Camp 2008 will take place 2 – 9 August 2008 in conjunction with the Welsh 6 Day International Event in South Wales. The Corps Squad will be accommodated at Sennybridge Trg Camp and will participate in the 6 events, which make up the competition.

The competition is expected to attract runners from all over Europe and further afield. Corps participants need to be competent Mil League B Course runners to be able to compete and benefit from the event.

squad of up to 30 participants will represent the Corps. Costs will be minimal as orienteering is classified as mil trg. Unit PRIs will be asked to make a contribution to the entry costs for individual participants. Details will be published on the British Army Orienteering Club website www.baoc.org.uk. In the meantime, interested parties are requested to e-mail the Corps Orienteering Secretary, **Maj Mel Rayner** with the following details, having first sought line management permission to attend the trg camp:

Number, Rank, Name, Unit, Date of Birth, Contact Tel Number, Contact E-mail, level of orienteering experience. Details should be sent to melrayner@fsmail.net, any queries should be sent to the same address.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood

Mr Peter Cuckow
Tel: 01258 482090

Maj(Retd) Ian Greig
Tel: 01258 482082

Association Office
RHQ Royal Signals
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8RH
www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals

Welfare Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2089
Tel (civ) 01258 48 2089
Email: welfare@royalsignals.mod.uk

Membership Secretary
Tel (mil) (9)4371 2090
Tel (civ) 01258 482090
Email: rsa@royalsignals.mod.uk

General Secretary and Treasurer: Lt Col (Retd) CP Conlon
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

Branch affairs. **Fraser Gordon** is the new Secretary of our Southport Branch and can be contacted on; 01704-894129. Our thanks go to former Secretary **Peter Dooley** for his contribution and hard work while in office. **Steve Goodyear** has taken over as Secretary Hull Branch and can be contacted on 01287-623620. Thank you to **Malcolm Leech** for holding the reigns.

New Life Members. We welcome the following recently enrolled Life Members;

Rank/name	Service	Branch/unit
Sig Richard Collins	1985-91	
LCpl Darren Hobbs	1988-03	
WO2 Stewart Hartshorne	1979-03	
LCpl Jeremy Huntingdon	1993-98	
Sgt Kenneth Brocklehurst	1945-47	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Sig George Wright	1970-72	
Sgt Richard Phillips	1984-07	
Cpl John Dunn	1962-68	
Cpl Malcolm Lay	1976-85	
Sig Ernest Shields	1944-47	Malta/Libya Comd Assn
LCpl Jim McLaughlin	1976-85	
Sig Kelly Bird	1999-05	
Cpl John Buckley	1952-54	
Sgt David Rayworth	1984-95	56 Div Sigs OCA
Sig Bart Pollard	1993-94	
Sgt Adrian Bennett	1998-date	UNFICYP
Cpl Brett Cowley	1981-94	
Cpl Roger Barnes	1963-69	
LCpl Graham Casey	1976-93	

SSgt Tom Dooley	1968-91	
WO2 Jamie Harper	1985-07	
Cpl Andrew Middle	1995-08	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Ben Pember	1998-07	
Sig James Skelton	1951-53	
Sig Darcy/Taff Morgan	1956-58	
WO2 Chris Rogan	1972-96	
Sig Russell Armstrong	1991-98	
Sgt Kevan Collins	1977-08	
LCpl Mark Le Boutillier	1986-97	
LCpl Neil Llewellyn	1985-94	
Sgt Ken Smith	1942-43	Shropshire Branch
Sgt Patricia Sanders	1972-80	Chester Branch
Sgt Ron Dark	1959-76	Middlesbrough Branch
Sig Andrew McLagan	1990-97	
SSgt Jeff Batkin	1961-83	
Sig Nik Gardiner	1985-90	
Cpl Robert Cherrie	1955-58	
Cpl David Stevenson	1999-08	
Sgt Dave Easter	1972-87	
Sig Fred Archer	1943-47	
Sig Chris Attwood	1975-81	
Sgt Wilf Warnes	1989-date	
Cpl Adrian Simmons	1984-07	Sheffield Branch
Cpl Ken Kay	1962-73	
Capt Jerry O'Connor	1966-82	Loughborough Branch
Cpl Alby Simpson	1961-70	
Cpl Jeff Smithurst	1961-71	
LCpl John Archibald	1981-00	
Sig Richie Mead	2003-08	
Sgt Andy Chubb	1977-01	
Cpl Donovan Bascombe	1976-89	
SSgt Kevin East	1965-96	
LCpl Phil Lane	1982-92	
Cpl Laurie Askin	1984-01	
Sig Greg Berry	1981-86	
WO2 Wayne Robson	1989-date	3 Div Sig Regt
Sig Colin Meynell	1949-51	Derby Branch
Sgt Laurie Hindle	1942-46	
Sgt Reggie Cullumbine	1999-date	East London Branch
Sig Ken Finnerty	1959-69	
LCpl Gerard Drummond	1991-date	
Sgt Dogsy Barker	1988-date	
Sig Alexander Shaw	1946-48	Manchester Branch
Sig Walter Turner	1953-55	Manchester Branch
LCpl Andy McCarthy	1976-83	
WO2 Terry Burbidge	1977-99	
Sig Mike Smith	1974-78	

DONATIONS

Ms Gaynor Avery	£200.00
Mr Simon Fletcher	£25.00
John Fryett	£10.00
Gary Kinsey in memory of **Mr John Leslie Kinsey**	£30.00
Cyril Cooke in memory of **Frank Stockdale BEM**	£20.00
Mr A R Homes	£25.00
Mr K Brocklehurst	£100.00
Frank Tyrrell	£5.50
Mrs J M Sheridan	£1.50
In memory of **Frank Stockdale BEM**, cheques totalling	£230.00
Lt Col (Retd) Peter McNaughton	
n memory of **Maj Bill Barnes**	£50.00
Mr E J Rawlinson	£4.00
Cheques totalling in memory of **Brian Ireland**	£531.00
R Waldron	£20.00
Mr Peter Chadwick	£25.00
J Tilt in memory of **Brian Ireland**	£10.00
Geoff Wheater	£25.00
Harvey Blizard	£50.00
Ken Rawlings	£5.00
JEC Stevens in memory of **Maj Norman Lane**	£20.00
Bob Peake in memory of **Frank Stockdale**	£25.00
Marie Collingwood Gittings	
in memory of her husband **Dennis**	£250.00
Dewi Treharne	
in memory of **Bill Barnes** and **Pat Lafferty**	£50.00
Certa Cito Lodge	£10.00
Raffle at RSA AGM March 2008	£211.00
Philip Biggs	
in memory of his father **Sgt Geoffrey Biggs**	£70.00
Gilbert V Thomas	£10.00
Hugh Burns	£20.00
T Jones in memory of **Sgt Geoffrey Biggs**	£60.00
A Findlater in memory of **Colin MacMillan**	£50.00
Collection and cheques totalling	
in memory of **Colin MacMillan**	£346.15
Cheques totalling in memory of **Maj Taff Dunbar**	£380.00
Members of Aldershot Branch	£202.00
Bedford Branch RSA	£50.00
Brig J F Blake in memory of **Col Colin Gilbert**	£20.00
D Hill	£10.00
Brig I M Rose in memory of **Col Colin Gilbert**	£50.00
Cheques totalling in memory of **George F Hughes**	£280.00

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Our very pleasant evening at the theatre with dinner at Sonning Mill was followed in March by two notable events. **Maj Jo Usher** gave a most interesting talk acquainting us with the plans for the redevelopment of Aldershot Garrison, the traditional 'Home of the British Army'. This was held in the WOs & Sgts Mess of 251 and 261 Sig Sqns, by kind permission of the PMC and was followed by a buffet supper furnished by our hosts. A little later in the month we had the pleasure of attending our third 'farewell' luncheon at St Omer Barracks. This has been the home of the Army School of Cookery since the barracks was built nearly 60 years ago to house the newly formed Army Catering Corps. We welcomed as our guests **Maj Ian Hargreaves** of 261 Sig Sqn and some of his Sqn members. Having not long before enjoyed what we had then thought to be our last luncheon at the School, this occasion was a bonus. We thank our hosts for the good victualling and the high standard of pleasing and efficient service given by the students. We have not given up hope of yet another luncheon. Who knows?

Maj Ian Hargreaves and Branch Chairman, Noel Moss, relaxing after the final lunch at St Omer Barracks

BRIGHTON BRANCH

Chairman **Tony Allibone**
Secretary **Phil West**

This report covers Branch activities since September last year. We had an evening meeting early in October at our TAC when a quiz was run which engendered the usual offside appeals. All were dismissed by the quizmaster but the splendid refreshments provided later restored harmony all round.

The Branch Standard was paraded on Remembrance Sunday in Brighton and Branch members formed part of the large contingent parading that day. Later a Branch member joined family and friends to lay a private wreath in memory of **2Lt Bracho-Cooke**, an ex-Tp member, who was killed in Iraq earlier in the year. The annual Branch Dinner was held in November as usual at the Courtlands Hotel, Hove. The evening was a great success and we received appreciative comments from some young people who actually enjoyed the formality of the event. The Branch had responded to the Association appeal and our Chairman **Tony Allibone** was able to hand over a cheque to our guest, **Brig Nigel Wood**, which exceeded our target for the Arboretum "Jimmy". This successful evening reflected the hard work and planning of the committee. In December we had our Christmas Lunch which was well attended and it was good to see some members who cannot attend many of the other events. The Branch has 2 of these informal lunches each year. The year closed with a social evening, which was the start of Christmas festivities and very well attended, we even had 2 members from France present. The creation of Christmas grottoes was explained by an expert and the evening closed with accompanied carols and excellent seasonal refreshments.

We started 2008 with a coffee morning in January and a fish and chip supper in February both of which were enjoyed by those who braved the winter weather. We conclude by reporting on a very well attended AGM, as always, supported by our President, **Brig Colin Brown** and his wife **Heather**. Reports on the past year were delivered by the Chairman, **Tony Allibone** and our Treasurer **Joy Lovelock** was able to assure us of the stable Branch finances. A new committee was elected and after the meeting everyone enjoyed an excellent lunch together. It may be that this recent innovation accounts for the very good attendance. Membership continues to be fairly stable and the new committee is set to continue the excellent administration of our Branch and hope to continue to attract any ex-signallers who might enjoy our varied programme of activities.

COTSWOLD BRANCH

Chairman **Mr R Woolley**
Hon Sec **Mrs J Woolley**

- by Mr S James

The Branch AGM took place on Tuesday 26 February 2008 at the Victory Club, Cheltenham. This was combined with a meeting to discuss the Corps Memorial Dedication on 20 May. There were 10 apologies and 14 members attended, one travelling from Bodenham, Herefordshire – a considerable distance away.

The Chairman, Hon Sec and Treasurer all gave their reports and the existing committee was re-elected together with **Mr Stuart James** who will be our Editor. The Treasurer proposed that Branch subscriptions be increased in 2009 to meet rising costs. After a lively debate, 3 proposals were put to members present and all had equal votes. The Chairman used his casting vote. There were two who abstained

The final item was the Corps Memorial Dedication on 20 May at the National Memorial Arboretum. Our Treasurer, **Mike Walker** recently visited the site at Alrewas and was able to purchase a site plan. This, together with photographs both from him and from RHQ via e mail, enabled him to explain what to expect e.g. the distance from the Visitor Centre etc.

The question of transport was raised and it was decided that the Secretary will send members an Application Form which must be returned before 19 March with a deposit. A suitable coach can then be ordered. This has now been done.

The meeting closed with a raffle and light bites supplied by the Secretary and served by some of the lady members.

EAST KENT BRANCH

Chairman: **Brian Calladine**
Hon.Sec: **John Ballantyne**

The East Kent Branch AGM in January was again held at a favourite venue of ours, The Marine Hotel at Tankerton. Following a very interesting talk and discussion by **Lt Gen Sir Derek Boorman**, he and **Lady Boorman** joined the party for lunch. Sadly we said goodbye to **Roy** and **Pat Andrews**, who have decided to move back to their roots in Yorkshire. **Roy** spent much of his time in the branch on the committee in one capacity or another and his contributions will be sorely missed. He had already moved away before he and **Pat** could enjoy the dining out that the other outgoing committee members, **Marion De Rose** and **Alan Austin** enjoyed in February. Our best wishes for a "happy retirement" go to them both in their new home in Yorkshire.

The cold months of the early year see the branch taking shelter in the variety of hotels on the area, where in February, another very interesting talk by local historian **Felicity Stafford** brought back memories of such items as Sunlight soap and the origins of others like Marmite, Oxo cubes and Hovis bread. A delicious lunch followed at the The Grangemoor Hotel. In March the branch made the short trip to the O2 Dome, where the Tutankhamen exhibition is being staged and found the interesting day made more fascinating by the in depth narrative delivered via personal headsets by the actor **Omar Sharif**. This year's annual away weekend in April was taken in Solihull, where those attending relaxed in 4 star luxury at The St. John's Hotel, arriving on Friday 11th via the pretty route through the Cotswolds and preparing for the excursions the following day to Stratford upon Avon. The party left on Sunday morning and headed a short way North to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. Everyone agrees that the site is well worth a visit if you are in the area, and the Royal Signals plot with the newly commissioned and installed "Jimmy" is probably the most impressive on the site. Several of the branch will be attending the dedication in May by our Colonel in Chief.

Donald Crisp has not been too well of late, but is well on the way to recovery, and his wife **Marie** is hoping for a new hip soon so that they can join in the branch activities again. **Peter Foakes** remains in good sprits following a series of operations which rendered him absent from parade for several months and the branch is happy to report to any of their old chums that they remain optimistic and look forward to getting back into the mainstream.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

Chairman **Maj (Rtd) Paul Burton**
Secretary **Alan Turner**

At our February Meeting, our guest speaker was **Maj John Howard-Walmsley** who gave us a very interesting presentation on the forthcoming Ex MIDNIGHT SUN which is the Royal Signals TA Expedition to Greenland that he is leading later this year as part of the TA 100 Celebrations.

We had our Annual Dinner Dance on 1 March, which was attended by over 100 of our members, guests, family and friends. Following the meal, our Chairman **Paul Burton,** made an introductory speech before our Guest of Honour, **Brig Jim Richardson** gave us a brief outline on recent events involving the Corps. This was followed by the new CO of 36 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Mike Lansdown** giving us a review of what was happening in the Regt, which included the bad news for us, that the move of the

Regt from Ilford to Cambridge, which had been previously cancelled, was now back on again and due to take place later this year.

Following the speeches and the presentation of the Best Troop Trophy to TM Troop, the committee members sprung into action and swiftly rearranged the tables to clear a space for a dance floor. Singer and DJ, **Denny Austin** then kept us all dancing until the midnight hour approached. We then had our closing ceremony which consists of the Last Post, National Anthem and march off to "Begone Dull Care" with our Vice Chairman, **Barry Greenwood** acting as Standard Bearer. Looking forward, this being the TA 100 Centenary year, there are an assortment of events that we have been invited to join in, including a service in St Paul's Cathedral, Royal Garden Parties and the Pageant taking place in Horse Guards Parade. Also, apart from the Reunion in Blandford, we are also looking forward to a Veterans' day outing to Chatham Dockyards and some of us will be heading up to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire for the Corps Dedication service in May.

Details of our branch and forthcoming events are posted on our web site at
http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa/eastlondon/index.htm

We always welcome more members and encourage any potential members living in East London, South and East Essex area to join us. We are aiming to be inclusive and would welcome, as Associate Members, serving or ex-service men and women from other Arms, Regiments and Corps. Our meetings are held in the Sgts Mess of 36(E) Sig Regt (V), Gordon Road, Ilford at 7.30pm (for 8pm) on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

HULL BRANCH

Chairman **Clive Blackburn**
Secretary **Steve Goodyear**

The Branch annual dinner was held in October and yet again proved to be an excellent night. Sixty seven members and guests enjoyed superb cuisine prepared and cooked by our resident chef, **Stu Key.** The evening was rounded off by our entertainments member **Paul Meredith** bringing the dog racing track to us on DVD. This was most entertaining and turned out more rewarding for some than others, namely our president **Lt Col David Sixsmith TD**, (perhaps he had some tips).

David has now finished his time as CO 34 (N) Sig Regt (V) and has undertaken a tour in EUFOR, Sarajevo. We wish him well in his new post, for the future and a swift and safe return from operations.

Whitby played host to the Herforder Reunion in February which was open to all members of The Association. A group from Hull branch attended and memories are a little fuzzy but a fabulous time was had by all – we think!

Another regular reunion we are looking forward to is the annual reunion in Blandford, which promises to be another splendid event. We are also hosting a games night against the local Royal Engineers Association branch in May which we will win – by hook or by crook.

MIDDLESBROUGH BRANCH

Chairman **Audrey Grainge**
Secretary **Richard Grainge**

The Branch continues to enjoy a good attendance at the monthly meetings held on the last Thursday evening of the month and we have even managed to recruit a few new members. Our Christmas party, held in the Sgts Mess Brambles Farm in December, was a great success with a bring a plate of buffet supper and with lots of games and quizzes.

Hughie Houston

Sadly in February we lost a very loyal member of our group in **Hughie Houston**. He was a true gentleman, always smiling and always very willing to do any task, asked of him. The most memorable was when he turned up every month with an armful of Jaffa cakes for the raffle. He will be greatly missed by everyone.

Not many activities are planned for the coming year but we are hoping to hold a Northern Area Sunday lunch on 15 June and we are also going to visit RAF Fylingdales in May.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

It is with much regret that we report the death of the father of our Chairman **Jim Reilly**. In addition we also regret the sudden death of a brother of **Debbie Wolfe**, our Hon Treasurer. We offer our sincere condolences to each of them. On 18 March, at a reception in Hillsborough Castle to celebrate TA100, the Branch Information Member **Maj (Retd) Denis Gilpin TD** and wife **Anne** had the great honour to be presented to **Her Majesty the Queen** and **Prince Philip** when they met several hundred serving and ex-members off the TA on the first day of their visit to the Province.

On March 19, the speaker at the NI Branch was **Maj Chris Davies**, formerly Royal Irish Regiment but who is now with 40 (U) Sig Regt where he is PSAO with 85 Sqn at Lisburn. **"Mush"** as **Chris** is affectionately known, gave us a great introduction to the history of 38 Irish Bde (1941 – 47). On his next visit he plans to continue the story of 38 Irish Bde which replaced HQ NI on 3 Aug 2007 at the end of Op BANNER.

On 2 April, branch members were invited to join the Parachute Regiment Association at their meeting in Clonaver where we were given a new PowerPoint presentation by ex-Para **Albert Owens MBE**, Memorial Custodian at Palace Barracks, Holywood. **Albert** gave a detailed account of almost every person named in his presentation, showing tremendous dedication to this task. This garden commemorates those service members who lost their lives in NI as well as in the Falklands conflict.
www.palacebarracksmemorialgarden.org

In May, we look forward to seeing Devon man **ex-Sgt Jack Mount** once again, this time as speaker at our monthly meeting. **Jack** escaped from France just after Dunkirk, arriving in Belfast on the 'City of Derby' in June 1940. After persuading the Harbour Commissioners that they were not Fifth Columnists, they were allowed to bring ashore their radio vans and proceeded to become signallers with NI District Signals (NIDS) under **Maj George Bayliss**. In 1948 **Jack** worked under **Maj CFC Lindsay** in 35 (U) AA Indep Sig Sqn until he became Signal Instructor with the 5th Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers (TA) in May 1950. In 1961, the latter became **Hon Col CFC Lindsay** of 66 (U) Sig Regt (TA), the predecessor of 40 (U) Sig Regt.

NI Branch has members on either side of the "pond" whose loyalty to the branch continues despite being unable to attend

meetings regularly at Clonaver. The Irish Sea is an expensive strip of water to cross but many members, living on either side attend some functions either here and/or on the "mainland"

Our local members always look forward to meeting up with ex-40 (U) Sig Regt people like **George Cook** ex-RSM who travels from Wales each year to the Blandford Reunion. Also **Eric Webster**, ex-QM and wife **Denni** meet up with **ex-RSM John Loveday** and wife **Heather** from Co Antrim, to spend a week in their caravans in the Blandford area. **Bill Ogden** ex-RSM and wife **Pam** will be on holiday so are not able to attend the TA100 celebrations in Belfast however **Bill** plans to attend the unveiling of the Corps Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in May, the Veterans Weekend at Blackpool and Remembrance Day at the Whitehall Cenotaph. **Bill** says; "It is 'the people' who make the visit worthwhile. Old friends from 40 Sig Regt and others we've met through the RSA and other Associations have always made our visits memorable and we look forward to seeing them at Clonaver again."

In addition to the above, Branch Chairman **Jim Reilly,** Branch Asst Secretary **Carole Cameron**, **Chris Stitt** and **Jim Hagen** plan to attend the Blandford Reunion this year again. As always, we issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, regular or TA and ex-members of ATS/WRAC who served with Royal Signals to join us at Clonaver TAC, Belfast on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

READING BRANCH

Chairman **Mrs Pauline Tennant**
Secretary **Lt Col (Retd) Hugh Nealon**

After a slow start to the year the Branch programme is gathering momentum. We have even had a visit to 'The Ivy', not the well-known eaterie in London, but a delightful Indian Restaurant of the same name in Sonning-on-Thames. Our outing was organised by Branch Secretary **Hugh Nealon**, and well supported by Branch members. Even the non-curry eaters agreed that we should pay a return visit. It made a very nice change from our usual local haunt, where we gathered earlier in the year, for some less exotic fare, at one of our informal lunches. We have also eaten well, on a couple of occasions this year at Caversham Heath Golf Club, particularly after the Branch AGM, on 8 March.

An excellent lunch rounded off a businesslike meeting, at which the Committee was re-elected for 2008 and a busy programme agreed. Among those at the meeting, was long standing Branch member, **Win Miles**. Whilst we knew **Win** had not been enjoying the best of health recently – she had only given up playing tennis six months before, we were all very sad to learn that she had died in her sleep 5 days later. **Win** had seen service during WW2, where she served with the ATS as an intercept operator, including time at Bletchley Park. She came to Reading when she married in 1949, and although widowed early, managed to bring up her daughter, work full time and serve with the Auxiliary Fire Service. When the AFS was stood down she transferred her affections to the TA and joined 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn, then part of 71 Sig Regt. Badged WRAC in those days, she became a Comcen Operator, achieving the rank of Cpl, until someone realised that she was 'over age' and she was discharged. She had however been persuaded by the SSM, **Alan Foot**, to join the newly formed Reading Branch of the RSA, and had remained a supportive member until her death. Her funeral was attended by a large party from the Branch, including our President, **Brig Tony Verey**, and the Branch Standard was carried by Standard Bearer, **John Mumford**, both of whom served with **Win** in 94 Sqn.

On a happier note we have to report that as this edition of *The Wire* is published, our Chairman, **Pauline Tennant** will be celebrating her 90th birthday. A lady of great charm and wit, but made of stern stuff, we wish her a very Special Happy Birthday. The Branch is organising a couple of celebratory events, at which

The Chairman, Mrs Pauline Tennant, who celebrates her 90th birthday in June

we intend to persuade her to continue as Branch Chairman for the foreseeable future. In the meantime she will be leading us on a number of outings, including a lunch at Southampton Branch, the Annual Quiz at Aldershot Branch, and the Dedication of the Corps Memorial at Alrewas.

Our Secretary will have a busy time organising all these events, but is, nevertheless, always keen to welcome new members to the Branch.

Details of how to join can be found on the Reading Branch web site, or contact our Membership Secretary, **George Verdon**, on 01491 835819.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

Chairman **Mr MG Elliott**
Secretary **Mr R Simmons**

The membership of Sheffield Branch remains stable at around 60 members and we usually have about 30 attending our monthly meetings. All our social events are well attended. Together with our friends from Rotherham Branch, we continue to provide stewards for the Bakewell Show in Derbyshire in August. This a very hectic 2-day event for all concerned.

If any visitors from other branches are in the area, you can be assured of a warm welcome at our headquarters down by the riverside.

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman **Mick Teague**
Branch Secretary **Tony Hull**

Our Reunion this year will be held at the Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry over the weekend of 10th/11th October. As this will be our 10th Anniversary we do hope as many of our members as possible will attend. The Staverton Park is a De Vere Hotel with excellent leisure facilities, including an 18-hole golf course.

On 18th February 2008, **Tony** and **Beryl Hull** left the UK bound for Hong Kong for a stopover and then on to Australia. The first week was spent at a Timeshare exchange, Cedar Lake, parts of which had been flooded the week before we arrived but our accommodation was fine and very comfortable. On the Tuesday **Daphne** and **Arthur Cotillard** (who used to be BEBA's Treasurer) drove down to see us (a couple of hours' journey), arriving at 7.30 am. It was lovely to see them both again looking so well after their emigration 4 years ago. We went into the nearest town, Nerang, for breakfast and then the heavens opened and we couldn't even get back to the car as the rain was so heavy. We had lunch in the local RSL (Returned Servicemen's League). For those of you who haven't seen one of these Clubs, they are really

something to behold. They are always large with a separate bar and restaurant and sometimes a café as well and then there is a room full of poker machines, from which the Clubs derive a lot of their money. They really put our British Legions to shame. We explored the surrounding countryside during the week and whilst at Natural Bridge in the rainforest, **Tony** suddenly saw a large snake only just in from the path. It was 9 feet long and a guide who came along with a party of tourists told us it was a carpet python. The next week we moved on to another Timeshare in Surfers Paradise. This one was in a block of flats but still had an outside swimming pool and a spa. We were in the centre of Surfers Paradise within easy walking distance of the beach, which has very soft sand that goes on for miles.

Doreen Rennie, Beryl Hull and Ken Rennie

From Surfers we drove down to New South Wales to stay with **Doreen** and **Ken Rennie**, also BEBA members and who have travelled back to the UK for 2 reunions. They have a lovely house in Bonny Hills close to some beautiful beaches and they made us very welcome, taking us out in one of their cars every day. On the way to the Billabong Nature Reserve, we were lucky enough to see a wallaby on the side of the road which hopped across in front of us. There were also a lot of kangaroos sleeping on the local golf course during the day. We left **Doreen** and **Ken's** to drive up to Caloundra, allowing ourselves a couple of days for the journey as the roads in New South Wales had loads of roadworks. The speed limit in Australia is usually 100 kms an hour, which is only 62 mph, so it takes quite a while to do the long distances. The countryside was very green as there had been quite a lot of rain after a drought of 7 years. The scenery is really beautiful and not what you expect from Australia.

We arrived at **Arthur** and **Daphne Cotillard's** at Caloundra later that afternoon, where they have a large house with its own swimming pool. It was good to catch up with old friends and **Tony** and **Arthur** put the world to rights! **Arthur** drove us everywhere and we visited Eumundi on the Sunday where there is a large market every week, going on to Montville, a very pretty little town with lots of interesting shops. From there we drove to Maleny with magnificent views over the Glasshouse Mountains.

Tony Hull, Daphne & Arthur Cotillard

On the way home we had a stopover in Tokyo as was out there during the Korean War. Like Hong Kong everything had changed beyond recognition. We did manage to find our way around on their trains, which are very fast, very clean and also very frequent. The Japanese that we met were all extremely polite and helpful. We arrived home on Good Friday and once again had a delay of an hour on the tarmac when we had landed. We arrived back to over 200 e-mails, 15 messages on the answer phone and 4 great piles of post, which brought us down to earth with a bump.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	Served years	Died
Bain- LCpl A Bain	1939/46	c2006
Barratt - Sgt FJ Barratt	1938/66	??/12/2006
Biggs - Sgt GE Biggs	1948/72	22/03/2008
Boxall - Sig G Boxall	1943/47	25/02/2008
Brown - Cpl DA Brown	1942/47	04/05/2005
Burrows - Capt WW Burrows	1951/59	c 2007
Cade- L Cade	1934/46	19/02/2008
Castle- WO2 FD Castle	1946/69	27/03/2008
Chance- Sgt J Chance	1941/47	03/02/2008
Dady - WO2 JAR Dady	1945/68	02/04/2008
Davis- Sgt WH Davis	1942/52	c 2005
Duncan - Cpl EG	1939/46	10/04/2007
Ellis- Lt RT Ellis OBE	1939/46	29/09/2007
Esson- Capt R Esson	1973/90	21/12/2007
Evans - Sig JE Evans	1936/46	??/03/2007
Gigg - Sig BM Gigg	1954/56	04/04/2008
Gilbert - Col C Gilbert	1948/83	05/04/2008
Guppy - Sig FJ Guppy	1962/71	23/03/2008
Haseltine- Sgt DR Haseltine	1949/56	21/03/2007
Hayles - Col BRM Hayles	1936/71	01/10/2007
Hickling - Sig JB Hickling	1942/47	12/01/2008
Hughes - WO1 GF Hughes	1948/72	26/02/2008
Joyce- Sig TC Joyce	1941/47	??/03/2008
Lafferty- Maj PWH Lafferty	1942/78	08/03/2008
MacMillian - Sgt CC MacMillian	1950/71	21/03/2008
McBirney - WO2 M McBirney	1962/85	23/03/2008
Morgan- Lt Col WC Morgan	1937/54	??/02/2008
Motimer - Capt CR Mortimer	????/??	07/04/2008
Payne - Sgt AE Payne	1942/46	08/03/2008
Rowland - Lt Col G Rowland MBE	1933/61	C 2007
Smy - Sig DR Smy	1947/49	29/03/2008
Stewart - WO1 JD Stewart	1956/78	06/04/2008
Watkin- Sgt GH Watkin	1969/71	c Mar 2008
Wilkinson- Sgt P Wilkinson	1943/47	23/02/2008
Willcock- Sgt J Willcock	1939/45	c 2005
Williams- Cpl HM Williams	1942/47	??/02/2008
Williams- Ssgt HE Williams	1952/77	03/03/2007

OBITUARIES

KNIGHT – Capt John William Henry Knight OBE died 24 December 2007.

John Knight was born on 27 July 1916 in a Staffordshire farmhouse to Henry and Charlotte Knight, a family of yeoman farmers who had farmed the same land since Tudor times. He attended the grammar school at Ashby de la Zouch where school prizes, in the form of leather bound and stamped books came

thick and fast. While certainly not an athlete, John was a model pupil destined for high things. By the time he was 18, the world wide depression had set in, and **John** trained as a solicitor with Birmingham Corporation. At one of the many social functions **John** met **Joan Tarver**, the second daughter of Isabel and Alfred Tarver. As the storm clouds of war gathered they were engaged. On a very cold January day in 1940 **John** and **Joan** were married at Repton church

Soon **John** was called up. He was posted to Catterick for officer trg with the Royal Corps of Signals. It was here that he honed his style of command, known and loved by so many of you. Sadly, he was too late for the lecture on timekeeping! Soon **John** was posted to East Suffolk at Westleton, where he was in charge of 3 shore batteries. It was on this tour of duty he first visited and liked Bury. Soon the Indian sub-continent required his presence. After a tour of duty in India, he went to the huge troop clearing station for the whole of the India at 'Doolally' (Deolali Tap).

In Burma he was stationed in Chittagong and in charge of a signals platoon composed entirely of Glaswegians. Their job was to lay wire communication lines; radios being too unreliable in the heat and humidity. Each platoon was issued with 50 miles of wire. As the British Army retreated through the jungles of Burma, the wire laid was retrieved. During this retreat along the coastal plain, **John's** platoon found themselves behind enemy lines.

They came out into a jungle clearing and found a pile of tinned peaches and rum under some palm leaves. Being the consummate pragmatist **John** realised that the alcohol and his Glasgow platoon were not going to be easily parted. So having checked for booby traps and poison, they took the rum and peaches with them.

Whenever enemy patrols were sighted they would head for the beach and with gently lapping waves of the Bay of Bengal, under arching palm trees, they opened the peaches and drank the rum! **John** remarked that during this withdrawal, the frequency of enemy sightings increased dramatically. Eventually they did get back from behind enemy lines and with 70 miles of wire! A few days later their HQ was overrun by the enemy and thanks to quick thinking by his CO, yet again our father avoided capture – this time by only a very few hours.

After a brief time as Deputy Town Clerk at Sutton Coldfield, we came to Bury. The Knight family arrival in Bury St Edmonds was to be a foundation for a life few would then have guessed, after a relatively short time as a Town Councillor, he made the decision that this was where the future lay for his family. Private practice now called in the form of a junior partnership at Woolnough, Gross son and Chamberlayne. He rose to become senior partner, a position he held until his retirement from the firm in 1984.

The family is especially proud that John went on to be Mayor of his beloved Bury St Edmonds twice, awarded the OBE for his public service and made a Freeman of the Borough among many other accolades and achievements in the Rotarians, the Cathedral Community, the Freemasons and many other bodies associated with the countryside and education.

John would have been the first to acknowledge the contribution others made to his own successes. The main one being his dear wife **Joan** who quietly (on most occasions) and dutifully stood at his side for just a few days short of 67 years of marriage. While not really an emotional or sentimental man he was very proud of his family and their achievements and he took great interest in his 5 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

To draw to a close, this is a tribute written by **Geoff Barton** head of King Edward VI School with which **John** had a great affiliation. **Geoff** said: "Right to the end of his life, he was one of the most tirelessly forward thinking of people and we will very much miss his mischievous, engaging and supportive presence at the Old Boys annual dinner."

We hope many others will remember him in that way also.

WARNETTE – George (Geordie) William Anthony died 1 March 2008.

It is with sadness that the Association of Harrogate Apprentices report the passing away of one of their stalwarts. Although he lived in Perth, Australia **Tony** followed our Association with great interest, managing with his partner **Shalima** to attend a reunion in 2003. In 2006 he presented the Association with a gavel and stand made from a special Western Australian wood called jarrah.

Tony was born in South Shields on 24 August 1938 and 15 years later he joined the Army Apprentices School in Harrogate (53B). Who could forget that very loud Geordie voice echoing through the wooden 'spiders'. **Tony** went on to serve with the Protectorate Levies Aden, HQ Land Forces Persian Gulf Bahrain and units in Germany, Munster, Osnabruck and Lippstadt.

The opportunity arose for **Tony** to immigrate to Australia and decided to join the Royal Australian Air force. He was successful and was posted to the Radio School Laverton Victoria, HQ Operational Command Penrith, NSW and 3 Training Unit RAAF Pearce WA.

On completion of his military career, **Tony** settled in Perth where he met **Shalima** sharing many happy years together. Sadly **Tony** lost **Shalima** in 2004. **Tony's** health deteriorated and he had numerous operations but always bounced back much to the amazement of his carers. **Tony** remained in good humour to the end. Sadly, **Tony** lost his battle and passed away peacefully. **Tony's** funeral was attended by ex Corps members **Bob Saw** and **Bob Fewster**.

Quote from **Bob Shaw**:
There was enough ex-service to have 4 each side as pole bearers and a standard bearer. About 20 people attended and it was a great send off for **Tony**, Last Post and Reveille were sounded and with tea and coffee afterwards, it was one of the best funeral I have attended. As we get to this age we seem to attend more each year.

We are indebted to **Graham** and **Kara Jeffress** for organising **Tony's** funeral. Also thanks to **Cliffe Webb** who happened to be in Perth on holiday enabling the contacts possible. **Tony** was a kind, helpful gentleman of good humour and will be sadly missed by his friends. We extend sincere condolences to his sisters **Veronica**, **Ann** and brother-in-law **Richard**.

CADE – Lt Charles Murdo Leslie (Les) Cade died on 19 February 2008.

Les Cade was born 10 October 1916 in the Black Isle, Rossshire. He lived with his grandparents who spoke Gaelic and going to school meant a walk or cycle of 9 miles each way every day.

He joined the Royal Corps of Signals in 1935 and his Army career spanned postings in Northern Ireland, India, Germany, Italy, Egypt and Palestine. He remembered Officer Training in Catterick as bleak, tough and very cold. His memories included listening for Japanese submarines from Goa in India and setting up radio listening posts with the use of 'mule trains' on the Afghanistan border. He was a keen and talented football player and in Kashmir, it became his responsibility to organise inter-unit football matches. He was fortunate to have both **Dennis** and **Leslie**

Compton in his team! These brothers went on to play football for England and **Dennis** also played cricket for his country! They struck up a friendship which resulted in **Les** being invited to trial for Arsenal Football Club after the war. In those days, a career in football was poorly paid and insecure, so he didn't pursue it! He retired from the Army in 1948 in the rank of Lt.

After his Army service **Les** joined the Foreign Office(GCHQ) and went on to work England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Turkey and Hong Kong before he retired in 1976. He was awarded the Imperial Service Medal for his 40 years long and loyal service to the Crown.

He was generous spirited man but his Scottish canniness made him frown upon any unnecessary expenditure – his policy was repair rather than replace. If it wasn't repairable – keep it for spares. A man who was ahead of his time on 'green' issues. Locally, many people relied on him as a 'Mr Fixit' and being unable to resist a challenge he would always do his best to help. He showed his sustained intellect and vigour by his crosswords, gardening, driving and cycling.

His wife **Hilda** passed away in 1988 leaving **Les** with 3 children and 4 grandchildren. He is also survived by his older brother **Roddie**, also ex-Royal Signals.

McBIRNEY – WO2 MATTHEW (MATT) McBIRNEY died 23 March 2008.

- by Grumpy Hamilton (Shetland) and Pete Thornton (Australia)

Matt was born in Glasgow in 1945 and raised in the Gorbals. He started his Army career in 1962 with Minden Pl, AAJLR Tonfanau. In 1963 he qualified as a Radio Telegraphist at 24 Sig Regt in Catterick. Seeking more adventure and excitement **Matt** volunteered for Airborne Forces. He survived the inevitable 'P' Coy at Maida Barracks, Aldershot and in common with many before him, said the subsequent Para Course at RAF Abingdon was a welcome relief. In 1964 he joined 216 Para Sig Sqn at Ellis Barracks, Farnborough. He hardly had time to unpack before the Sqn deployed to Cyprus for op duty with UNFICYP. 1964 was to prove a busy year with another op deployment to Borneo with Patrol Coy, 2 PARA. In 1965, he joined 2 PARA again; this time for active service in the Radfan - adventure and excitement indeed!

Those of us fortunate to know him will remember **Matt** as a complete rascal with a legendary sense of humour. Nothing and no-one was sacred. From his early antics in Aldershot impersonating 'Dr Kildare' whenever he encountered young QARANC recruits on their first foray into the NAAFI Club through to the penultimate prize-winning performance that earned him a permanent place in Corps folklore. Not many ride a horse through a Sgts Mess and come away unscathed by injury or official retribution, let alone with First Prize and the coveted Blue Rosette.

Some would say it was this sense of fun, and a few days unsanctioned leave (AWOL) in Blackpool with the late **John Angus** (the pair should have been on a 216 Sqn parachuting ex), that combined, not in his downfall as you might expect, but in his redemption. How so? Well, following the 'Blackpool incident' the powers-that-be decided **Matt** needed to broaden his horizons and he was posted to Air Sp Tp, 249 Sig Sqn (FARELF). There he was to meet **Jan Walkingshaw** of 4 Coy WRAC, a fellow Scot, his future life partner and given this was exotic Singapore in the 1960s, his undoubted saviour. Having fortuitously survived the exotic Far East, **Matt**, new wife **Jan** and first child **Lorraine**, returned to 216 Para in 1971.

There followed a N Ireland tour to Lurgan with 16 Para Bde, a Drill Course at Pirbright and numerous para/radio exs in UK, Norway, Cyprus, Turkey, Sardinia, and Germany. Throughout this time he firmly established himself as an outstanding NCO and a highly experienced radio det comd. **Matt** excelled at sport, particularly football, and represented the Sqn at Bde level and the Corps at Army level.

While in Aldershot, **Matt** and **Jan** were further blessed with a son, **Gary**. In 1976, when 16 Para Bde disbanded, Matt went as a SSgt to 7 Sig Regt in BAOR. Promoted WO2 in 1979, he joined Queen's (Belfast) UOTC as PSI. There he endeared himself to his Officer Cadets by hand-painting his ½ ton Land Rover primrose-yellow. "To disguise it from the IRA", he said! In addition, a memorable prize-winning skit, during a UOTC's Ex NORTHERN LIGHTS, saw the debut performance of 'S'arnt Major Stan Dateese'.

His artistically successful UOTC tour was followed in 1981 by a posting as SSM to the newly-formed Junior Royal Signals Regt at Ousten, where he swopped stage footlights for the Drill Square. His last move was to Cyprus in 1983 as RQMS with 9 Sig Regt at Ayios Nikolias. It was at the end of his final posting, he was awarded the aforementioned Corps rosette for "Sgts' Mess Equitation." Matt retired from the Army in 1985, having completed 24 years regular service.

On leaving the army, **Matt**, **Jan** and family moved back to Scotland, to Cumbernauld and a job with Tennant's Brewery. That's right, the perfect job, initially driving a beer tanker before moving into Aladdin's Cave itself and a plumb job in the depot! In later years he served briefly with 32 Sig Regt (V) in Glasgow. In 2007, mobility problems forced him to retire early from full-time work. Both his knees were knackered by years of parachuting and football, and he found it both difficult and painful to walk. In spite of this **Matt** found time to offer comfort and support to **Myrtle** and **Steve Marshall**, during **Steve's** final months, and later at The Marie Curie Hospice. **Myrtle** was very grateful for **Matt's** kindness at this distressing time.

By the end of 2007, NHS Scotland had scheduled **Matt** for double knee-replacement surgery. In February 2008 he had the first operation which was successful. However, a week later he was rushed back into hospital with peritonitis, septicaemia, and kidney failure. The family were told he might not live through the night! Ever the fighter, he did recover, and after 8 days Intensive Care and 5 weeks hospital care, he was allowed home. Well on the mend, he planned a summer cruise with **Jan**. Tragically, a week after leaving hospital, his heart failed. **Matt** died peacefully in his sleep on 23 March 2008.

A funeral service was held at Falkirk Crematorium on 3 April, attended by his family, and scores of friends and work-colleagues. Some old comrades from 216, 244, and 249 Sig Sqns helped fill the chapel to capacity. There were many floral tributes, sent from near and far, and numerous messages of condolence posted on the Guestbook at http://www.216parasigs.org.uk.

Matt was a devoted husband to **Jan**, with whom he shared 39 happily married years. He was a fond father to **Lorraine** and **Gary**, and in latter years a tremendously proud Grandad to **Linzie**, **Dan**, and **Georgia**. **Matt** will be fondly remembered by his countless friends and comrades, throughout the Corps and the Airborne. Deepest sympathies are extended to his loving family.

RIP, **Matt McBirney** - a wonderful brother-in-arms – sorely missed, never forgotten.

BARNES – Maj (QM) William (Bill) Barnes died 29 February 2008.

Bill Barnes was born on 17 February 1928. His old Army colleagues might be surprised to know that, having been a sea cadet, **Bill** intended to join the Royal Navy. However, on learning that he would have to sign on for 9 years, he changed his mind and joined the Royal Corps of Signals in October 1945.

He served in Italy and Palestine before being posted to Egypt where he met **Ellen**, who was serving in the WAAF. They were married in November 1949. Whilst there he was Team Sgt of the Royal Signals Motor Cycle Display Team formed from local garrison troops.

Their eldest daughter **Hazel** was born in Egypt, younger daughter **Linda** in Ripon and son **David** in Singapore. Tours in the UK, Germany and Singapore followed and he steadily progressed up the promotion ladder until he achieved his ambition of becoming RSM and was posted to 21 Sig Regt in Laarbruch. As everyone who knew him would agree, **Bill** was a born RSM and his children laugh when they describe how they had to march up and salute to get their pocket money. On completion of a successful tour in Laarbruch, Bill was commissioned and reported to 11 Sig Regt as a 2Lt. In 1969 he was posted to Cyprus, first for a short spell with the UN peace-keeping force and then (much to his delight) as OC Troodos Leave Centre.

After a tour in Glasgow with 32 (S) Sig Regt (V), he faced a major challenge as QM with 22 Sig Regt under comd of **Lt Col** (later Brig) **John Almonds**. Bill got on well with his CO and they remained in close touch until **Bill's** death. Returning to Catterick he enjoyed another rewarding tour; this time under comd of **Lt Col** (later Col) **Andrew Carter** in 11 Sig Regt. Bill was a good sportsman, playing rugby and hockey for the Corps.

On retiring in 1983, he settled in Richmond (North Yorkshire of course) and served as a Coy Comd in the Home Services Force for 2 years. He also worked at Richmond School as a laboratory technician for 10 years. **Bill** and **Ellen** enjoyed dancing at Richmond Cricket Club and playing in the domino team. **Bill's** love of gardening was well known and he spent many happy hours in his greenhouse and garden.

Bill joined the Royal Signals Association in 1950 and became a member of the Catterick and District Branch in 1985. He was Branch Chairman from 1987 until March 2000 and served as Area 1 Representative from 1994 to 1997. His work for the RSA was recognised by the award of Honour Membership in 2001. The short time between his illness being diagnosed and his passing was a shock. He faced the end bravely and with great dignity. He will be sadly missed by his wife **Ellen**, children **Hazel**, **Linda**, and **David**, and grandchildren **Rebecca**, **Emma**, **David**, **Nick** and **Suzi** as well as all who knew him.

VENTHAM – Maj Jeremy John Ventham died on 24 February 2008.

Jeremy was born on 2 May 1942 in Portsmouth at the height of the blitz. He was educated at Portsmouth Grammar School and commissioned from Sandhurst into the Royal Signals in August 1962.

After YO training at Catterick and a few months in BAOR, **Jeremy** went up to Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He graduated in 1966 but it is fair to say that the Trinity Foot Beagles and various other pursuits probably took rather more of his attention during these 3 years, than his studies! Tours in Aden, Colchester and Singapore followed. He met and married **Caroline** in 1970. He attended Staff College at Camberley in 1974 and this was followed by a hugely enjoyable tour in Ottawa as a Defence Attaché. Returning to UK, he then commanded a Sig Sqn in Northern Ireland.

Leaving the army in 1979, **Jeremy** joined Marconi and had a very successful career in the television broadcasting division of that company. Following Marconi's demise, he retrained as an Independent Financial Advisor and was continuing to work in that role up to the time he became seriously ill with cancer.

Jeremy's great loves included country pursuits and sailing. He hunted with various beagle packs throughout his life. About 10 years ago, he became involved with the work of the London Sailing Project and he sailed frequently with groups of disadvantaged and disabled youngsters, with many of whom he achieved a great rapport.

A practising, and very high church Anglican, **Jeremy's** funeral, appropriately, took the form of a requiem mass at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Portsmouth, where he had worshipped for many years. **Jeremy** leaves his much-loved daughters, **Isabelle** and **Alison**, and his grandchildren **Elsie-May**, **Reuben**, **Dylan** and **Imogen**. **Jeremy** also leaves **Pauline**, his partner and companion of the last few years of his life, with whom he was so obviously wonderfully happy.

BIGGS – Sgt Geoffrey (Biggsy) Biggs died 22 March 2008.

Sgt Geoffrey Biggs started his Army career in the Royal Irish Fusiliers before he moved to the Lovat Scouts – a special Regt deployed to provide reconnaissance and close protection troops. His role meant he fought alongside partisans in Yugoslavia and Greece and was involved in many daring raids during the WW2.

He later served with the victorious Eighth Army in North Africa before he transferred to the Royal Signals in 1942, where he saw action in Egypt, Berlin, Austria and Africa. **Brian 'Bushy' Williams**, who served alongside him in the Royal Signals and the White Helmets, described him as a brilliant leader.

For 6 years in the late sixties and early seventies, he supervised training of new members while encouraging and coaching the more experienced members.

The 60-year-old, from Redcar, East Cleveland said: 'There are so many stories to tell about Biggsy – I wouldn't know where to start. He was a wonderful man and a true leader of men. He did so much when he was in charge of training the White Helmets. He transformed good riders into brilliant riders. It was his time spent on the icy Yorkshire moors on winter training and his personal attention to all the team members that helped to make his teams successful."

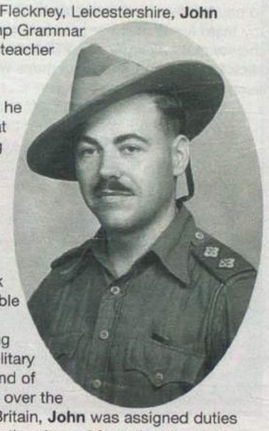
During his time with the White Helmets, which regularly performed in front of the Royal family and around the globe, **Biggsy Biggs** was famed for his death-defying wall trick, in which he rode through a brick wall unscathed.

Biggsy Biggs, whose wife **Jeannie** died 3 years ago, died aged 83 leaving a son, **Phillip**, and daughter, **Sharon**.

The respect that ex-members of the White Helmets Association had for him was borne out at his funeral when more than 12 of his former colleagues escorted the hearse on their bikes to the crematorium.

The service was a celebration of his life which included a rendition of 'Schöne Maid', a German drinking song he and his friends sang on outings in Germany and ended with a song selected by his grandson, **Tom**, 'Ernie (The Fastest Milkman in the West)'.

NOURISH – John D Nourish died April 2008.



Born in 1917 in the village of Fleckney, Leicestershire, **John** attended Kibworth Beauchamp Grammar School and then trained as a teacher at the City of Leeds Training College. He taught at several schools in Leicestershire until he was called up into the Army at the end of 1939. After training at Aldershot, **John** joined the 4th Bn of the Somerset Light Infantry, part of the Wessex Division. He was assigned to the intelligence section. The Bn was based around the country including Chilton Park in Kent. Here it was responsible for patrolling the coastal area and **John** was fond of recalling the bugle calls which ruled military life in those days and the sound of the bugles as they resounded over the countryside. At the Battle of Britain, **John** was assigned duties spotting enemy gunfire across the channel from the top of the Keep at Dover Castle.

In 1942, as an officer cadet, he left Greenock with 'O' Coy to train at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) at Dehra Dun in the foothills of the Himalayas. 'O' Company sailed on the '*Louis Pasteur*', with destroyer escort, from Greenock to Durban in South Africa. The famous 'White Lady' was singing 'Land of Hope and Glory' on the jetty when they arrived. The cadets were billeted on the stands of the Cricket Ground whilst they waited for a regular troop carrier. They sailed on the troop ship '*Dunera*' from Durban to Bombay and thence to the IMA at Dehra Dun. John was at the IMA when the first Indians were trained as King's Commissioned Officers rather than Viceroy's Commissioned Officers. All newly commissioned officers were automatically first posted to Indian Regts, where there was a shortage of officers.

Lt John Nourish's first posting was to the 8th Punjab Regt but that posting was not taken up and he went instead to Delhi for training as a cipher officer. As a cipher officer he became Royal Signals and was assigned to the HQ of the 23rd Indian Div, known as the Fighting Cock, under the comd of **Gen Robertson**, in Chittagong in the Arakhan. From there the Div moved to Imphal on the India/Burma border, where they manned the banks of the Chindwin River. This was a long defensive line maintained to protect the builders of the road being constructed to meet the troops coming up from Singapore.

John was later with the 33 Corps in Madras. Among his many memories and stories were his account of a meeting with **Gen Slim** and his descriptions of this last gathering of Empire with troops gathered from so many countries. His regard for the Gurkha regiments, in particular, knew no bounds. In 1945 he returned to England where he married **Joan T Burton**. A final tour of duty in Germany at the very end of the war marked the end of his military service.

John returned to teaching in Lutterworth in Leicestershire in 1946 where he became deputy head in 1949. In 1957 he left to take up his first headship at Cosby. **John** moved to take up the headship at Ringwood Junior from Billericay, Essex in 1964. Ringwood Junior went from strength to strength under his guidance and leadership. He took an active interest in all aspects of the school and followed with interest the progress of his pupils as they went into secondary education. At the time of his retirement the school comprised over 900 pupils. He retired in 1983 after almost twenty years as headmaster of Ringwood Junior.

His long and happy retirement was spent in the village of Burley, near Ringwood, where he had lived for the past forty years. He leaves 3 children, **David**, **Jane** and **Paul** and 6 grandchildren, **Keshena**, **Beren**, **Beth**, **Peter**, **Nathan** and **Daryll**.

REUNIONS

This year is the 15th Anniversary of the Malta Libya Egypt Club RSA. To celebrate this we are holding a get together at Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry, Northants on 29th to 31st August 2008. There is a cabaret on the Saturday with cabaret star **Rosemary Squires** and **Brian Dee** international pianist who played with **Ted Heath**.

New members welcome, if interested you are assured of a fantastic weekend. Families welcome.

Further details contact **Roy** or **Pat Andrews** on 01377 201237 or e.mail signals.roypatandrews@yahoo.co.uk

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A reunion was held for ex-members of 5 Field Force HQ & Sig Sqn (1978 – 1982) at the Turton Golf Club in Bolton on Saturday 12 April 2008. An absolutely emphatic success, this reunion was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended. Some of whom had not seen each other in over 25 years, it was a very strange experience to see so many "old" faces in one place, although the banter hadn't deserted us and within a few hours it was as though we had never been parted.

In total 26 ex-members of the Sqn attended the function which started as an idea between **John Laverick** and me, when he got in touch with me after 15 years without any contact. We had both kept in touch with 2 or 3 ex-members of the Sqn and we decided to contact them and hoped that they might know a few more. As time went on, more and more of us started to join and exchange e-mail addresses. We started off exchanging stories of times gone by and then the old pictures started to come out. I now have a very healthy album from those times whereas my personal collection had numbered a mere 5 or 6 photos but with everyone scanning their pictures into their computers and emailing each other, we all now have a very healthy album each to remind us of those happy days.

Most of us learnt to type on the old T100 teleprinters while we served in the Corps and this skill is now invaluable in the modern age of computers and has been a godsend for communications between us on the internet. The ex-lineys among us are jealous now and not calling us handbags anymore!
There is a real sense of camaraderie among us that most of us have not experienced for a long time in our lives. There is a strong desire not to let our friendship slip away for another 25 years and already there are ideas being suggested for another get together in the not too distant future. If you have served with any of the guys in the photograph and would like to get back in touch with them then you can by contacting me at:
scotspike@yahoo.co.uk . If you served with 5 Field Force HQ & Sig Sqn between 1978 and 1982 and would like to get involved then again contact me at the above email address.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

EXERCISE ROLLING THUNDER – THE FIRST NATIONAL CADET SIGNALLING CHAMPIONSHIP, HELD AT RSS BLANDFORD 23 – 24 FEBRUARY 2008

Sixteen teams from the Army Cadet Force (ACF), Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Air Training Corps (ATC), from the four corners of the UK, battled it out last weekend to be crowned the "National Cadet Signals Champions".The National Cadet Signals Tg Team headed by **Maj Mike Foster**, together with regular soldiers from with the Royal Signals, had arranged a full day of signals related activities, to test teams on both the practical and theoretical elements of Army Cadet Signalling. The activities included a march and shoot, a high pressure VP ex, a Corps knowledge test and various outdoor ex involving masts and antennas, line laying and orienteering. **Lt Dan Lehmann**, Trg Officer for the Cadet Signals Tr team, explained that he had come up with the idea of the competition because of the huge surge of interest in cadet signalling over the past few years. He said: "Cadets enjoy competitions, and Signalling requires a range of skills, in particular quick thinking, teamwork, and technical skill. Ex ROLLING THUNDER has been designed to test all these skills and most importantly to be fun as well".

The competition was visited by ACFA Gen Sec, **Brig (Retd) Mike Wharmby OBE**, and **Col (Retd) Crichton Wakelin OBE**, SO1 Cadets at HQ Land Forces. They had a chance to chat with competitors and to see all the different activities on offer within cadet signalling. They were also given a demonstration of the new Harris radio system, which is due to replace the existing Clansman system for cadets, in the next few years. They were particularly impressed by the competitive, but at the same time extremely cheerful, atmosphere which marked the day's events. Teams from the ACF, CCF and ATC went round in pairs all day, but despite the competitive nature of the stands, they were chatting and giving each other tips.

After 8 hrs of mil activities and physical exercise, the cadets were able to enjoy a fun evening at Blandford Camp's ten pin bowling alley, before some well earned rest and the prize giving on the Sunday morning. **Lt Col Peter Richards**, SO2 TA & Cadets for the Royal School of Signals, gave a rousing speech at the prize giving, stressing how important signalling skills are within the Army and also within civilian life. The results were extremely close, with only a few points separating the top 4 teams. Dorset ACF became the first ever team to win the team event and **Cadet Sgt J Terry** from Bournemouth School CCF won the best individual signaller award. Winners, runners up and the 3rd placed teams and individuals all received medals and Dorset ACF and **Cadet Sgt Terry** were awarded trophies that had been kindly donated by HQ Land Forces. Every team taking part received a certificate to commemorate their participation in this first national competition. Our especial thanks to the ever cheerful **SSgt Gareth Howell** of the TA and Cadets cell for his assistance with admin, tpt and of course with the photography. However, we still managed to get at least one photograph with him in it despite his best efforts!

Maj Foster said: "Ex ROLLING THUNDER could not have run without the huge support of the Royal Signals and in particular the Regular soldiers and PTIs from Mil Trg Sqn, Cable Systems Div, Ex Trg Tp, and the TA and Cadet cell at DCCIS, who have all assisted with the competition. Southampton UOTC provided a PSI, **WO2 Chris Marlow** and 3 Officer Cadets, whose participation was invaluable on the day itself. HQ Land Forces supported the event with publicity and financial help for the trophies and medals. Everyone has thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, and judging by the success, we will be repeating the event next year. HQ Land Forces have allocated a significant sum in the coming year's ACFA budget to cover the cost of this event in 2009, so that it will not be the individual units that have to pay trg days and travel costs for AIs and cadets. Thank you to my team for all their hard work, in particular **Lt Dan Lehmann**, the competition organiser, **PO Alex May**, **SSI John Turrell**, **SI Nick Hooper** and also to all those who attended, for making it such an enjoyable event."

Dorset ACF – The first placed team with their trophies

TOP TEAM PLACINGS

1st	Dorset ACF	100 points
2nd	Duke of York's RMS CCF	96
3rd	Bournemouth School CCF	85

TOP INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

1st	**Cadet Sgt J Terry** Bournemouth School CCF
2nd	**Cadet Cpl A Henderson** Dorset ACF
3rd	**Cadet S/Sgt S Hawkwood** Middlesex and NW London ACF

VISIT TO SOUTH GEORGIA, FALKLANDS AND ANTARCTICA – 18 DECEMBER 2007 – 12 JANUARY 2008

- by Gwynneth and Derrick Wilkinson

The monument to the members of the RFA lost at Fitzroy

In December 2007, **Derrick** and I set off from Buenos Aires on an exped to South Georgia, the Falklands and Antarctica. On board the ship were exped leaders who were experts in their field of study, such as an ornithologist, a geologist, a glaciologist, a marine biologist, a plant biologist and a historian specializing in the history of exploration of Antarctica. We also had **Canon Ian Ainsworth-Smith** who conducted worship on board the ship, as well as at the battlefield memorials of the 1982 conflict in the Falklands. So we felt we were well equipped with a team who would bring a unique insight to the sights and landmarks of Antarctica, steeped in history and teeming with wildlife. After visiting South Georgia we landed in Port Stanley with calm seas and blessed by the sunshine. Our trip round the island started off with a battlefield tour. This tour revealed some of the most important sites and memorials of the Falkland Islands conflict. The tour began at the settlement of Fitzroy and Port Pleasant where the British logistic landing ships *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram* were bombed by Argentine Skyhawks on June 8, 1982. The settlement at Fitzroy was a field hospital at the start of the Falklands campaign commanded by **Surgeon Cmd Jolie**, which had the proud testament that anyone who went into the hospital alive, left the hospital alive. This is now a community centre. We also visited the memorials for the Welsh Guards, RAMC, RE and RFA. As it was such a clear day, we were able to view the poignant mountain battlefield sites such as Sapper Hill, Mt William, Mt Tumbledown, Mt Harriet, the Two Sisters, Mt Longdon and Wireless Ridge, where after crossing the hazardous terrain of the East Falklands, British Forces fought fierce battles in conditions reminiscent of WW1. The second part of our trip in Port Stanley took us round the main points of interest. These included:

The Anglican Christ Church Cathedral which is the most southerly cathedral in the world;
The 1982 Liberation Monument;
Government House;
The 1914 Battle Memorial
The Britannia House Museum, which has a treasure trove of memorabilia and artefacts relating to the maritime, military and natural history of the Falklands.
The Memorial to those service personnel and 3 civilian women who were killed in the 1982 Falklands conflict against the Argentines.

Gwynneth and Derrick Wilkinson at the Cenotaph in Port Stanley

At this point of our visit we were able to lay a wreath on behalf of **Freda McKay** whose son **Sgt Ian McKay** of the Parachute Regt was killed during the conflict and who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. We also laid 2 crosses that had been specially made by one of our members, on the memorial on behalf of the Sheffield and Rotherham branches. **Canon Ainsworth-Smith** conducted a short remembrance service and both **Derrick** and I were so proud to have been asked to perform such an emotional tribute on behalf of so many people who had lost friends and loved ones during the Falklands Conflict of 1982. We felt it was such a befitting way to end our special trip to Port Stanley and the Falklands.

During our short time in Port Stanley we met a number of the Islanders who were so grateful that the Falklands were still a British colony. This would not have been possible if our service pers and their families had not made such a great sacrifice during

The wreath laid on behalf of Freda McKay and the special crosses laid on behalf of the Sheffield and Rotherham Branches

the Falklands Conflict of 1982. The following day we visited West Point Island, which is situated off the most north westerly point of West Falkland. The island has been in **Roddy Napier's** family since the 1860s. Before we boarded the Zodiac for our return to the ship, we made a visit to **Roddy** and **Lily Napier's** farmhouse for tea and cakes. As we were leaving West Point, *HMS Nottingham*, a Type 42 frigate, came alongside our ship and hailed us as they sped on their patrol. Our epic journey ended in Ushuaia in Argentina on Thursday 10th January and we then returned to the United Kingdom via Brazil. We have only just started to edit our 5,000 digital photographs and each one has a specific memory. This was an expensive trip, one which took us 2 years to save for but I can categorically say was well worth the effort. It had been such a privilege to be able to share the natural habitat of the wonderful wild life in all the places we visited and to see the majestic formation of the icebergs, glaciers and snow capped mountains. Even the experience of the bad storm in South Georgia and the feeling of being ill during the 3 days of stormy weather added to this wonderful adventure.

All these memories **Derrick** and I will always treasure.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor's Note: **Mr Larby** enclosed a photocopy from the '1942 Review of the Year' which unfortunately is not good enough to reproduce. One of the photographs shows two soldiers approaching a Nile boat called "ARABIA" with a sign in the foreground which says "ROYAL SIGNALS LEAVE – BOAT" and under that "ENTRANCE FOR TROOPS". The article says that: "The leave ship was the original idea of two officers who set the scheme going and even installed a sergeant as receptionist." The article has raised several questions posed in the letter below.

From: **Ron Larby** (West London Branch RSA)
178 Braemar Avenue
Neasden NW10 0DS
Tel: 0208 450 6885

Dear Editor

A friend gave me this photo copy of an article from 'The review of the year 1942'

As you can see it follows the leave of **'Nobby'** and **'Ginger'** – who else! They are in wartime Cairo and some of their time is spent on the "Royal Signals Leave Boat". This was a River Nile boat called *Arabia* converted into a houseboat.

This gives rise to a few queries – as the article does not say specifically that **Nobby** and **Ginger** were in the Corps, was the *Arabia* exclusively for the use of Royal Signals personnel or was it for any serviceman on leave? Was the Corps only responsible for administration?

Did the *Arabia* actually sail up and down the Nile; the photos illustrating the article seem to suggest it is permanently moored in what looks like a marina rather than the main stream of the River Nile?

I was also surprised to see mention of tea dances on the houseboat attended by girls in the women's services. As the situation in the Middle East was still fluid, were there many?

Finally do any of our Desert Eighth Army Veterans recall the *Arabia* and might be able to answer my questions

Regards Certa Cito...

CONNECTION BETWEEN 15 SIG REGT AND RORKE'S DRIFT?

Editor's Note: A request has come to *The Wire* for information following the discovery by an ex-member of the Corps of a wooden cross bearing a message apparently from 15 Sig Regt in a cemetery in South Africa. The request is mentioned below in an extract from his letter with a photograph showing the cross placed on the monument at Rorke's Drift.

"During our trip to South Africa in late December and early January this year, we drove to many places including the Drakensburg Mountains with a side visit to Ladysmith and Rorke's Drift. Whilst visiting the very small cemetery at Rorke's Drift, we came across a small wooden poppy-appeal type cross from 15 Sig Regt and I don't believe that it dated from Aden days. I have attached a couple of shots. I would be most interested to find why it was there."

If you have an idea, then either write or email The Editor.

From: Robin Barker [mailto:robinb@goba.co.za]
18 Canberra Avenue, Impala Park,
Boksburg 1472 South Africa
Tel:: (H) 011 918 1725, (M) 072 120 6389

Dear Sir

I hope that you will be able to assist me with this request. I am trying to find out if any units from the Royal Signals were deployed in Zimbabwe (Harare) between 1977 and 1980. If anyone could put me in touch with someone who would be able to assist me with further information, I would be grateful.

Yours...

ADVERTISEMENTS

Calling All Old Welbexians

Did you know that the **Old Welbexian Association (OWA)** has been re-launched?

Are you interested in catching up with old friends or visiting the new College?

Why not check out the new OWA Website at
http://www.dsfc.ac.uk/OWA/index.asp

Update your contact details and attend the inaugural Old Welbexian London Dinner
planned for Friday 10 October 2008?

The OWA Chairman, Secretary and Membership Secretary can be contacted directly by following the links available at the OWA Website.

Put 10 October in your diaries now, phone a friend and arrange to meet up with others from your Entry!

THE ROYAL HOMES

The Royal Homes in Queen Alexandra's Court in Wimbledon is an independent and self-financing charity and a subsidiary of SSAFA Forces Help that provides subsidised residential accommodation for 76 widows, divorcees or unmarried daughters of Officers or Warrant Officers and women who are retired Officers or Warrant Officers of the three Services. Because of the Homes' charitable nature, priority is given to applicants with modest incomes but each case is treated on its merits. Successful applicants will not normally be allowed to be a resident before the age of 60 and must be fit enough to look after themselves and their flats

The accommodation consists of self-contained flats with their own entrance, kitchen and bathroom. There are 3 types of flat; studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom and apart from a hob, oven and built-in cupboards all flats are unfurnished. Each resident makes contributions to running costs and is responsible for the cost of her electricity, telephone and council tax.

Further information can be obtained as follows:

By writing to:
The Manager, Queen Alexandra's Court, St Mary's Road,
Wimbledon, London, SW19 7DE

From the website:
www.theroyalhomeswimbledon.org
Telephone 020 8946 5182

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ARMY

MERCURY'S MARCH

15 - 20 SEP 2008
PLYMOUTH TO LONDON

A 270 MILE FUND-RAISING ROUTE MARCH BY SOLDIERS FROM BLANDFORD CAMP IN SUPPORT OF THOSE INJURED IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

HELP for HEROES

THE Wire

August 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

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HELP for HEROES

THE wire

August 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

HONOURS AND AWARDS

We congratulate the following Royal Signals personnel who received Honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours List:

Members of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE)

WO2 NJ Mitchell 16 Sig Regt
Capt PJ Carley 21 Sig Regt
Capt ZK White HQ SOinC (A)

Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal (QVRM)
Capt G Jennings 34 Sig Regt

We also congratulate the following who were recognised in the Meritorious Service Medal List:

WO1 P Storey Royal School of Signals

THE CORPS RSM – WO1 DR TAYLOR

WO1 Taylor enlisted as an apprentice Radio Telegraphist in September 1985. On completion of his training he graduated in July 1987 and was posted to 244 Sig Sqn (AS) located at RAF Brize Norton. During this time he completed an operational tour with UNTAG in Namibia and was promoted to LCpl. Then followed a posting to 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn based in Detmold, Germany. On the closure of Detmold, he moved to 4 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt and on completion of his Class One he was promoted to Cpl.

In September 1994 he was posted to 30 Sig Regt, based in Bramcote, where he completed an operational tour of Bosnia and a short, but memorable, deployment on Op DRIVER. He also attended his Education for Promotion Level One, RMQ 3 and Skill At Arms courses. In 1997 a burning ambition to become an Instructor at the Army Apprentice College was fulfilled and he was posted to Arborfield. While at the Apprentice College he was promoted to Sgt. **Sgt Taylor** then joined 35(SM) Sig Regt (V) based in Sutton Coldfield and Coventry, as HQ Sqn Permanent Staff Instructor. During This tour he completed his Unit Training Officer and Warrant Officer Courses.

In 2002, he was promoted to SSgt and was posted to the CIS Wing at the Infantry Training Centre Warminster. During the 2 years there, he was responsible for the instruction of VHF/HF theory, SCRA and crypto accounting procedures to the Infantry Regimental Signals Officer/Warrant Officer and Sergeants courses. After this tour he was posted back to 244 Sig Sqn, as the SQMS; this time based at Colerne. After gaining promotion to WO2, he assumed the appointment of SSM 220 Sig Sqn and immediately deployed on OP TELIC 1.

In 2006, **WO1 Taylor** was posted to the Universities of London Officer Training Corps as the Royal Signals Permanent Staff Instructor. He was selected for promotion and assumed the appointment of RSM 14 Sig Regt (EW). In October 2007, after successful selection on the Late Entry Commissioning Board, **WO1 Taylor** was selected for the prestigious appointment of Corps RSM. He assumed this post in May 2008.

WO1 Taylor enjoys all sports and outdoor pursuits. He has recently gained his RYA Level 2 Powerboat Instructors and Safety Boat certificates. To relax he enjoys fishing, cooking and red wine. He has been married to **Tracey** for 6 years and has a fifteen year old son, **Michael**.

The following students were awarded RSI prizes on graduation:

GRADUATION 2 MAY 2008:

Electrician Basic Regular Course	07/003	**Sig Sealey**
Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/014	**Sig Swanson**
Information Systems Basic Regular Course	07/007	**Cpl Kerry**

GRADUATION 30 MAY 2008:

Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/015	**Sig Stojanovic**
Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/016	**Sig Morgan**
Basic Phase Equipment Module Course	07/001	**Sig Colverson**
Basic Phase Equipment Module Course	07/002	**Sig Stewart**

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EDITORIAL

One of *The Wire's* aims is to provide a home for an informal history of the activities in the Corps. This edition is an excellent example which provides a contemporary record of a very busy Corps engaged in ceremonial events, operational tasks, exercises, training and sport. I commend the articles from 16 Sig Regt and 216 Sig Sqn which contain some excellent anecdotal reports from individuals committed in Afghanistan which add much to our knowledge of that Theatre.

At the same time, I have tried unsuccessfully to calculate the total amount raised by the numerous and varied fund raising events reported this month. There is no doubt that it is a significant sum and demonstrates the generosity and hard work of virtually every unit in the Corps. The report by **Sgt Welch** on Page 91 on the Charity Motorbike Ride is a perfect example of the generosity of units, individuals and ex-members of the Corps to raise money for two important charities.

STOP PRESS NEWS ON ARMY INTER-UNIT ATHLETICS

In the Army Inter-Unit Athletics championships held at Aldershot, 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt came 2nd and 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt came 3rd. The overall winners this year were 3 Log Sp Regt RLC.

A number of Royal Signals athletes are now in the Army team for the Combined Services Athletics Championships to be held 15 – 17 July.

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FRONT COVER

In Pensioner J Mitchell BEM sharing a joke with Sig Wright before the 36 Signal Regiment Freedom of the City Parade.

BACK COVER

The unveiling of the Corps Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum on 20 May 2008

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

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INFORMATION

THE ROYAL SIGNALS BENEVOLENT FUND ACCOUNT FOR 2007

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CORPS FUNDS?

READ THIS – IT IS YOUR MONEY

The purpose of Corps Funds, otherwise known as the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund, is to:

- Relieve hardship among serving and retired members of the Corps and their dependants.
- Support the activities of other charitable organisations involved with the welfare of Signallers and their dependants.
- Enhance the efficiency and morale of the serving Corps by funding activities such as sport, adventurous training, social events etc.

The main source of Corps funds income is the Payroll Giving Scheme, under which all regular serving members of the Corps are asked to contribute a percentage of their daily rate of pay as follows, Corporals and below 110%, Sergeants and above 140% and Officers 190%.

TA units make a financial contribution to Corps funds in lieu of the Payroll Giving Scheme on behalf of their volunteers.

Finally, retired officers are asked to pay an annual subscription of £25 and from time to time we receive donations or legacies from ex-members of the Corps.

Corps funds are regulated by a Trust Deed, registered with the Charity Commissioners, which sets out the main purposes for which these monies may be used. For ease of administration and to ensure equity, the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund is split into four separate funds:

The Corps Fund - which primarily supports soldiers' activities.

The Officers' Fund - which funds officers' activities and heritage.

The Association Fund - the main role of which is to support welfare and benevolence.

The Sergeants' Fund - the purpose of which is to enhance R Signals WOs' and Sgts' Messes throughout the Corps.

INCOME 2007

Total income into Corps Funds in 2007 amounted to £1.115M, most of which (£833.5K) came from Payroll Giving Subscriptions received from serving soldiers and officers.

The TA contributions totalled £18.5k. Income from Corps investments amounted to £235K, loan repayments came to £5.9K and finally, donations and legacies accounted for the remaining £22K.

EXPENDITURE 2007

The following significant expenditure was incurred during the year:

Welfare. Last year £398.2K was spent on welfare, the key strand in the purpose of the fund, in support of 932 cases on behalf of both serving and retired members of the Corps; this includes a grant of £37.2K to the Army Benevolent Fund which gives the Corps valuable support in meeting its commitment to those in need.

Sport. The Corps Games Club authorised expenditure of £86.3K in support of Corps sport while the Royal Signals Yacht Club received a grant of £11.9K and £17.3K to be set against the yacht replacement programme.

Adventurous Training. Grants totalling £34.7K were made to support members of the Corps taking part in adventurous training activities. This allocation will increase to £44K this year.

Music. The Corps Band was subsidised to the tune of £9.5K while the Northern Band and Pipes and Drums received allocations of £9.3K and £7.3K respectively.

The Wire. Our Corps magazine attracted a subsidy of £35.3K which enables the magazine to be produced in full colour and allows for free copies to be provided for all units.

Heritage/RSI. The Heritage Committee approved capital grants of £11K for the purchase of Corps paintings and silver. This sum included a painting commissioned in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the White Helmets. A further £52.7K was spent on insuring and maintaining Corps property and on Royal Signals Institution (RSI) activities including subsidising the cost of lectures, providing Corps prizes and the publication of the RSI Journal.

Entertainment and Visits. A total of £37.6K was spent on visits and entertainment, including Royal visits to units and in support of the Royal Signals Association Annual Blandford Reunion.

Sergeants Messes. The Sergeants' Fund Committee authorised expenditure totalling £29.8K in response to requests for funding various projects from messes throughout the Corps.

Running Costs. Finally, £132.4K was spent on the running costs of RHQ, which includes the salaries of Corps employees such as the Corps Accountant, the Welfare Secretary and the Association Administrative Officer as well as other general expenses such as audit fees and insurance costs etc.

SUMMARY

The Payroll Giving Scheme continues to be extremely well supported by the Corps and both Regimental Headquarters and the Trustees of the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund are most grateful to all those who contribute.

However the call on Corps funds continues to increase and every subscription received is vital if we are to be able to maintain the current levels of much needed financial support to both the serving and retired Corps and thus making a significant contribution to the relief of hardship and the maintenance of morale.

It is hoped that this brief explanation of our accounts for 2007 satisfies the interest of subscribers and is an encouragement to the few, who for whatever reason, do not currently subscribe.

If anyone requires any further information about Corps funds please contact **Mr Alan Wilkinson**, the Corps Accountant, on Blandford Military extension 2086 or by e-mail at corpsaccountant@royalsignals.mod.uk

MOVEMENTS

Name and Rank	*Unit to which posted*
APRIL 2008	
Capt MS Rai	10 Sig Regt
Capt D Winfield	JSSW Digby
Lt IS Burgess	ATR (W)
Lt AB Glover	ATC (P) 2 Regt
Lt JA McClean	10 Sig Regt
Lt EA Shale	30 Sig Regt
Lt G Winkles	4 Armd Bde HQ Sig Sqn
MAY 2008	
Capt REF Gardner	14 Sig Regt
Capt N Gurung	30 Sig Regt
Capt IK Kirk	71 (Y) Sig Regt
Capt SJ Macpherson	CT & UK Ops
Lt AK Burki	ART 16A- Chilwell
Lt HM McDonald	ATR (W)
Lt J Swindell	ATC (P) 2 Regt
WO1 J Porter	14 Sig Regt
WO1 M Robson	LOG Div HQ Land
WO2 DG Ware	10 Sig Regt
JUNE 2008	
Maj PJ McElwee	32 (S) Sig Regt (V)
A/Maj PA Sutcliffe	RSS
Capt AOH Biggs	DLO
Capt HGP Evans	101 Log Bde
Capt SL Green	HQ 1 Sig Bde
Capt W Howard	224 Sig Sqn
Capt Tolbahadur Khamcha	30 Sig Regt
Capt GMT Oosterveen	628 Sig Tp
Capt DG Petty	SANGCOM
Capt TM Prentice	14 Sig Regt
Capt Laxman Pun	22 Sig Regt
Capt Tekbahadur Rai	USSO HQ
Capt DDA Reader	7 Sig Regt
Capt GG Tabor	HQ SOinC(A)
WO1 D Oneill	14 Sig Regt
LCpl P Hart	SORLS, HQ SOinC(A)
JULY 2008	
Maj DC Ball	PJHQ - J6
Maj MW Harris	DES
Maj M Keech	14 Sig Regt (EW)
Maj DC Laycock	MS Soldiers (Combat Sp)
Maj JMP Leggate	G6 Branch HQ UKSC(G)
Maj KE Roach	CAST (S)
Maj S Steven	HQ ARRC
Maj MA Wright-Jones	40 (U) Sig Regt (V)
Maj GO Yeomans	CIS Ops 10 Sig Regt
A/Maj SA Bason	USSO Network Sp
A/Maj PS Meehan	SABGCOM
A/Maj DG Richardson	DCI (A)
Capt Premahadur Ale	RSS
Capt Narayanbahadur Bhandari	30 Sig Regt
Capt Nirmalkumar Bhattachan	HQ Brignepal
Capt TM Brown	NATO - CCA R
Capt CS Budding	3 Div HQ & Sig Regt
Capt EL Cameron	RSS
Capt WJ Cardwell	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Capt P Emsen	HQ LWCTG (G)
Capt MR Flather	2 Sig Bde
Capt Ganeshbahadur Gurung	HQ Brunei Gar
Capt Lalbahadur Gurung	RSS
Capt Purna Gurung	2 Sig Regt
Capt GD Hume	LSP Oman
Capt D Longmuir	JSSU (Cyp) - 1 ASEC
Capt EDL Maskell-Pedersen	21 Sig Regt (AS)
Capt B Plant	2 Sig Regt
Capt Ratnabahadur Pun	RSS
Capt RJ Pye	7 Sig Regt
Capt DP Sheerin	35 Sig Regt
Capt JG Simpson	JSSU (V)
Capt KN Smith	30 Sig Regt
Capt DJR Taft	7 Sig Regt
Capt WP Taylor	COS, HQ SOINC(A)
Capt JP Walsh	251 Sig Sqn
Capt DJ Watson	DES
Capt N Watton	11 EOD Regt RLC
Capt ZK White	7 Sig Regt
Capt MD Wilford	RSS
Capt T Williams	BRIT Forces FI- CBFFI
Capt DL Wilson	DES
Lt RJT Harris	16 AA Bde HQ & Sig Sqn
WO1 AD Amies	OCE - MND (SE)
WO1 JP Blyth	DES
WO1 D Clarke	102 Log Bde HQ Sig Sqn
WO1 SW Crowther	21 Sig Regt (AS)
WO1 PT Haughton	DES
WO1 JS Skimins	10 Sig Regt
WO2 MD Wilfred	RSS
AUGUST 2008	
Maj CS Alexander	HQ ARRC
Maj JS Balfour	DEC (CCII)
Maj MC Bruce	HQ Land
Maj PJ Brunton	CBM Branch
Maj EA Byfield	DEC (ISTAR)
Maj LJ Courage	DIS
Maj WBP Cramer	DCMT
Maj MW Davis	DSTL FH
Maj TW Day	DIS
Maj MJ Fayers	DEC (SP)
Maj KJ Grice	DEC (CCII)
Maj Dhanbahadur Gurung	HQ 145 (HC) BDE
Maj KA Reeves	DIS
Maj JR Jennings	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt
Maj JS Jones	DII IPT
Maj CJ Kell	HQ 101 Log Bde Sig Sqn
Maj JN Mayne	HQ SOINC(A)
Maj JP Nichols	SANGCOM
Maj GJ Oliver	BATUS
Maj L O'Rourke	DEC (SP)
Maj MP Purves	G6 CBM HQ Land
Maj NRD Shenow	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
Maj PR Smith	RHQ 10 Sig Regt
Maj RN Wilson	CSD Nets HQ SOinC(A)
Maj CJ Woodbridge	DCMT
A/Maj RA Bell	2 Sig Regt
A/Maj Buddhibahadur Gurung	HQ SOINC(A)
A/Maj RN Wilson	CSD Nets HQ SOinC(A)
Capt MJ Bentley	4 Mech Bde
Capt ST Cadywould	DES
Capt PM Carpenter	HQ 1 Sig Bde
Capt PD Crawley	Log Div HQ Land
Capt NW Fletcher	16 Sig Regt
Capt Buddhibahadur Gurung	ATR (W)
Capt JA Kitson	30 Sig Regt
Capt R Pace	16 Sig Regt
Capt AD Stannard	HQ ARRC
Capt K Sturman	SRR
Capt IG Thompson	38 Sig Regt (V)
Capt DJ Watson	DES
Capt PA Williams	36 Sig Regt (V) RHQ
Lt AK Curtis	10 Sig Regt
Lt ML Gray	DT NU Courses
Lt A Jeyes	DT LU Courses
Lt RS Monk	20 Armd Bde Sig Sqn

2Lt PW Johnson	DT SU Courses	
WO1 IK Jones	CIS OPS 10 Sig Regt	

SEPTEMBER 2008

Maj A Patterson	CSD Nets HQ SOinC(A)
A/Maj MA Solomons	HQ SOinC(A)
Capt S Brown	2 Sig Regt
Capt JC Heaton	DCMT DTG Courses
Capt PE Stockell	Royal School of Signals
Capt PF Stowell	Th & Fmn Comms IPT
Lt DG Atkinson	10 Sig Regt
Lt L Copson	2 Sig Regt
Lt ML Grande	10 Sig Regt
Lt JA Snelgrove	1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

HQ SOinC(Army)

EXERCISE MEUSE MERCURY

Day 1

The HQ SOinC(A) Battlefield Tour to France started with a day covering the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 71. Syndicates took turns throughout the day, briefing on Firepower (**Gp Capt Neil Phillips**), C3 (**2Lt Naomi Nicols**), Logistics (**WO1 FofS Rob Campbell**) and Organisation of the Armies (**Lt Col Pierre-Andre Le Roy**). **Capt Steve Buckley** helped us to view things from the perspective of a soldier on the ground. Laden with equipment, wearing heavy uncomfortable uniforms and carrying only the most basic rations – some would say that warfare has not changed much! **Col Iain Standen**, the Chief of Staff, explained the detail of the battle and kept interest high, despite the inevitable rain. **Gp Capt Phillips** was probably a little

Ex Meuse Mercury at the Andre Maginot memorial, Souville

disappointed that the only 'Air Power' used was the carrier pigeon. **Lt Col Leroy** (our French LO) was equally upset when he was informed by **2Lt Nichols** that his ancestors ate a percentage of the pigeons instead of using them for communications.

Day 2

After field replenishment in Metz and a tactical move to Verdun the WW1 phase commenced with study of the preparations, communications, defences and firepower in the huge battle for Verdun, which now has iconic status to the French. An organisation brief from O&D (**Lt Col Joe Cooper**) followed the museum tour. **Lt Col Tim Dyer** briefed on the awesome firepower employed with **Capt Monty Farrow** covering the detail of WW1 C2 arrangements. Rations and the importance of logistics were covered by **Maj Paul Horton**, who briefed on the importance of quartermasters who issued millions of items and shells. In an effort to win the propaganda war, the French press were claiming that the French soldier was better fed than his German counterpart, needless to say the said newspaper was inundated with 200,000 letters from angry French Poilus (soldiers) from all across the front inviting to come and sample the food for themselves!

Day 3

Day 3 saw the final actions of the Verdun campaign covered and a visit to the Ossuary, reputed to hold the bones of over 40,000 officers and soldiers (both French and German). We then moved on to the American Offensive of Meuse-Argonne. The hilltop monument at Montfaucon gave excellent views of the battlefield and an inspiring backdrop to a briefing on C3 from **Maj Richard Byfield**. The initial attack by American forces was nothing less than spectacular. A newly constituted Army with minimal training and borrowed materials demonstrated that through intestinal fortitude and superior leadership, it was possible to achieve dramatic results. We visited US memorials at Cheppy and Varennes that paid tribute to the men of the Missouri and Pennsylvania National Guard Divisions who sacrifice their lives in the early days of the campaign.

Day 4

On Thursday, the theme switched focus to a number of tactical level vignettes as the stories were retold of the US 'Lost Battalion' and that of **Sgt York's** heroic exploits in the Argonne Forest. The group listened with rapt attention as the story of the struggle for survival by the small force of US soldiers unfolded and made all the more pertinent by the personal aspects to their wretched struggle against the surrounding German forces. We heard of necessity to reuse first field dressings as supplies ran out and of the shortages of ammunition, rations and water which eventually began to bite. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the pigeon theme resurfaced yet again! This time the hardy creature survived volleys of German rifle fire as it flew from the Lost Battalion back to their parent 77th Division's HQ; or at least that was how the movie of the Lost Battalion played on the coach portrayed it. For once a movie genuinely based on a true story!

Final Day

The Battlefield Tour was completed appropriately with a visit to the Meuse Argonne US cemetery and memorial. The exercise participants were able to reflect on the cost of the campaign that we had discussed over the week.

Maj (promoted to Lt Col in June) **Patrick Ginn**, US Army, laid a wreath at the grave of **Edwin R Bleckley**, Medal of Honor. The cemetery was immaculately maintained, peaceful and a perfect memorial to those that rest there. The entire Staff Ride was a great success and thanks must be reiterated to **Col Iain Standen**, whose professional battlefield tour guiding skills maintained interest throughout the heaviest downpour.

SIGNAL OFFICER RECRUITING AND LIAISON STAFF

PREPARING FOR THE SOinC(A)'S DISPLAY TEAM SHOW
- by LCpl Emma Gilroy

Every year prior to the Corps Display Teams moving into the public display calendar, the SOinC(A) reviews their performance to ensure that they have attained the standards required before being released to perform in front of the public. The Display teams being reviewed on 26 April 2008 were the Royal Signals White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team, the Royal Signals Free Fall Parachute Team, the Royal Signals Corps Band and last but not least the Royal Signals Motorcycle Experience. Now that Sgt Ed Lewis has moved back to his first love – the White Helmets – it had fallen to me to prepare the Motorcycle Experience (MCE) for the show. Having served a one year apprenticeship with Ed Lewis, I was confident I was up to the job and also extremely proud to be given this responsibility. The process started by me selecting 10 students aged 13 – 14 years from The Blandford School, training them to perform daring rides and tricks as a supporting act to The White Helmets and then preparing them to perform for the SOinC(A) – Lucky me!

I started by attending an assembly at the Blandford School in February and outlined to the students what was required. I think some of the students thought I was joking when I explained that my intention was to put the selected individuals into the same arena as the White Helmets but when I asked for a show of hands for volunteers, I was pleasantly surprised. Eventually I managed to whittle the number down to 10 students suitable for the task and started the process of introducing them to the Honda 100cc motorcycles, teaching them how to ride and eventually practising the manoeuvres required for the display. As I write this, the students are on a well-deserved Easter break, having completed 2 weeks of their training. On their return I have planned a little surprise for them and intend to take them to the Bike-Safe Southwest 2008 Show run by the Dorset Police. This will give me the opportunity to practise the students at a real live event in front of a real live audience. This will also provide an opportunity for the young riders, not only to boost their confidence for the SOinC(A)'s Show, but to help with any apprehension they may have of performing in front of a large crowd. This year I anticipate that these students will give the best show ever – I hope. Their confidence has grown and the teamwork built in just 2 weeks has been incredible. In such a short space of time, the riders have progressed from having never ridden a motorcycle before to confidently performing rides and tricks, similar to those the White Helmets perform in their shows – albeit a little more slowly.

MCE SNCO RECRUITING NOTES - by Sgt Mason

In my past 2 postings, I had assisted in recruiting events and normally this would be in my role as a Physical Training Instructor. However, in my current role as a Permanent Staff Instructor at 35 Sig Regt (V) I have been requested to assist the "In house" recruiting team at various events and began to realise that I enjoyed this work immensely. This was not my first experience of working with potential recruits as I had also been employed at the Recruit Selection Centre at Glencorse. While working in the gym, I also dealt with the day to day business as an Admin NCO. I felt that the experience knowledge, people skills and enthusiasm for the job had put me in good stead to tackle the challenges of full time recruitment within today's' modern Army.

Due to personal reasons my original intention was to put my name forward for an ACIO post in the North of the country. However, when the time came for the 2-day recruitment selection at "sunny" Blandford my circumstances had changed and an alternative position within the Motorcycle Experience (MCE) Team was mentioned. For a number of reasons this position hadn't even crossed my mind, mainly because I didn't have a motorbike licence or had ever ridden a motorbike before!

At the conclusion of the selection package I was surprised, in fact "gob smacked", to be offered the opportunity to join the MCE Team. After some thought I realised what a chance this position could be and knew I would relish the challenges that it would undoubtedly bring. The prospect of achieving something completely different was too much to pass up on and I accepted the job!

After studying the programme for the up and coming 6 months, I knew that I was going to be an extremely busy man but this only spurred me on to get the qualifications that I would require to fulfil the criteria for the post. The training started in earnest with 2 weeks in Stockton-On-Tees under the direction of Ex-White Helmet Gary Elliston. Gary and his team ensured that I was taught all the correct techniques and procedures required to operate the MCE smoothly and more importantly safely! In addition to this training, I also had to attend my own motorbike lessons in order to pass my test and prepare me for CBT. I found riding a bike quite alien at first and must admit to falling off on more that one occasion, however I would like to put this down to how wet and slippery the fields that my training took place in were (that's my excuse anyway!).

The whole 2 weeks spent with Gary's team were not only both extremely beneficial and informative but I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it, I must also pass on my thanks to all the instructors for their professionalism and at times patience! As I write these notes I have successfully passed both my CBT and theory test and am just waiting to take the practical test. My initial insight into the MCE Team has convinced me that I have definitely made the right decision, and am looking forward to the future challenges that it will no doubt bring.

Early stages of training for the volunteers from Blandford School with LCpl Gilroy

BLANDFORD GARRISON SUPPORT UNIT

HQ BGSU

CO	**Lt Col G Richards**
2IC	**Maj R Patrickson**
GSM	**WO1(GSM) P Storey**

This period has seen a major change in the HQ with the departure of the CO, **Lt Col Rab Young** and the 2IC, **Maj Derek Deegan**. The CO has now become **Senõr Young** as he and **Kim** have decided to leave the UK and settle in Sunny Spain.

We wish them both all the very best in retirement. The old 2IC has only moved buildings, not continents, and become the QM (T).

It's all yours Senõr!

We welcome **Lt Col Guy Richards** as the new CO BGSU and **Maj Ray Patrickson** as the new 2IC. We hope you have a fulfilling tour and to paraphrase the Chinese curse; you will be living in interesting times!

QM DEPARTMENT

QM	**Lt Col WJ Drain**
RQMS(G)	**WO2 S Reynolds**
QM(T)	**Maj DA Deegan**
RQMS(T)	**WO2 S McIlroy**

The QM's department has had a busy time over the last couple of months with the main focus as always on the support to training. Over the past year the introduction of Pay as You Dine (PAYD) has taken a great deal of time and energy on the part of the QM, **Lt Col WJ Drain** and **WO1 GCWO MC Sheridan**.

All members of the department were involved at some point, covering areas as diverse as negotiation of all contracts and the refurbishment of the Junior Ranks' Dining Facility.

This was all bought to a successful conclusion on 25 April 2008 when the doors were officially opened by the Garrison Commander, **Brig T Watts OBE**.

ARRIVALS AND DEPATURES

The department warmly welcomes **Maj Deegan** who has transferred all the way from the HQ BGSU, also **WO2 S Reynolds** previously MTO Blandford Garrison and **WO2 S McIlroy** posted in from Northern Ireland. We would like to say farewell to **Maj Mackay,** who has made the leap into civilian life, and to both **WO2 S Fardy** and **WO2 G Middleton** who have been successful on commissioning. We wish you all good luck and every success in the future.

It has to be said that life is not all work here in Blandford, on occasions some of the department get to down tools for a day or two and take part in their chosen sport.

Cpl S Carlyon, an avid sea fisherman and a member of the Army Angling Federation (AAF) recently took part in an annual trip organised by the AAF to the Island of Alderney.

During her week aboard the 'Off Shore Rebel' **Cpl Carlyon** and her fellow fishermen faced the challenging weather of our unpredictable climate.

Sea Bass, Pollock, Bull Huss, Bream and Tope were part of these fishermen's' haul.

When asked if she had caught any big fish **Cpl Carlyon** replied that on average they were a bit small, and proceeded to show us a picture of what can only be described as a shark; if that is what she classes as small, then can we assume that if she says 'big' it's bound to be a whale.

Our second fisherman is **SSgt(SQMS) Richard Smith**, who is also addicted to the thrill of sea fishing and more accurately beach casting. He can quite often be found on the rocks near Portland in the dead of night with his rods and reels set out, always ready to catch 'the big one'.

Fishermen, of course as we all know, are never prone to exaggeration, and **SSgt Smith** is no exception. However, most members of the department, before seeing this photo, distinctly remember the words spoken during one coffee break; 'enormous' and 'biggest ever', while he indicated the estimated size of his catch with his arms held wide! The picture tells the truth – only 4lb 7oz.

SSgt Smith with his "enormous" catch

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS
COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

CI	**Lt Col AR Knott MBE**
Trg Adjt	**Capt Narayan Bhandari QGS**
DSM	**WO2(SSM) Chris Jones**
DSM (G)	**WO2(SSMG) Shankar Gurung QGS**

MILITARY TRAINING ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE HARROGATE FOLLY- *by 2Lt Matt Williams*

On a cold and wet spring afternoon, 3 Tp Comds from TC 70 deployed on Ex HARROGATE FOLLY with Lightning Tp of 11 Sig Regt as part of the Class 1 Technicians Course run at Blandford Camp. The ex is run yearly to practise the soldiers in the art of 'Operations in Built Up Areas' (OBUA). They had volunteered act as Tp Comds to assist for the duration of the ex to provide some realistic training for the soldiers.

The ex took place in Copehill Down Village on Salisbury Plain and consisted of instruction, battle exs and a final sqn attack. All involved were very enthusiastic about the prospect of practising their soldiering skills and threw themselves into every activity. From the very start, the Tp Comds were very impressed with the professionalism, intelligence and skill of the Royal Signals soldiers. Although the majority had not previously taken part in any OBUA training or operations, they picked up the tactics and skills extremely quickly. This made the role of Tp Comd extremely enjoyable and resulted in some excellent tp level attacks.

Exercising troops on Ex HARROGATE FOLLY

By the time it came to conduct the final sqn level attack, the soldiers had improved their OBUA skills beyond recognition. This was largely down to the excellent leadership shown by the Sect Comds and Tp Sgts which freed up the Tp Comds to concentrate on the tactical and situational aspects. The ex was a resounding success for all involved and lessons were learnt at every level. As new Tp Comds, it was refreshing to witness first hand the high level of infantry skills Royal Signals soldiers have at all levels and has given us all high hopes of what to expect when we arrive at our units in August.

THE DIVISIONAL BATTLE CAMP- *by Sgt Rachael Allen*

On a bright sunny Saturday morning a large contingent of RSS permanent staff set off to Otterburn Training Area to conduct our annual Divisional Battle camp. On arrival, we settled into our new home, an old barn on the training area, and to be honest it seemed pure luxury compared to what we were expecting. However that did not last long and we soon found ourselves stripped to the bare minimum of kit and instructed to build improvised shelters in a nearby forest. After drawing up our blue prints we all got stuck into building our homes for the next 5 days. Each sect had different styles and once completed, the area could have easily been mistaken for a new Barrett Homes housing estate. The question on everyone's mind was would they stay up for the duration and would they keep the water out?

Over the next couple of days we sat intently listening to our instructors teaching us everything they knew about survival. **Sgt Del Jackson** was keen to volunteer to skin a rabbit – I think he may have regretted that once the stench hit him as – with no wash kit he was not so popular that evening. **SSgt Owen** and **Sgt Kamal Gurung** gave us a very interesting lesson on improvised weapons during which **SSgt Owen** appeared to have just stepped out of a horror film, giving a perfect demonstration on how to throttle someone!

Thursday saw our AOR overrun by enemy and there began our Escape and Evasion phase. Over the difficult terrain this proved very arduous and after living on very little food all week, energy levels were extremely low. The cloud closed in and as the rain began to fall so did our morale. Luckily the kind agents we met managed to smuggle us some sticky treacle pudding – which at the best of times is like eating a house brick. It did the job though and spirits were thoroughly lifted. End Ex was drawing close and we could feel it in our sore feet.

Two sections had managed to escape capture, **Sgt Billy Boyle's** excellent map reading was just enough to keep his sect one step ahead. The rest however spent the last hour of the ex with sand bags on their heads much to the amusement of **Sgt Paddy Grills**, **Sgt Emily Potter**, **Cpl Si Mackay** and **LCpl Jimmy Jay Rogers** who also managed to evade capture. The remainder of the ex saw us visit Edinburgh castle for a little education and culture, but after a week of not eating very well, the pub lunch was most definitely the highlight of the day for many. All in all, the week was very informative and everyone who took part would say it was an enjoyable and potentially very useful week. Thank you to all the DS and to all the 'survivors' for making it happen.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - *by Capt Jim Hawkins*

EXERCISE KALEVALA TIGER

Military training aside, over the last few months the Division has still managed to shoe-horn even more 'value added' into the tight and demanding programme of training delivery. Diverse in nature, and be they UK based or abroad, a host of extra curricular activities has enabled a significant number of individuals and groups to face new and challenging experiences (in whatever guise) as well as having a lot of fun in the process.

With the lead being taken by Communication Services Group, and with a slack handful of all-comers, **Capt Jimmy James** organised an alpine skiing expedition to Austria in March. Ex KALEVALA TIGER saw 2 complete minibus loads of enthusiastic and mixed ability **Heinz Muller** 'wannabees' deploy to Neustift to take part in a week's worth of glacier and more conventional skiing.

Under the watchful eyes and direction of **Capt Rick Young** APTC and **Mr Mark Geddes**, and with a number of students clad in the latest fashions – including some very tasteful hot pink camouflage trousers, the 2 ability groups progressed through some intense 'goalkeeper' sessions, a few 'Youtube' moments and the odd argument with the button lifts to become more confident and competent on their skis. With the usual random prizegiving in recognition of some outstanding personal 'efforts', all expedition members walked (thankfully not hobbled) away with at least a Basic Ski Proficiency qualification to their name.

NEWS OF TRAINING

ARMY TRAINING CENTRE PIRBRIGHT

FORMATION OF THE ARMY TRAINING CENTRE PIRBRIGHT – 31 MAY 08- *by Capt Kelly Griffiths*

There have been huge changes afoot in the world of Phase 1 Training recently, with ATR Lichfield passing its last troops off the square on 17 April 2008 and closing its gates once and for all. The reason for this is the formation of the new Army Training Centre (ATC) Pirbright – a multi-million pound project that has seen ATR Pirbright almost double in size and shoulder the majority of the burden of Phase 1 Standard Entry training (i.e. adults).

ATC Pirbright is formed of 3 regts – a HQ element and 2 training regts (formed from the old ATRs Lichfield and Pirbright). In total, there are 8 training sub-units, capable of training up to 5280 recruits every year, which is a phenomenal amount. Among these sub-units is 1 (Fowler) Sqn Royal Signals, the only dedicated Royal Signals Sqn within Initial Training Group. This Sqn is the Corps focal point within ATC Pirbright and that is where the majority of Royal Signals instructors can be found. Across the ATC, there are now approximately 50 Royal Signals permanent staff posts, ranging from Cpl to Maj and despite the relatively short length of time that Royal Signals entrants have trained in Pirbright, the presence of the Corps can be felt throughout the ATC.

The transition from ATR to ATC was marked with a Formation Parade on 31 May 08, attended by CGS, **Gen Sir Richard Dannatt KCB, CBE, MC**. Despite the hectic schedule of life within a training establishment, there was still time to mark the day with a parade, involving all of the permanent staff and trainees within the ATC, a flyby of military aircraft, a procession of military vehicles (past and present) and an accompanying military band. The *pièce de résistance* however was the delivery of the new ATC Pirbright colours by a lone parachutist, who dropped effortlessly onto the centre of the parade square and with a sharp salute, produced the new colours from his suit. Definitely a crowd pleaser!

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

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

CO **Lt Col CSK Paterson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DW Dunbar**

INTER SQUADRON ATHLETICS COMPETITION
- by Lt S O'Connell

This year's Inter-Sqn Athletics competition took place on a gloriously sunny day at the Jahn-Ludwig Stadion on Tuesday 6 May. All 4 sqns entered a full male A and B string team and a female A string for the day's 16 events which ranged from the discus to the 3000m.

The RSM receiving his medal for throwing things a long way

The first track event started at 1030hrs with the 400m hurdles for men and simultaneously the field events started with the shot putt. As it turned out the throwing events were very closely contested all day by 2 main men, **WO1(RSM) Dunbar** and **Sig Massey** from 201 Sig Sqn, with the RSM just pipping **Sig Massey** to the gold medal every time.

In the track events, there were a few outstanding performances from the likes of **Sig McColl** in the 1500m, **Sig Dower** in the 200m and **Sgt Skene** in the 100m. The competition was rounded off with a command race which was won by 201 Sig Sqn.

Sgt Skene winning the 100m

The day resulted in a fantastic win for 201 but the efforts of all the Sqns should not go without mention. A huge thank you should also go to **RCWO Sinclair** and his staff for all their hard work with the catering and to the QMSI **WO2(QMSI) Callum Fergusson** and his staff for ensuring the smooth running of the actual event itself.

The Ladies 4 x 100m winning team

BISMARCK CHALLENGE 2008 -by Lt Sarah O'Connell

The 8th annual charity Bismarck Challenge successfully took place on 1 June 08 in the Bad Salzuflen and Herford area of Germany. The arduous 26km (14.2 mile) course had both civilian and military competitors coming from all over Germany to compete. There were 3 categories to be entered; the loaded marchers, who carried 12kgs (females) and 17kgs (males), male and female runners age 17-35 and male and female runners age 36 and over.

The fundamental ideas for this event were twofold; foster Anglo-German relations and raise money for charity. To that end the event was not just about the competitors, but also their families. A children's obstacle course and fun race was organised by the PTIs headed up by **LCpl 'Al' Murray**, the Herforder Brewery, a burger stall, David's fish n' chips and the PRI tuck shop were also in attendance to supply everyone with a variety of food and drink.

This year the Bismarck Challenge supported 3 charities; The German Red Cross, the children's ward at the Herford Klinikum and the Army Benevolent Fund. Although a final total can not be published yet, it is believed to be in the region of €2000, giving each charity at least €650 each. The weather on the day was nothing short of excellent. Slightly overcast at the start of the race at 1030hrs, which obviously kept the runners and loaded marchers cool, brightening up and turning into glorious sunshine just after 1300hrs.

This year's competition was fierce for the credited title of overall winner of the Bismarck Challenge. **Maj Lee Kiely** (formally OC 201 Sig Sqn) was battling hard with **Capt Ash Lawes** part of the Div HQ staff right down to the last 2 miles, but **Maj Kiely** eventually came through as the triumphant winner of the race in a phenomenal time of 1hr 30min 38secs. **LCpl Ash Mulligan** was the winning female in the 17-35 age group, while **Cpl Becky Connor** of HQ Sqn won the females loaded march and **Sgt Ally Skene** won the male loaded march. Overall it was a fantastic day, which was enjoyed by all. Congratulations has to go to 201 Sig Sqn and especially **Sgt Steve McNally** for organising a fantastic day.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Garrett**
SSM **WO2(SSM) R Heynes**

201 SIG SQN'S SUPPORT OF 7 BDE MISSION READINESS EXERCISE APRIL 2008 - *by Cpl D Somerville*

On 3 April 08, 201 Sig Sqn with supporting elements of HQ Sqn, lined up ready to for a 2 day journey into deepest darkest southern Germany, otherwise known as Bavaria. Their purpose, to support 7 Bde on their Mission Readiness Exercise, prior to their operational deployment. Our first order of business on arrival was to find out where we were supposed to be living for the next 4 weeks. Finding ourselves in something that resembled the barrack room from 'Full Metal Jacket', we settled ourselves in.

Once sorted, we set about positioning ourselves and our vehicles ready to carry out our task. All vehicles were located on the grass, close to the big white tent, Hessian was draped but it appeared we were upsetting the local establishment because we were destroying their grass. Problem identified, moments later, problem solved in the form of grey plastic paving provided by our hosts. As we were set up and ready to go well ahead of schedule, it was time for something a touch different. As we happened to be using an American training facility, it seemed only right that we should take in the local culture by making good use of the PX shops around us. Finding a bowling alley within 10 mins walk of our location, it was decided that we should enjoy a couple of hours in there. Needless to say, this was not the only visit. During the exercise we were visited by our own CO and the RSM, taking a break from the BCIP 5 exercise that was going on back in Herford. They visited each detachment we had in use on site and were given a briefing as to what we were providing and how we were progressing.

The exercise over, we returned to Herford, tired from the long journey, only made worse by having a forced rest at 1400hrs and a departure from said rest stop at around midnight. Fortunately there were no major incidents, and all personnel we deployed with, returned safely.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj GJ Oliver**
SSM **WO2(SSM) JE Baxter**

THE MIGHTY 211 SIG SQN

There has been a change of SSM within the Squadron with **WO2(SSM) Churchward** moving to the Regimental Training Wing. He finishes a 2 year tour as SSM where his strength of character and wit has helped to bolster and support the Sqn and he now hands over the reigns to **WO2(SSM) Baxter**. We also have a new Foreman, so welcome to **WO2(FofS) Usher** and a fond farewell to **WO2(FofS) Welch.**

EXERCISE PREMIER CHAIN II

The Sqn has been involved in a number of tasks over the last few months in preparation for Ex PREMIER CHAIN II. The deployment to Stapel was keenly awaited as it had been a long time since the armour had rolled out of camp as a convoy. It was soon clear that all the hard work maintaining the vehicles had paid off as there were no breakdowns or mechanical problems en route. In fact the only drama was **Sig Kendall** ignoring **Maj Oliver's** commands for a left turn and carrying on regardless taking the rest of the packet with him!

We were on the area for a little under 2 weeks and everyone enjoyed being out of camp and exercising in their role – but this was probably helped by some fantastic weather! Over the period we practiced movement of the HQ, low level skills and stretched and tested Bowman. A great deal was learnt by all involved, however I think everyone's highlight was having a cabby in the 43s which is a rare experience these days.

212 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Pearce**
SSM **WO2(SSM) P Watson**

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

The flexible 'H' Sqn has said a sad farewell to their 2IC, **Capt 'Russ' Moody** who has moved the short distance to 262 Sig Sqn

in Gutersloh so that he can be closer to the rehab department. His replacement **Capt 'Gaz' Middleton** has arrived from sunny Blandford and has contributed to the enhancement of the already upwardly mobile Sqn. The upward movements can be largely attributed to the new 'senior soldier' **WO2(SSM) Pete Watson** who is commuting from Sennelager to Herford on a daily basis and exceeding his permitted mileage on his new BMW! Also farewell to the SQMS, **SSgt 'Barney' Revell** and his family who have moved on promotion to 7 Sig Regt proudly swinging his new pacestick. Finally, **Sgt Charlie Hart** has completed an internal move from acting Foreman as our real Foreman **WO2(FofS) Lynn Stevenson** has decided to return from her extended career break. **Sgt Charlie Hart** is now performing the duties of SQMS. There is a rumour that he is doing a good job but that has yet to be confirmed.

MONTE CASINO TROOP

Tp Comd	**2Lt 'Macca' MacAulay**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Dave Wheeler**

The Tp would like to say goodbye to **Lt Hanna McDonald**, who has completed her time in Herford and has moved on to ATR Winchester, as have **Sig 'Bradders' Bradfield** who has moved to 251 Sig Sqn and **Sig 'Podgy' Hodkinson**, who is now a member of 2 Sig Regt. Good luck to you all. Welcome to **Sig Jenkins** who is 'over the moon' to have left Blandford and is now looking forward to assisting with the ever changing set up of the HQ tent and also spending all that LOA in Germany.

EXERCISE PREMIER CHAIN - *by 2Lt C MacAulay*

On 15 April 212 Sig Sqn and a small element from 211 Sig Sqn deployed to the parade square on Harewood Barracks for Ex PREMIER CHAIN. The purpose was to test the newly uplifted BCIP 5.2 equipment and also to build the Gold HQ. This was a doubly important exercise as not only are 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt leading the way in BCIP 5 for the British Army, it was also the first time that the Gold HQ had been constructed and it was important to test and develop this concept in the Bowman environment. The exercise was meant to begin with a PACEX of all the vehicles on the square followed by the build of the Gold HQ. Unfortunately no plan works first time and so the decision was made to reverse this and instead begin with the build. As the much maligned 'BFOT' was constructed it became apparent that constructing Gold was not a task to be taken lightly and that serious consideration would need to take place as to how we would effectively deliver this capability.

Having completed the build and seen first hand just how much real estate Gold was going to require, the Sqn moved into the PACEX. The PACEX did not come without its problems but this was to be expected given the sheer amount of newly uplifted equipment that had to be tested. Once the LAS was in and the Mitchell brothers, **Capt (TOT) Mark 'Phil Mitchell' Todd** and Regimental YofS, **WO1(YofS) Steve 'Grant Mitchell' Milne** were happy that all the equipment was tested and working correctly, it was time to start seeing what new capabilities the 5.2 uplift had created. It was important to get as much time as possible using the equipment and to develop SOPs for the future. Concurrently to testing the Gold HQ, the Sqn was also able to deploy RRB assets to undergo some much needed training.

Naturally the exercise was going to generate interest and so there were several visitors throughout, including the DCOS, the COS and the GOC. These visits were important in the development of the Gold HQ, from a diagram to a physical structure which the Staff would be happy and comfortable working in. The GOC was very impressed with what the Sqn had achieved, but he was less than impressed with the tents used to do so! The final visit was from the Comd Field Army. Unfortunately the heavens opened and the BFOTs vulnerability to the weather was again exposed. The visit was a good opportunity for him to meet the soldiers involved and to see what their views were. Subsequently, the GOC personally tasked **Sig 'Paddy' Rennick** to write to him after the June exercise detailing what were the good and bad points to come out of the new uplift from a soldier's perspective. All in all the fortnight was a valuable learning exercise which thanks to the hard work of all involved, was a success and a very good start point from which to build on in June.

AREZZO TROOP

Tp Comd	**Lt Charlotte Pitstra**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Steve Riste**

Arezzo Tp has seen a number of movements of personnel recently and would like to offer a warm welcome to **Sig 'Happy' Easter**, **Sig Forbes**, **Sig Deans** and **Sig Andy Jenkinson** who have all completed internal Sqn moves from Monte Casino Tp. A sad farewell goes to **LCpl Emma Rimmer** who moves on promotion to 258 Sig Sqn and to **Sig 'Baz' Smollens** who has moved to 600 Sig Tp. Good luck and be lucky!

RIMINI TROOP

Tp Comd	**Sgt Phill Hensel**
Tp SSgt	

Not much to say about the newly formed Rimini Tp (yet), just a few hellos and goodbyes.
Hellos to **Cpl Dan Riches** from 7 Bde, **Sig 'Mich' Thompson** from sunny Blandfordia and a few welcome backs for **Cpl 'Smudge Smith'** from long term sick leave, and finally to **Sig Robertson Murray** from maternity leave. Welcome to long days and longer nights..... As always there are more goodbyes than hellos so here goes: Arrivederci to **Lt 'Aff' Burki**, **Sig Forbes Latusek**, **Sig Bradley**, **Sig Holmes**, **Sig Murray**, **Sig Parkhill** , remember the grass is always greener on the other side – no it really is!

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK

CO	**Lt Col JJ Cole OBE**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) JA March**

RACE THE SUN 2008 - *by Capt Shaun Wilson*

Race the Sun is a 15 leg multi-discipline relay endurance competition. The event is run by 2 Sig Regt and took place on 15 May.

Twenty one teams from across the Army, including 2 teams from Germany came to York to compete. Each event is completed by a different member of the team or, if you're really lucky and down a couple team members, you get to do 2 events before the day is done.

Limbering Up!

For most of the competitors the race began at 0400hrs when an early breakfast was served to those starting the first leg. At 0500hrs the starter gun was fired on the WOs and Sgts Mess lawn and the race was on. The first event was a 500m sprint followed by a 6km paddle up the River Ouse. The conditions were beautiful and for many there could be no better way to start the day. The next event followed the River Ouse further upstream with a 12km river run. There were some impressive times put in, particularly by 18 and 2 Sig Regts. Leg 3 saw competitors complete a 7km run followed by a 20km cycle. The competitors had to deal with morning rush hour and, in some cases, were overtaking the cars! By the end of Leg 3 the competitors were deep into the Yorkshire countryside and onto the start of Leg 4; a calf busting 10km hill run. Each team can enter 2 members into each leg and the best time counts; not surprisingly most teams could only fill one place on this particular leg!

Exhausted faces tagged their team mates at the start of Leg 5; a 12.5km forced march with 15kg. The last 5km of the course were described by the race organiser **Maj Al Higgins MBE** as 'a little bit up hill!' The fastest time of the day for this was 1hr 08 min. Leg 6 saw competitors launched onto a 10km moor run followed by the second mass start of the day at Leg 7. By now 18 Sig Regt had a considerable lead over the rest of the field and the start of the half marathon was a chance to catch up. This was won by a runner from ATR Bassingbourn who completed the hilly route in 1hr 18min. Leg 8 was a very fast 27km mountain bike route through the North Yorkshire Moors followed by a 7.5km fell run at Leg 9. Again 18 Sig Regt began to pull away but it was 2 Sig Regt who finished the Orienteering first at Leg 10. Leg 11 was a 9km forest run through Dalby Forest. 18 Sig Regt were first into the start of Leg 12, a 30 km cycle orienteering route, followed closely by ATR Bassingbourn and 10 Sig Regt. The race then moved into the grounds of Castle Howard for a 900m swim across the lake. This event was won quite convincingly by a female member of Leeds UOTC.

Duck impressions help you swim faster

Once the competitors had wiped all the lake mud and duck poo off, they hopped on their bikes back to York. The speeds the cyclists achieved were phenomenal and the press car had real trouble keeping up! At the 24km point they dropped their bikes for a 6km sprint back to Imphal Barracks. The teams then had a chance to recover before the start of Leg 15. Each team entered their 6 strongest for a 3 km stretcher race.

The Major Units competition was won by 18 Sig Regt followed not so closely by 10 and 2 Sig Regts. The Minor Units Competition was won by ATR Bassingbourn followed by USSO and ATR Harrogate. The event was a massive success and all who entered enjoyed it. Whether this was because the day was over and they didn't have to run any more or whether they genuinely enjoyed it, we will never know. Thank you all for competing and we look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Only 10 metres in and the strain is showing

TRIANGULAR BOXING COMPETITION
- by SSgt Darren Roberts

On a cold and dark morning in North Yorkshire in early February, a small gathering of 23 boxing hopefuls assembled to undergo a demanding 4 month training camp. Run under the watchful eye of **SSgt Daz Roberts** as the 2 Sig Regt boxing coach and his assistants **WO2(RQMS) Lez Tobbell** and **LCpl Owen Ryan,** the volunteer team did not to know what they had let themselves in for! For the first 5 weeks their training consisted of early morning runs, muscular endurance circuits and interval training just to get the entire team to the basic standard and fitness levels required to start learning the techniques and the skills needed to box at a safe standard (and also to put on a jolly good show).

As late March approached, the team moved away from Imphal Barracks and went into hiding. We moved to the Army Foundation College Harrogate where we were to base ourselves until 3 days before the competition on 28 May 08. The set up and the facilities were second to none with a boxing ring and bag room, mirror and shadow room and circuit training room and of course miles and miles of countryside to run around. The team consisted of various cap badges of the Regt:

LCpl Dan Huck, **Sig Rachel Drummond**, **LCpl Richie Mullen** REME, **Cfn 'Shameless' Snaith** REME, **LCpl 'Dodge' Dodgson**, **Sig Sam Gowling**, **Sig Liam Mills**, **Sig 'Wilco' Wilkinson**, **Sig Leon Hill**, **Sig Liam Taylor**, **Sig 'Crouchie' Sivell**.

As we approached late April, the boxing team had come on leaps and bounds. Following hours and hours of skill sessions and enduring countless sparring battles and round after round of blood, sweat and tears, the time had come for the battle to commence. The fight night had arrived. The participating teams were 14 Sig Regt and 30 Sig Regt.

Fight	Class	Result
2 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Heavyweight	2 Sig Regt - **LCpl Dodgson** (Walk-Over)
30 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Welterweight	30 Sig Regt - **Sig Smedley** (Walk-Over)
14 Sig Regt v 30 Sig Regt	Welterweight	30 Sig Regt - **Sig Day** (RSC(H))
14 Sig Regt v 2 Sig Regt	Middleweight	2 Sig Regt - **LCpl Mullen** (RSC)
30 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Lt Heavyweight	30 Sig Regt - **Cfn Critchley**
2 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Lt Middleweight (F)	2 Sig Regt - **Sig Drummond** (Majority Decision)
2 Sig Regt v 30 Sig Regt	Lt Heavyweight	2 Sig Regt - **LCpl Huck** (Unanimous)
30 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Cruiser Weight	14 Sig Regt – **SSgt(YofS) Samuel** (RSC)
2 Sig Regt v 30 Sig Regt	Heavyweight	2 Sig Regt - **Sig Hill** (Points Decision)
2 Sig Regt v 14 Sig Regt	Welterweight	2 Sig Regt - **Sig Mills** (Majority Decision)

Overall winners were 2 Sig Regt with 30 Sig Regt in 2nd and 14 Sig Regt in 3rd place.

Showing off the silver

The 11 Sig Bde Triangular Boxing competition was a resounding success with a big thank you to all the officials who aided with the running of the event and the sponsors who enabled us to put on such a well received evening. Last, but by no means least, thanks to all the Boxers and the Coaching Staff from the participating Regts.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Anderson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) I Conlan**

It's been another busy period for the Sqn with the changeover of key personnel including the SQMS on promotion to RQMS 35 (V) Sig Regt, the Training Wing YofS on promotion to WO1 at BOWTAG and the SSM on promotion to WO1(RSM) 36 (V) Sig Regt. We would like to thank all of the posted personnel for their hard work and wish them and their families all the very best in their new postings.

Hot on the heels of successful Regimental events: Kohima Day, Race the Sun and the 11 Bde Triangular Boxing Competition was Ex KEY FOB 08. This was a Sqn deployment to Otterburn to conduct CT 1 & 2 training. It gave all departments the chance to shake out and revise basic skills, or in some cases learn basic skills, prior to deployment on the Regimental Exercise. Everyone agreed it provided an excellent opportunity for all the diverse departments of Support Sqn to get out of barracks into the field to do some Sqn bonding and soldiering.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj M Graham**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

ARMS AND DISPLAY DAY AT THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST - *by 2Lt Thompson*

On Wednesday 21 May representatives from 2 Sig Regt ventured down to Camberley to attend the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) Arms and Services Day. The purpose of the day is to introduce Junior Term Officer Cadets to all of the elements of the Corps that may be available to them after commissioning. Our main objective was to inform the Officer Cadets of not only the role of the Royal Signals, but also the specific capabilities of 2 Sig Regt. We wanted to explain to them to our formation, our mission and past and future operations, but most of all we tried to win them over by telling them of the adventurous training expeditions and sport available to us.

Overall the day was a great success with **Cpl Williams**, **LCpl Clarke** and **LCpl Mercer** being excellent ambassadors for the Regt.

ADVENTURE TRAINING IN CORNWALL - *by 2Lt Winkles*

Straight out of Sandhurst and 3 weeks into my attachment and already I was joining 214 Sig Sqn on a well earned break from their busy schedule on a week of adventure training in Cornwall. After arriving we were delighted to see the weather was gorgeous and it stayed that way for most of the week.

We split into 4 groups to participate in the week's activities of coast walking, rock climbing, kayaking and mountain biking – doing a different activity each day. The coast walking was an 18km walk along Cornwall's beautifully scenic coastline. The route took us into Newquay where **Sgt Lake** was always sure to reward our hard work with one or two quick ones in the pub before being picked up by the minibus.

The Coastal Walk – before the essential pub stop

Rock climbing was an activity I had never had the pleasure of doing before and it took a while to get used to. Eventually however I managed to gain some sort of technique and everyone managed to get up and down the rock faces, except for **Sig Manche** who after a sudden fear of heights, needed to be rescued by **WO2 Conlan**.

Another testing day came in the form of kayaking, where for the first half we had to battle against large waves on the open water before paddling upstream to make it to the first stop off point – another pub! The second half of the journey was slightly less strenuous on calmer water with the wind behind us. Everybody managed to stay dry all week apart from **LCpl Burke** who somehow managed to fall of the jetty at the end of the trip while pulling his kayak onto dry land.

The mountain biking was lead by **LCpl Oakes** and the daily trips to the beach must have taken it out of him as on the final day he took the group the wrong way up a huge hill, only to have to do a U-turn back down it – he wasn't popular when he realised his mistake!

On the final day, half the AT participants went 'coasteering' – basically climbing up cliff faces then jumping off them into the sea, gradually making your way higher as you go. The saner half of the group decided to learn how to surf instead. The waves were quite large and breaking perfectly for catching. **LCpl Burke** and **Sig Manche** overcame their previous mishaps, being the best in the group and managed to stand up by the end of the day! That night before the long drive back to York, we booked a brewery tour. After being shown round for 20 mins we were free to sample Cornwall's award winning ales, lagers and ciders for several hours into the night!

Everyone had a fantastic time in the sun and learnt something new, a special thanks goes out to **WO2(FofS) Sanderson**, **Sgt Miller**, **Sgt Fisher** and **Sgt Eskdale** who without their time and effort, this week would not have been possible.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Mould**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

A large part of the Sqn has recently deployed to Op TELIC to take over the role of Baghdad Signal Unit (BSU) and also in support of Op TELIC, the Kuwait Signal Troop (KSF Tp) where they will stay until November. For the significant number of troops that remain in York it is business as usual as we have been busily preparing for an RSIT inspection while simultaneously carrying out the In Barracks Data Preparation (IBDP) for next month's Regimental Ex KEY FLIGHT. We are looking forward to testing our Cormorant skills in the field after a long period spent on and preparing for operations and other tasks and hope that the weather will be kinder to us than it was for our Sqn ex earlier in the year!

KSF CIS TROOP - *by Sig Richmond*

Tp Comd	**Lt C P Jones**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt S Sweeney**

At 0700hrs, Friday 16 May we paraded outside the cookhouse ready to deploy to Kuwait in support of Op TELIC. In true British Army fashion we arrived at RAF Brize Norton with hours to wait for departure. After a 3 hr non-smoking stop in Hannover, we went on for a further 6 hr flight to Kuwait City International Airport (KCIA). We arrived at KCIA at dawn, enjoyed breakfast and set about a 2 hr trek, on an overly cramped coach, to Camp Buehring.

Day One, Week One!

On arrival we commenced the RSOI package and had a series of initial briefs. After the long trip we all had to fight to stay fully attentive. We collected our baggage and were accommodated in a 50 man tent where we were allowed to have 4 hrs well deserved sleep before parading in the classroom at 1630hrs. After some more fascinating briefs, we went to the American Dining Facility (DFAC) for evening meal where we all enjoyed our first taste of Baskin Robbins ice cream. We finished late that evening due to **Cpl "Fozzy" Forster**, being the only Skill at Arms instructor out of nearly 200 people, having to take the entire course through Weapon Handling Tests.

The RSOI package continued at 0500hrs with physical acclimatisation sessions and a daily "Death March" across the open desert in the sweltering heat to the Training Village. Once at the Training Village we were put through a number of serials. The first stand was a First Aid serial where, as 12 man sects, we were faced with battle wounded as realistic dummies, which bore no resemblance to Resuci Annie!

The dummies cost around £65000 each so you can understand our concern when **Sig Aaron Usher** was a little less than delicate whilst putting the dummy in the recovery position. Throughout the serial we were constantly pressurised by the RAMC staff who were asking questions and testing our BFA skills.

From there we went to the HEAT trainer serial which simulated a vehicle roll-over. Firstly we were taught the drills by the resident American instructor, before moving on to the simulated HMMVV. The drill consisted of a commander, driver, 2 gunners and a top cover.

The worst place to be was top cover as they had to rely on the other 2 gunners in the rear of the vehicle to pull him inside and hold on for dear life as the HMMVV rolled-over one and a half times, leaving us upside down. The next challenge was to get out of the vehicle, trying to open the door up side down and undoing you seatbelt whilst completely disorientated. On disembarking the vehicle, the commander had to give a quick SITREP and then the serial was over. Other stands in the Training Village included an IED lane where we practised out our Op DALTON drills, a Judgemental Trainer which is similar to our DCCT, tutorials by the Royal Engineers and the RMP and a personal safety lesson with the PTIs.

We were all relieved to find out that we could complete the range package in our own time, which meant that RSOI was shortened by 2 days. We then cracked on with the handover takeover from 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn. Surprisingly the takeover went smoothly and within 5 days, 2 Sig Regt were in command and our 6 month tour was under way. Our congratulations go out to **Cpl Greg Morton** who will soon be wearing his third stripe following his success at the promotion board.

BAGHDAD SIGNAL TROOP
- by Lt Corns

Tp Comd	**Lt J Corns**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Young**

In May, 219 Sig Sqn deployed a detachment to Baghdad as part of the Baghdad Support Unit (BSU) to support the British Military contingent in the city.

The primary figurehead is the Senior British Military Liaison in Iraq (SBMR-I) **Lt Gen Cooper** who is the deputy commander to **Gen Patraeus** in Iraq. **Lt Gen Cooper** and his staff are supported by an infantry company (PROFOR), a Signals detachment and other support units that make up BSU.

The detachment comprises a staff element made up OC**, Maj Mould**, **FofS Clish** and **Sgt Hulbert.** The Tp is headed up by **Lt Corns** and **SSgt Young** and it is broken down into numerous detachments based in Maude House and the US Embassy in the Intentional Zone (IZ) and across at the Baghdad Intentional Airport (BIAP) complex.

A small advance party arrived in theatre a week before the main body to initiate the HO/TO. The main body of the Tp eventually arrived in theatre after a 48hr stop over in Qatar due to flight problems. The lads were devastated by this news and **Lt Corns** had to console them by the swimming pool. We made it to Baghdad Support Unit (BSU) in one piece after an early morning road move from the airport. **Cpl Gillam** RAF, **LCpl Borwick** and **LCpl Hodson** are attached to us from 10 Sig Regt and settled in already. During my first week I visited all the detachments to see the layout, equipment and routine to get a feel for the working conditions of the Tp.

SSgt Young and I then tinkered with the manning to try and even the workload across the detachments. After 3 weeks, things are starting to shape up and we are at a stage where the equipment and the routine is working how we want it to.

The camp has a weight and CV gym and plenty of the Tp are an Op MASSIVE, but a few of them need to realise that just taking weight gain powder and not going to the gym won't make you any stronger. Competition on the table tennis is heating up. I've not been the most competitive of opponents but its clear to me the lads are getting too much time to practise.

The Instl Techs, **LCpl Borwick** and **LCpl Hodson**, have had a few jobs to complete so far, including a full survey of the US embassy. Although painstaking work, they finally managed to complete the task.

The Techs, **Sgt Livesey**, **Cpl Wright** and **LCpl Hayden** on the other hand, have been the busiest of the bunch. On arrival, one of the voice systems proceeded to pack in. **Sgt Livesey** took command and on fixing it, it broke again. Undeterred, he managed to fix it again. With the words: "It's been up for 24 hours now, it will be fine!" we waited with baited breath to see if it would hold up. So far it's still working, but let's just wait and see!

The SBMRI COMMCEN Detachment Commander **Cpl 'Shez' Sherrington** and his side kick **LCpl 'Sparky' Heartfield** have been keeping things running smoothly with the help of **LCpl 'Cowhead' Cowell** and **Sig 'Jeppo' Jepson**. The COMMCEN is probably the smallest office in theatre, but has the largest amount of equipment. Barely enough room to swing a mouse, let alone a cat. The days are filled with VTCs and supporting the staff at Maude House.

With plenty of time for the gym in the evening, **LCpl Cowell** has also embarked on Op MASSIVE with the help from **Sig Hills.** While **LCpl Hartfield** has started his own quest to be the next **James Blunt**.

Without a doubt, the Information System Managers (ISM) department has been the busiest in terms of initial workload. With only **Sgt Brown**, **Cpl Gillam** RAF and **Sig Hills** being employed with the ISM department at Maude House, we have needed to become experts very quickly on a number of IT Systems that were unfamiliar to us. There was no question as to whether we could achieve this gargantuan task, as we are IS Engineers, and we had been well prepared in our prior training.

LCpl 'Harry' Harrison and **Sig 'Jeffo' Jeffries** are currently working in the Deputy Commander General (DCG) Office in the American Embassy. As the communications experts at this location, they have been providing top notch IT support and secure links for **Lt Gen Cooper** and his staff. Our various jobs involve the day to day running of several IT systems, assisting staff with any problems, and the maintenance of the detachment here.

We also get the privilege of polishing **Lt Gen Coopers'** desk at the end of the day! Working in the American Embassy gives you full access to the American welfare facilities, which include an outdoor swimming pool, fully air conditioned gym, laundry and a large screen cinema. The DFAC also offers a great range of food/drink from a healthy sandwich to a deep fried salad! Just about daily someone from BSU visits the DCG office, they always seem to arrive around meal timings and then sneak off to use the pool or gym afterwards!

We all would like to congratulate **Cpl Frain** and **Dawn** on their new arrival. I know the detachment is looking forward to his return.

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B G White**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

EXERCISE NORTHERN HIM MANAAV
- by Sig Yambahadur Gurung

The life of the soldier means he has to go through lots of physical and mental hurdles in his Army career. Soon after our successful operational tour on Op HERRICK, our Sqn OC, **Maj Ben White Saheb** organised a week long hill-walking event in the North West Highlands of Scotland from 12 – 19 May 08. The exercise was called Ex NORTHERN HIM MANAAV 08.

The training itself was very demanding; both physically and mentally. Even though, it sounds quite simple and easy when you hear it was merely 'hill-walking', it was most certainly not. You need to have good map reading skills, physical fitness, good route planning, basic first aid knowledge, good weather knowledge, countryside code, emergencies in hill and knowledge of the natural inhabitants in and around the area. On the top of this, your personal admin will play a vital role.

Luckily apart from one day, the weather was brilliant throughout the whole week; which only made our hill walking more interesting and challenging. Some of the hills were very steep with loose stones all over the tracks and along the steep cliffs. There were also rivers, snowlines, swamps and slippery heather bushes to negotiate.

But once we got to the top of the mountain peak the natural beauty made us forget all the hard work that we had put in to reach the peak and we were spellbound. Most of the group members were Mountain Leader Training (MLT) qualified, which gave us good opportunity to learn lots of things with regards to hill walking.

I must admit it was a good week away from the daily work on camp and was indeed thoroughly enjoyed by all.

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM
- by LCpl Barun Sherchan

Despite the busy schedule within the Sqn, members of Kowloon Tp from 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn set off on 3 June 08 to visit a historical place, The National Memorial Arboretum. The Arboretum is located within the National Forest in Staffordshire near Lichfield and was established in 1997 on former gravel and sand pit gifted from Lafarge Aggregates.

However, it was officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent on 16 May 01. The aim of our visit was to gain further knowledge about this historical place and also for a bit of troop bonding.

The Arboretum is the home of the new Armed Forces Memorial which was opened in October 2007. Designed by Liam O'Connor, the Memorial is a magnificent piece of architecture in its own right.

The stunning memorial contains the names of 16,000 service men and women killed on duty or by terrorist action since the end of the WW2 and they are engraved in the stone walls. The significance of the design is that it allows a shaft of sunlight to fall across the sculpted wreath on the central stone at precisely the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. It is also the only place in the country where the Two Minutes Silence is observed every day of the year.

The Arboretum comprises 150 acres of trees and memorials devoted to the concept of Remembrance. It is managed by the Royal British Legion and is part of the national forest. The Arboretum has a very wide range of tree species on the site, many chosen for symbolic reasons. It contains over 50000 trees, with more being added each year. Among them all, we were captured by one special tree which was planted in the name of the brave Gurkhas of the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles. We gathered around the tree and stood in silence to offer our tribute to our forefathers.

Overall, the visit proved to be insightful and educational and every one of us now has a better understanding and importance of the Arboretum. Visiting the Arboretum comes highly recommended.

Jai 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron!

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

CO	**Lt Col PEJ Drew**
RSM	**WO1 MR Eastman**

THE MORRISON CUP - *by Maj P Flavell*

FIRST WIN FOR MEN AND LADIES RUNNERS-UP IN MORRISON CUP

The Regimental Athletics team began the competitive season with a successful result at the Morrison Cup. The ladies' team came runners-up by just 1 point and the men's team won after a very close finish by just 2 points. On receiving the cup it became apparent that the Regt have no previous record of winning the men's trophy so this year's result was a great achievement for those involved, especially when one considers the number of troops deployed on operations from the Regt. Notable performances came in the men's team from; **Sig Cargill**, **Cpl McSween** in the sprints and **Lt Monk** in the hammer and from the ladies: **LCpl Walker** before she was called away for Army duty in the Heptathlon and **Cpl Francis** in the 800m. Overall it was the contribution of all team members in keeping the scoreboard ticking over that delivered success. Thanks are due to those in the Regt covering for the athletes, while they were away. At the time of going to press the men's and ladies teams are through to the Inter-unit semi-finals after finishing runners-up and 3rd in the 4 Div Championships. A number of Regimental athletes have also achieved Combined Services, Army and Corps representation this season.

Sig Charlery and Cpl Francis with their medals

Combined Services (v Loughborough and Brunel 7 May)

Maj Flavell	**Cpl Davies**
LCpl Walker	**Sig Cargill**

Army (v Loughborough/British Police 14 May)

Maj Flavell	**LCpl Pieterse**
Cfn Silvera	**Cfn Osabutey**
Cpl Francis	**Cpl Mcsween**
LCpl Walker	**Sig Cargill**
Sig Beardmore	

Corps (Inter-Corps Championships 11 Jun)

Maj Flavell	**LCpl Pieterse** RLC
Cfn Silvera REME	**Cfn Osabutey** REME
Cpl Francis AGC	**Cpl Mcsween**
Cpl Gunn (Nee Davies)	**LCpl Walker**
Sig Cargill	**Sig O'Neill**
Sig Beverley	

202 (ARMOURED) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj KA Owen**
SSM	**WO2 Scarrott**

The Sqn has had another busy period with a large number of soldiers deploying on tasks both in the UK and overseas. The Sqn currently has had soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Belize, Kenya and Brunei and is soon to send more off to BATUS. In addition it has been supporting all of the Regimental events, whether that Adventurous Training, sporting events, Charity fundraising and other military training. Worthy of particular note has been the departure of **WO2 Steve Crooks** on posting to be RSM of 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

202 CHARITY COLLECTION FOR THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND

The Sqn was set the task to raise £1000 as our contribution to the 2 Sig Regt Charity bike trip. The second self-imposed challenge was to raise this sum from outside the Regt. Consequently, once the various Town Councils' permission had been obtained, a week of Street Collections followed in local towns. The first day say the OC Sqn and **SSgt Daz Margle** take a team to Marlborough where the local 'Ladies who lunch' very generously gave £1700 in one morning. **2Lt Naomi Nichols** and her team made £1000 in Swindon while **SSgt Hood** managed to prise £700 out of the people of Devizes. Keen to get in on the act, the CO, **Maj Dom Sharkey** and the RSM, **WO1 Price** RRS assisted in the weekend's collection in Salisbury. Salisbury proved to be a real money spinner and with a sunny day on the following Tuesday market, we saw over £5000 being raised in those 2 days alone. **RSM Price's** kilted regalia was the centre of attention for most of the locals. Overall a total of £9,300 was raised for the ABF from the local populations.

WO1(RSM) Price, Maj Sharkey and Sgt Lea collecting for ABF in Salisbury

REGIMENTAL SKIING - *by Sig Stark*

On 29 March 08, 202 Sig Sqn took part in Ex TARENTAISE TIGER in the rather 'plush' resort of Tignes, France. On arrival and after a quick issuing of kit, there was ample time to grab a coffee (or beer). The rest of the day was spent getting acquainted with locals, checking out the nightlife and discovering what the sleepy town of Tignes had to offer.

Day 1 on the slopes got everyone back into the 'zone' and was good preparation for the 'ski off'. The rest of the week until Thursday was predominantly spent skiing in groups and meeting up for lunch at one of the competitively priced restaurants. It was at this point that **LCpl John Barratt** nearly caused an

'International Incident' when he found himself short changed after ordering 'a couple of cokes'.

Thursday was 'Super-Heroes' day and there was a strong turnout from all. Making an appearance this year Batman, Robin, Captain America, a Hawaiian Chick and would you believe it Wonder Woman (the SSM) all turned out in style. The chair lift to the slalom race course turned a few heads and before long the competition was underway.

Ex TARANTAISE TIGER – Super-heroes day in Tignes

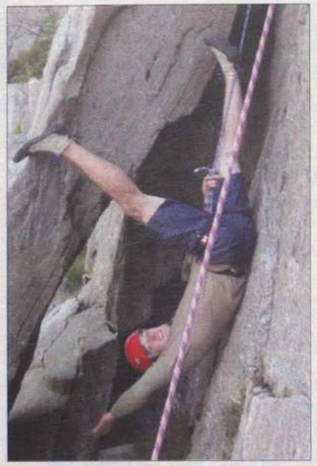
The entertainment for all to see was fantastic. The image of seeing very novice skiers, dressed as Super-Heroes trying to complete a Slalom course not only gave the locals some entertainment but also provided some useful entries for You-Tube. As the day went on, it was off the slopes and into the bar for 'beer and medals'. Friday was the last day for our skiing so everyone made the most out of it as best as could with just a slight headache (obviously due to altitude). It was an amazing week and I would recommend anyone to participate in an exercise like it in the future!

202 SIG SQN ADVENTURE TRAINING – THE AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE - *by Lt Greg Underwood Australian Army*

During the period 11 – 16 May 08, the Sqn conducted adventure training in Capel Curig, North Wales. On the first day I went for a "mountain walk" up Mount Snowdon. As we approached the start of the walk I thought to myself, this isn't going to be too bad, that mountain doesn't look too big. Then I found out that it was actually the beast of a mountain that dominated the area in the background that we were walking up and not the "little hill" that I had mistaken. It was at this point that I thought "Crikey!" this is going to destroy a few people today – especially the fatties. The walk took approximately 6 hrs and we had immaculate views for kilometres.

On the Tuesday I decided to give my legs a bit of a workout and tackled the monstrous mountains that **Lt Monk** and **SSgt Young** "Recce'd" the day before. We rode down to the start point, had a bit of a warm up and motivational talk about the day ahead. After **Sig Stevens** showed everyone how not to ride through a stagnant puddle, lie in it, and come out smelling and looking like he had a bath in a toilet bowl, we set off on our journey. We travelled up and down various hillsides and stopped off along the way for a few punctured tyres, **SSgt Young's** mountain bike skill lessons and some lunch. It was inspirational and a credit to their "reconnaissance" to get three quarters of the way around the course, completely knackered, to hear "Right, where the bloody hell are we?" - twice! It was at this time that I thought, "Struth, these POMS have gone and got me bl**dy lost in the middle of Wales!"

Once we got ourselves back on track, it was a very quick pace to make it back home in time for the 1530hrs deadline. We made it back only 10 min overtime which was quite an impressive tempo



Lt Underwood climbing the Australian Way

even when we "re-rode" part of the course and overcame some more tyre punctures.

On the Wednesday and Thursday I went for a climb up "Little Tryfan" which ironically is not so little. We did some challenging climbs and abseils while the RAF flew Euro Fighters and Hawks through the valley below us. As we climbed up the rock faces, in our special rock climbing shoes that allowed us to climb like spider man, we once again, had clear skies and awesome views. Some of the lads even decided it was time to work on their tan and show off their pasty white bodies that hadn't seen sunlight for the last 10 months.

As if the sheer thrill of climbing a cliff face wasn't enough, some of the lads decided they would take the challenge of climbing blindfolded. With some excellent efforts, all managed to reach the top. Once we had all climbed and abseiled a number of times, we retired back to camp for beer and medals.

That night, **Lt King** decided to have a BBQ to conclude what was an excellent week of adventure training. This was an excellent plan, but poorly executed. The sheer thought of 2 POM officers cooking a BBQ with coals sent a very cold electrifying shiver down my spine. To the chef's credit, they did a good job considering the amateur and primitive construction concocted by **Lt King** and **Lt Monk**. Not to my surprise, food was served around 2 hrs later, once **Cpl Doyle** and I made some adjustments.

On Friday morning we turned over the camp and departed for Bulford Camp. The week had been an excellent training experience. It allowed 9 individuals to achieve basis proficiency qualifications and from what I saw put quite a few people out of their comfort zone. It also created a great social atmosphere for some of the newer members of the Sqn to meet and greet. I'm sure that next year's Regimental adventure training package in March will be just as challenging and entertaining.

A TROOP COMMANDER IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS
- by Lt Stuart Thomas

Following on from the article 'A Troop Commander in JCUFI' in April 2008, avid readers will have been waiting with great anticipation for my second (and final) report of my time in the Falkland Islands. I have just completed my 6 month tour of JCUFI (Joint Communications Unit Falkland Islands) and have had at various times the following sections under my command: IT Cell, Aerial Maintenance Section (AMS), Systems Control (SYSCON), Communications Centre (COMMCEN), Communications Maintenance Installation Section (CMIS) and the Forward Repair Team (FRT) as OC Eng Support Tp. Resembling an independent Sig Sqn, JCUFI is commanded by **Maj Duncan Parkinson.** Along with the TOT, Eng Sp Tp Comd, Unit SSM, Foreman and about 40% of the soldiers, he comes from the Corps. The remainder of the unit comprises RAF and RN personnel: the result is a diverse working environment, which to my surprise saw smaller differences in working practices and ideology than I expected. Although amusingly, those differences

Engineer Support Troop Falkland Islands

which became apparent seemed often to conform with well known stereotypes, which won't be mentioned here!

With winter starting to kick in, the beach themed bar Sharkies, is the place to be seen on a Friday night, now completely refurbished to an outstanding standard – it's the 'invitation only' bar that all on camp want to get into. Keeping a sense of tradition, everyone can expect a couple of misdemeanours and funnies to lighten the mood, which result in a bell ringing and a £5 fine.

One particular incident deserves special mention. A SNCO who shall remain nameless needed to send a letter by fax to the UK. To the amusement of the Sqn Clerk, it quickly became apparent he had not used a fax machine before. This nameless Sgt who worked in the IT Cell proceeded to feed the letter through the fax machine inside an A4 envelope! I promised not to talk stereotypes, but she was RAF!

JCUFI has become widely respected on camp due to the extremely professional way it operates, but it's the extra-curricular activities that deserve particular praise. Just in the period of my tour, the unit raised thousands of pounds for charity, always had more entrants for station events than any other unit, including the March and Shoot and the MPA Dash, participated in every sporting event going and our soldiers ran the paintball range in their spare time.

The whole unit was encouraged to participate in the unique opportunities that the Falklands hold, from battlefield tours, flights on the C130 and VC10, to the numerous wildlife trips where you can observe penguins, dolphins, whales and sea lions in their natural environment.

Leading from the front, I felt it was my duty to get out of the office as much as possible and so took every chance to get out and about. From the top down, the ethos is definitely work hard – play hard.

It's not all been fun and games; there has been a lot of hard work to do. Sustaining and maintaining the on-island communications has often been extremely demanding and time consuming. I would like to thank all the soldiers who have worked tirelessly for me throughout my tour and coupled with excellent leadership from my sect commanders and SSgts, much of the short term attitude (4/6 month syndrome) has been eradicated and replaced with the Tp all pulling in the same direction. From a personal perspective, being a Tp Comd in the Falklands has been a terrific opportunity. It has been my first prolonged experience of commanding soldiers and the diverse nature of the Tp has given me exposure that I don't think can be achieved anywhere else. Just from the Corps, the Tp consisted of Radio Operators, Techs, Installation Techs and Driver Lineman. Throw in RAF Techs and Riggers and Navy operators and I have had a truly eclectic mix. This tour has proved invaluable in my personal development, I have learnt a tremendous amount and after a year and a half of training, I have had a great time in finally doing what I always wanted to do, be a Tp Comd.

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENT ON OP TELIC

On the most romantic day of the year, the Baghdad Support Unit (BSU) Quiz night was no ordinary quiz night. It was a night that most would remember. On 14 February, Baghdad Sig Sqn held a Charity Auction. Many of the Signal Detachment volunteered to do weird and wonderful activities; from Breakfast in Bed served by 2 lovely young ladies, to being a slave for the morning as **Cpl Wilson** volunteered. It was not only the Signals that auctioned off items. The Chief of Staff, **Cdr Corderoy** auctioned off his large bath for the evening which was strangely snapped up quickly by an odd pairing of **LCpls Symmington** and **Von Anrep**. There was lots of interest from everyone within BSU and also from outside units. The event went well and the Sqn raised a massive $1100 for 'Help for Heroes'.

Being at the range every month is a task enjoyed by all ranks. Some get to fire the 9mm Pistol for the first time. The latest range day was run by **SSgt Duplock**, who went through a few different pistol firing techniques.

The Signals Fun Sunday was a fun sports day organised by **Sig Washington**. It included many of the sports events which are run often here in BSU. With the problem of communication faults arising, some entrants could not make the events. Nevertheless, the day was well run and the victors of the day were **Sgt Gallagher** (Team Leader), **LCpl Phillips**, **LCpl Hankey** and the Player of the Day **Sig Cargill**.

Since being here at BSU Baghdad, we have had many VIPs visiting, some being of high importance. On 4/5 March, we had **Lt Gen Houghton**, who is the current Chief of Joint Operations (CJO). The 12/13 March brought us the Secretary of State for Defence **Rt Hon Des Browne MP**. He took some time to speak to each department in BSU. More recently, on 15/16 the Chief of the Defence Staff, **Air Chief Marshall Sir Jock Stirrup** came to BSU. He also took the time to speak to individuals from BSU.

Secretary of State with Baghdad Signal Squadron

7th SIGNAL REGIMENT
ELMPT

CO **Lt Col NJ Makepeace**
RSM **WO1(RSM) McDonald**

SWIMMING AND WATERPOLO - *by Lt Lifton*

On 16 May 08 an Inter-Sqn Swimming Competition was held as part of the ongoing CO's Cup. This saw members of all Sqns braving the outdoor pool in Elmpt to compete in various individual events and relays. The aim of the day was to provide the opportunity for soldiers to represent their Sqns in a sport they might not normally have much chance to do. The proud winners of the event were 229 (Berlin) Sig Sqn, followed by Support Sqn, 231 Sig Sqn and 232 Sig Sqn.

229 (Berlin) Signal Squadron Swimming Team – winners of the CO's Cup Swimming Event

Many of the competitors from this event then went on to represent the Regt at the BA(G) Swimming Competition, where both male and female teams achieved runner-up positions in their respective categories, thus securing themselves a place in the Army Championships. A last minute decision to enter a water polo team proved worthwhile after the team beat Elmpt Station rivals 16 Sig Regt to secure themselves a place in the final and finished up as runners-up.

Well done to all those who took part in both events. The team will now look forward to the Army Championships in June.

Cpl Smith competing in the Individual Medley event at the BA (G) Swimming Competition

JAVELIN BARRACKS 2008 CADRE COURSE
- by Sig Murray and Sig Ford

Starting early on the morning of Friday 18 April, 41 of the Elmpt Station Signallers were preparing for the first instalment of the 2008 Cadre Course – a basic CFT followed immediately by a best effort mile boot run. Our brains were then given a workout in the form of a written test containing questions on all aspects of military field work. The remaining members of the Course paraded at the Training Wing on Sunday with their best 95 kit for **WO1(RSM) McDonald's** parade. The "mighty" 3 Sect stood fast while the unluckier 1 and 2 Sects were marched off. To top the day off however the Training Wing staff had organised a nice burden retrieval that ended with a 2km stretcher race. It was at this point most people were starting to regret being placed on the course at all but once completed, all had a great sense of achievement. But there was more to come!

The rest of the week consisted of power point presentations mixed up with a few cheeky PT sessions and command tasks thrown in. The final exercise consisted of a week in the field at Haltern training area. The content included patrolling and contact drills, basic field craft and sect attacks. The week culminated in a PI level attack followed by a Casevac (another 2km stretcher race in disguise). After 2 weeks hard work, the 31 remaining members of the course were treated to a presentation meal at the 7 Sig Regt's Sgts Mess. The highlight of the night was **Sig Foot** being awarded top student and receiving his well deserved promotion to LCpl. All that remained was to catch up on some well deserved sleep and food!

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Rawlinson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) J Love**

- by Maj Darcy Rawlinson, Australian Army

Since the last edition of *The Wire*, it has been a busy period for 229 Sig Sqn. We have conducted a Sqn Battle Camp, coordinated the Regimental effort for ANZAC Day and also managed to fit in a bit of communications training. The Sqn has unfortunately bade farewell to the SSM, **WO2(SSM) Gary Sinclair** but we have recently welcomed his replacement, **WO2(SSM) John Love**. I welcome **WO2 (SSM) Love** to the Sqn and note that the soldiers are quickly getting to know him.

ANZAC DAY 2008 - *by Cpl Pawson and LCpl Findlay*

A lot of hard work by the Sqn, headed up by Wilmersdorf Tp led to another successful ANZAC day on 25 April 2008. Behind the scenes a lot of preparation took place, from weeding to organising the entertainment for the day in question. All departments were more than willing to help when called upon.

ANZAC Day is celebrated on 25 April each year to commemorate the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (the ANZACs) on the shores of Gallipoli in 1915. ANZAC day is a National Day of Remembrance in both Australia and New Zealand and in recognition of the Australian Exchange Officer at 7 Sig Regt, ANZAC Day ceremonies are conducted by the Regt each year.

ANZAC Day at Javelin Barracks was an opportunity for all serving soldiers to commemorate the personal sacrifices made in past conflicts and to celebrate their own commitment to service. This commitment was tested at 0500hrs when the soldiers were woken by the SNCOs and Officers for a "Gunfire Breakfast". This included a feed of ANZAC biscuits and some rum and coffee –

apparently a traditional ANZAC Day breakfast. The formalities of the day then began with a dawn service conducted by **Padre Feltham-White** which was a solemn occasion for reflection on the meaning of the day. The rest of the Regt, despite still looking half asleep, held their candles and made their voices heard during the service.

The service was followed by a Regimental breakfast held at JB's café and a morning tea for the senior staff. After a quick change parade, the Inter-Sqn sports day followed. The gym staff kept us entertained with a variety of Australian themed sports and a ridiculous choice of costumes – led as always by the QMSI, **WO2 Cawley**. The winners of the final relay event were (un)surprisingly, 229 Sig Sqn. Our prize was to soak our Aussie OC, **Maj Rawlinson**.

The day rounded off nicely with everyone meeting at Archies Bar, with addresses by the CO, **Lt Col Makepeace** and **Maj Rawlinson**. The afternoon's entertainment kicked off with a BBQ and music provided by the rock band Offsteam, while the closet gamblers got involved in the traditional ANZAC game of 'Two Up'. The day was most definitely a success. The Regt's newcomers got a good understanding of the significance of ANZAC Day and fun was had by all who attended.

BATLLE CAMP - *by Sig Gray*

This year's Sqn Battle Camp was mainly organised by **SSgt Blakeley** and the location was the dreaded Haltern. The Admin Party and the Directing Staff departing on 4 April and the remainder of the Sqn followed on the Sunday. Once we arrived we hit the ground running as we went straight into map reading with **Sgt Norris**. Military Annual Training Tests (MATTs) continued for the rest of the week at nights and with ranges during the day. The ranges consisted of an APWT, GPMG training and numerous Pistol shoots. This is where the likes of **Cpl Simpkins**, **Cpl Grounds** and **Cpl Berry** felt at home with their Skill at Arms Training.

After a week of training, the field phase finally arrived to put all our skills to the test but as per usual, so did the rain. Nevertheless morale still remained high. We patrolled to our first harbour location where we found that our navigator **LCpl Alfereti** had taken us to the wrong location. After a few days of finding battlefield casualties everywhere, including **Sig Fletcher** who managed to get fake blood on almost everyone, and a defensive shoot where we managed to fire off 17,000 rounds using GPMGs and our personal weapons. Surprisingly we won the fire fight!

Wednesday arrived and we had a March and Shoot competition between the sects in both Pls. After trekking 2 miles on what seemed to be Mt Everest, we loaded up and fired on our targets. All credit to **Cpl MacArthur**, **Sgt Wood** and **Sgt Watson** who ran the course 6 times. With the exercise completed and all MATTs passed, it was time to wrap things up with a BBQ where the award for best sect was won by 3 Sect, 2 Pl led by **LCpl Claydon**, 2IC **LCpl Cook** and the award for Best Soldier went deservedly to **Sig Priestley.**

231 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Chopsey Cornell**
SSM **WO2 Lee Linton**

Ex ARRCADE DEPLOYEX has been the Sqn's focus for the last couple of months alongside a number of smaller activities that the Sqn has got stuck into. We finished 2nd in an extremely successful Bruggen 10 competition and enjoyed celebrating ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) Day.

The sun is shinning at last and has brought an atmosphere that can only be provided by the onset of summer; the pool is open and the lifeguards are strutting around in their 'Baywatch' style outfits. What else has summer got in store for the mighty 7th and 231 Sig Sqn in particular? The answer is: exercise, adventure training, more exercise and then preparation for the long awaited HERRICK tour next February but I'm sure we will manage the odd social occasion and sports event here and there.

The summer also spells the end of an era for 231 as the majority of the operations team will have changed by the time the Regt deploys to Afghanistan in February 2009 so a lot of new fresh faces are expected. The Sqn bids farewell to **WO2(FofS) Pete Levick,** who is moving office and that's all, as on promotion to WO1, he takes up the position of Bde FofS at 1 Sig Bde some 15kms away in JHQ, Rheindahlen. He will be replaced by a younger model: **WO2(FofS) Garry Stokoe**, who joins the Sqn from 232 Sig Sqn, who are based at the other end of our shared corridor.

The Sqn looks forward to 2 weeks of adventurous training in southern Germany at the end of June and before this there will be a week Range Camp, which will involve live firing, probably a first for the majority of the younger members. There are also a number of smaller events planned; Ascot Day, the Station Pool Party and the Regt's Summer Fete. So all in all a busy but fun time ahead.

OSCAR TROOP

OC **Capt Steph Archibald**
SSgt **SSgt Richie Savage**

VISIT TO CHURCH HOUSE - *by Sig David Griffiths*

It was a fairly unenthusiastic bunch who met ready to go to Church House. No-one was really sure what to expect but we feared that we would be faced with 2 days of religious studies. However, after a very hot 4 hr drive we arrived and were greeted by the exceptionally friendly church house staff, the Padre who would be taking our course and a really good lunch. Things were off to a good start! After some interesting lessons on teamwork, team spirit, morale and problem solving, we were free to choose our own activities for the remaining 2 lessons. Most went to play tennis on the Church House tennis courts while others had a short siesta.

A gong announced the BBQ was ready, which we enjoyed with a couple of beers. We were surprised and happy to find that we had found ourselves in the cheapest bar in NATO with a shot costing 30 cents and a beer from the local brewery only 70 cents. We played a few games and laughed and joked our way late in to the night.

After a very peaceful sleep a hearty breakfast was served and as the Padre was away for the beginning of the morning, we were free "to practise our relaxation techniques". Most people went into town and enjoyed an ice cream, whilst others took a walk or read the papers...some (the losers of the previous evening's games) went back to bed. At the agreed time we met up in the classroom again for 3 interesting lessons with handouts about dealing with problem people and how well our team worked at the moment. We didn't fare too badly but found there were definitely areas for improvement. We left Church House after another good lunch and arrived back at Javelin Barracks just in time for supper.

Our preconceived ideas about Church House have now been changed and everybody is yearning to go back, hopefully with the rest of the Tp. Many thanks go to **Cpl Chris Parker** for organising the trip.

RADIO TROOP

OC **Lt Sandy Hennis**
SSgt **SSgt Eggy Henderson**

EXERCISE ARRCADE FALCON - *by Lt Sandy Hennis*

It was a Sunday evening and instead of getting an early night, 8 members of Radio Tp were looking forward to an overnight drive to France for the start of ARRCADE FALCON. We were

conducting a long distance communications exercise to test the Bowman equipment while following the 'Help for Heroes' Big Battlefield Bike ride. This meant that we would also have the chance to go on the battlefield tours that the cyclists were attending.

After the normal last minute checks and changing of bulbs, we set off to JHQ to join up with the ARRC Support Battalion guys who were running the exercise. Once we had our new crewmen on board and all the kit loaded there was just time for a quick pizza before we set off. After plenty of stops and a quick detour to avoid protesting French fishermen, we finally arrived in Ouistreham in time to help put the last of the tents up. Two very important lessons were learnt on that drive. Firstly that **LCpl 'Tomo' Thomas** was actually the worst driver in the world and secondly that **Sgt 'Si' Burns** was seriously addicted to coffee.

The next day with communications established back to Elmpt, the detachments set off early so they would be set up before the cyclists got off the ferry. All seemed to be running smoothly, until **Cpl 'Dodge' Coppack** came on the net to ask for recovery. Apparently the French country lanes were too much for him so he had decided to park his Rover in a ditch. With no damage done he was soon back on his way.

Our ARRC Support Battalion attachments were soon in the swing of things and we even had time to teach some of their LAD personnel how to put up a dipole. With the communications exercise going well, we then had the chance to rotate people through some of the battlefield tours that were taking place. We had all learnt about the D Day landings on the first night and the battles really came to life as we visited many of the sites and heard about them in much more depth.

There were some very sobering moments as small ceremonies took place to lay wreaths at different memorials and historians were at hand to explain each battle in detail. The biggest of these memorials was at Thiepval and all personnel had the chance to attend the ceremony along with the cyclists. This also gave the guys chance to see the Page 3 girl who was taking part in the bike ride. A photo opportunity that **LCpl 'Snake' Ferris** was the first to jump at.

Getting to know some of the cyclists, the lads were happy to meet a Page Three model

Before we knew it we were in Bethanue, our final site before we left the cyclists and headed back to Germany. Everybody's' skills were now fully honed and we could even reach back to camp on 2m whips. Although this did mean I had to force people to put up masts.

After a marginally shorter drive back we said goodbye to our ARRC Support Battalion operatives. We were not sure if **Cpl 'Swede' Roberts** could cope with the loss of his dance partner crewman **Pte 'Emma' Harris** but with vehicles to turn round he soon got over it. Overall a good exercise with loads of different experiences and great opportunities to learn about WWI and WWII, not to mention a testing navigation exercose for myself.

QUEBEC TROOP

OC	**Lt Phil Marshall**
SSgt	**SSgt Harrison**

The period since Easter leave has been busy for Quebec Tp with exercise, operational and sporting commitments. Many of the Tp swam in the Inter-Sqn and BA(G) swimming competitions – well done to **Sgt King** for winning his races.

The Tp has been spread far and wide during Ex ARRCADE DEPLOYEX, with elements deployed to different locations in the UK as well as down the road from Elmpt in JHQ. The long-running argument over whether Inst Techs or Dvr Lnm work harder or more productively is no closer to being answered but in the end the Tp managed to get the job done despite **Sig Chris Stanton's** best efforts. It seems the Belgium road system just about survived his attempts to bring it to a stand-still by driving through the Kennedy tunnel in his fuel truck.

We welcome **LCpl Jelly Baker** to the Tp from Blandford and **LCpl Dave Wilson** and **LCpl Steve Collier** from Support Sqn. We say a fond farewell to **LCpl Leon Crayton**, posted to 21 Sig Regt and **Sig Fraser Brown** who is going to the dark side: 1(UK) Civ Div. We send congratulations and best wishes to **SSgt Al Watson** on his promotion to WO2 and commiserations for his posting to 16 Sig Regt. Finally we welcome the newest member of the Tp: **Emelia Vinson**, who arrived just as this was going to press and is not ginger like her dad **Cpl Mini-Vinne Vinson** thank goodness.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON - *by Lt Lynton Bell*

OC	**Maj AJ Lawson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) G Revell**

Preparation and planning for the ARRC exercise season has been the main effort for the Sqn of late. There has been a lot of work put in by all involved for Ex ARRCADE DEPLOYEX, with the majority of us, including all of Delta Tp, deployed across the channel to Caerwent in Wales. Tac Tp and a contingent of Hotel Tp have remained in Germany to form part of the exercise nearer to home. We have had a couple of high profile visits to our location on exercise recently, including COMARRC, **Lt Gen R Shirreff CBE** and the GOC, **Maj Gen H Rollo CBE**.

Our young Sigs have also recently completed their challenging and at times, gruelling cadre course. The standard of performance was high throughout and after the dawn attack on the final day, there were some tired but happy faces at the end of it. There were some amusing occurrences, notably **Sig Merrigan** executing a sect attack with a massive hole torn through the front of his trousers (but that didn't stop him!) and some sharp shooting grenadier potential was demonstrated by **Sig Kamara** when asked to take a shot at a Fig 11 at 150m with a UGL. He stepped up to the plate and fired....unfortunately he had not

Sig Kamara and Sig Harrod show off their 'direct hits' with UGL from 150m

closed the breach. On attempt 2, a direct hit was scored! It punched a whole straight through the target's chest. Brilliant.

Despite all of this, regimental life continues as normal and we continue to try and fit sporting and extra mural activities into everyone's busy schedule. Boxing training continues for a small contingent of soldiers as they work extremely hard in preparation for the Inter-Sqn boxing competition in the near future. The Officers attended the Corps Dinner Night in London which, as expected, was filled with misbehaviour, hilarious and at times shamelessly childish antics.

With the pool now open for summer, the CO's Cup Swimming Competition has just been held, which was well attended and competed in by all. As a result of that, time trials were held for the BA(G) Swimming and Water Polo Competition, in which we came 2nd in both, a notable achievement. **Cpl 'Ollie' Smith** swam superbly and he made it at least one of us who knew what on earth was going on in the Water Polo afterwards. It was a hard but enjoyable day in the pool and cramp and sunburn all round were the order of the day by close of play.

ANZAC day was a great success and enjoyed by all, both on the sporting and social side in the afternoon. After some crazy Southern Hemisphere potted sports kindly provided by the gym, we moved down to the 'Archies' field where a band, BBQ and drinks had been laid on for all to enjoy (but not to excess of course!). There the CO also announced the results of the Bruggen 10 road race and it seems that whilst 232 might not have come first where results are concerned, we certainly did come first for attendance (Gold Star!). It was good to see that our soldiers had made the effort to get out on the day and all are congratulated for their support. A big well done goes out too, to those who raised some very respectable amounts of funding for charity, particularly those in masochistic fancy dress like **LCpl Nelson** who could barely be seen cammed-up in his homemade 'gilly' suit...

The Sqn has recently bade farewell and good luck to **Lt Emma Hughes** and **WO1 Paul Jordan** who have left us for 19 Lt Bde in Northern Ireland. And we welcome **2Lt 'Loz' Willmore** who joins us as the new Hotel Tp Comd and **2Lt Sam Brinkworth** who joins the Sqn on a long attachment. A warm welcome to the new SSM in our Sqn; **WO2 Glen 'Barney' Revell** who joins us from 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ and Sig Regt. Finally **SSgt(FofS) 'Gaz' Stokoe** is congratulated on his promotion to WO2 on posting to 231 Sig Sqn.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Fradley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) N Elliot**

The last month has been a busy period for Support Sqn. The main event however has to have been the Bruggen 10 road race. This is an event held on Javelin Barracks and consists of a pre-determined 10 mile road run. Support Sqn had the honour of organising the race. Special mention has to go to the on-the-day charity collectors: **LCpls Baxter** and **Rodway** for their tenacity in getting people to part with their hard-earned money, and if they managed to get cash from me then they can get it from anybody. The main race started at 1400hrs and consisted of a mixture of civilian and military personnel from across the globe. Fortune smiled during the race and provided only a slightly overcast day which led to superb running conditions. Again, it has to be noted that Support Sqn did particularly well in the actual race itself with **LCpl Hatch** coming in at 1 hr 9 mins and Support Sqn won overall on the inter-sqn race. Once the race was over and all of the prizes and awards were handed out, everyone gathered for the obligatory "Hanger Bash" with live band, disco and bar. The event was a real success and a good time was had by all.

The week following the Bruggen Ten, **LCpl Hatch, Cpl Foley, Sgt Booth** and **Sgt Hatch** entered the Gutersloh half marathon coming in with a team time of 1hr 38 mins. Following the Bruggen 10, Support Sqn then carried out MATT training (1-6) at Sennelager (Ex WOODLAND FLIGHT). For a change, the weather decided to stay glorious all week enabling the completion of the programmed MATTs as well as ensuring a good time was had by all. **SSgt Thirwell** idea to organise the MATT training away from the work environment proved to be a success in keeping people away from being dragged into work enabling personnel to concentrate on training. In between the fun and the games however a lot of hard work has been carried out in ensuring Support Sqn personnel continue to be the driving engine behind the success of 7 Sig Regt.

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT
CORSHAM

CO	**Lt Col RJ Quinlan**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Rayson**

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Jez Toze**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Kev East**

The Sqn approached the busiest time of the year with 638 Sig Tp conducting ceremonial Ops and 1 and 2 Tp still busy training and exercising with their UK Ops assets whilst also introducing Project Tyndale into the Army.

1 TROOP - *by Sig Matt Bignell*

OC	**Capt Emma Cameron**
SSgt	**SSgt Kenny Macpherson**

February saw the Regt hold its annual Signallers' Cadre course consisting of one week military revision. This was followed by a week long field phase where lessons learned were put into practice. The course was really enjoyable and it gave us all a chance to meet the other Sigs in the Regt, though at times it was challenging. The top Sig award went to **Sig Burns** who was awarded local rank of LCpl for his efforts.

The Tp would like to say goodbye to **Cpl 'Steaders' Steadman** who is off to Chicksands on promotion and **SSgt(YofS) Paul Calvert** who has left us for a short spell with ECM(FP) Sqn on Op HERRICK. The Tp has had many new faces posted in and we welcome **LCpl Grant De Souza** and **Sigs 'Mandi' Mapheka, 'Baz' Webster** and **Mark Brymer.**

The Tp would also like to congratulate **LCpl Mel Walker** on her marriage to **Sgt Geoff Overend**.

2 TROOP - *by Sig Abouda*

OC	**Capt James McClean**
SSgt	**SSgt Marc Bagstaff**

The CO's Cup consists of a number of sporting events throughout the year culminating in a military patrol competition on Battle Camp in June. 251 Sig Sqn are defending champions. **WO2(SSM) Kevin East** made the Sqn's intentions very clear – we must win! The Sqn had 1st position tied with 243 Sig Sqn and it was our chance to gain the lead. Events got underway and first up was the 400m Hurdles. **Cpl Ronnie Debique** started as the Sqn meant to go on, coming first without much difficulty and **Sig Gray** was streets ahead of the field in the 100m and brought home the 4 x 100m as well.

LCpl Kris Looker had an impressive day, winning all 3 of his events and contributing massively to both relay events. There were a number of good performances on track and field and soon the day was culminating in a quite dramatic finale. All day we had been keeping an eye on 243 Sig Sqn's progress but it turned out that it was ECM Sqn that we needed to watch as the final battle to decide the winner of the Athletics went down to the last relay. 251 Sig Sqn was then crowned champion after a very strong sprint race. The Sqn now look forward to winning the final event in the CO's cup and becoming Regimental champions once again.

The Sqn congratulates and sends its best to **Sgt Chris Brady** and **Kerry** who have a lovely baby boy, **Owen**. We also bid a fond farewell to **Capt Alex Hodges** who leaves for ATC Pirbright with a tan which he somehow achieved during an arduous sailing expedition...in the Caribbean.

638 (LONDON) SIGNAL TROOP

OC	**Lt James Snelgrove**
Sgt	**Sgt Phil Brown**

Often in the Army, soldiers are asked to carry out duties that they have never done before. In most cases you can go to an expert or at least to someone who has done it before. With ceremonials however, it is often not that easy. On 27 March the President of the French Republic was to arrive for a State Visit. This would not normally have been cause for concern as the Tp are well versed and practised in London State Visits but things are never that simple. This visit was to be at Windsor Castle, something that had not been done for 7 years and not even GSM LONDIST had seen it before! So began a very steep learning curve for all involved.

After much to-ing and fro-ing from Windsor, the big day was finally upon us. All went well and any minor mistakes were missed by most as they were all intently watching **Madame Sarkozy,** the ex-model and singer wife of the President.

With a successful State Visit over we say goodbye to **LCpl Shaun Woodward** who leaves us to try and find his millions in civilian life and **LCpl Bob Innes** who also leaves the Sqn. We say good luck and send our best to them both.

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Graham Pardew**
SSM	**SSgt Matt Stowell**

Commitments continue at pace with the Sqn training for and competing in the 'Race the Sun' and Morrison Cup Competitions, in addition to late notice tasks to provide much needed infrastructure support to the Combined Arms Staff Trainer (CAST) North in Catterick. Surge teams recently re-deployed to Op HERRICK and Op TELIC for approximately 6 weeks and the Sqn now look forward to deploying on a Leadership Development Training Exercise and enjoying a well earned Sqn BBQ with the soldiers, their friends and relatives.

KILO TROOP

OC	**Capt SLR Gray**
SSgt	**SSgt M Stowell**

RACE THE SUN 08 - *by Sig Richard Webb*

On 15 May 08, 21 teams fought it out to win Race the Sun 08, the 15 leg multi activity relay race that takes place in and around York, starting and finishing at Imphal Barracks. The race began with **Maj Toze** (OC 251) making a 500m sprint to his kayak then a 6km paddle down the River Ouse to hand over to Leg 2 the River Run in 3rd place. **Cpl Dickinson** (ECM (FP) Sqn) and **LCpl Watson** (251 Sig Sqn) got off to a good start but unfortunately the pair lost their way slightly and ended up in someone's gardens and running an extra 1km.

I was tagged next and began my leg. With every turn of the run then bike I thought I would be able to catch the man in front of me, alas **Lt Col Cole**, CO 2 Sig Regt, beat to me to the leg finish. In the end I was 4th with seconds between us. It was then up to the runners, **LCpl Robinson** (251 Sig Sqn) and **Sgt Naylor** (ECM(FP)Sqn) on the hill run to continue the pressure.

They did well to finish as this leg was keeping us in contention as they handed over to **Sgt Nichol** (ECM (FP Sqn) and **Cpl Potts** (233 Sig Sqn) for the loaded march. With them keeping up the pace we were 6 mins behind 2 Sig Regt and on to Leg 6, the Moor Run. This leg saw some internal team rivalry, with **Capt McClaren** (QM) and **WO1(RSM) Rayson** both competing to win it for us. The QM succeeded coming in first and setup the rivalry to continue on Leg 11.

Leg 7, the Half Marathon was where the tide turned in our favour on the day. A massive effort from **Capt Clay** (251 Sig Sqn) and **Sgt Harvey** (ECM (FP) Sqn) finishing 5th and 6th respectively set us up again to finish higher in the placings. Then followed a hard Mountain Bike leg by **Cpl Gollop** (251 Sig Sqn) and **2Lt Collier** (251 Sig Sqn), a strong finish in the Fell Run by **Maj Pardew** (241 Sig Sqn) and **LCpl Mills** (241 Sig Sqn) and a tough but successful Orienteering leg by **Cpl Thomas** (ECM(FP) Sqn).

Capt Clay (5th) and Sgt Harvey (6th) at the completion of the Half Marathon

Next was the Forest Run with another internal competition between **WO2 Manley** (243 Sig Sqn) and **WO2(RQMS) Leask**. As it turned out, the prior Race the Sun knowledge of **WO2 Leask** won the day.

Leg 12 was Cycle Orienteering; **Cpl Howe** (243 Sig Sqn) and **2Lt Conway** (251 Sig Sqn) planning and then cycling the 27km route towards Castle Howard. **Sgt Angus** formally of 10 Sig Regt and now 19 Lt Bde Sig Sqn was promising a win for his side; however **Cpl Howe** proved otherwise and finished 2 mins ahead of him.

The final stages of the event began with a mass start for the Lake Swim; **Cpl Bond** (ECM (FP) Sqn). She then handed over to **Sgt Campbell** (243 Sig Sqn), who made up places on the 29km cycle and 6km run back to Imphal Barracks.

The final event was the Stretcher Race. The team of **LCpl Harle** (251 Sig Sqn), **WO1(RSM) Rayson**, **Cpl Potts** (233 Sig Sqn), **Cpl Watson** (251 Sig Sqn) and **LCpl Lawson** (251 Sig Sqn) putting in a brilliant effort to finish in 16 mins and 8th place overall.

After nearly 15 hrs of racing 10 Sig Regt finished 2nd and a full 6 mins ahead of 3rd placed 2 Sig Regt, We have proved that our Regt is a sporting force to be reckoned with, and we can't wait to compete again next year to go one better.

LIMA TROOP - *by Cpl Rod Williamson*

OC	**Capt AP Manley**
SSgt	**SSgt S Reeves**

The Tp currently has a team led by **Sgt Ben McFaul**, deployed on Op HERRICK even though a Lima Tp team has only recently returned from Op TELIC. In the early hours of Monday 10 March 2008, 7 brave men from the glorious Lima Tp embarked to the Middle East on a journey promising action and adventure.

A 7 man team led by **Sgt 'Ski' Grabowski** deployed to Basra to assist J6 (Synergy) in upgrading the communications infrastructure. We carried out a number of tasks, ranging from installing a new infrastructure for both the RMP detachment and the Royal Engineer EOD team to pulling new copper and fibre in to the existing pit and duct routes. To finish off we worked at Bde HQ carrying out a general tidy up of the existing infrastructure.

Unfortunately not Lima Tp transport for the 6 weeks

During our 6 weeks we came under around 100 IDF attacks the closest of which landed 30 – 40m away from where we were, although **Sig Dan Matthews** would swear it was closer; what a hero! Overall this was a great experience for all troops involved and with some of the more junior members gaining the Op TELIC medal to boot.

Since our last submission, **LCpl Steve Hargreaves** has successfully completed his transfer to the RAF Regt where he will join his father. A big welcome goes to **SSgt Steve Reeves** and goodbye to **SSgt 'Tosh' Pope** as they swap roles as Tp SSgt and CPO Planner. Hopefully **SSgt Pope** will not forget his roots. Good luck to **LCpl Andy Borwick** who is heading out to Baghdad with 219 Sig Sqn for 6 months of sun and ice-cream.

HOTEL TROOP

OC	**Capt J Perring**
SSgt	**SSgt M Carr**

Most of the Tp deployed to Catterick Garrison to complete an installation project to install a fibre optic Local Area Network to support CAST (N). This is a purpose built building within the Garrison that supports various exercises at all levels. This project will enhance the communications infrastructure and capability dramatically for the exercising troops. The project was led by **Sgt 'Rod' Rouchy** with **Cpls 'Ozzy' Osborne** and **'Jacko' Jackson** as team leaders.

The Tp say farewells to **LCpl Matt Hodson** for 6 months as he deploys with 2 Sig Regt to Baghdad as an individual reinforcement and **Sig Dan Lewis** who has deployed to the Falklands for 8 months.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Glenis Maloney**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) John Manley**

OPERATIONS SUPPORT TROOP

It has been yet another busy period for the Tp though a number of us have managed to escape from Wilton and appreciate some of the niceties that the Army offers. Various members of the Tp attended a Regimental Battlefield tour to Turkey. **WO2 FofS (IS) Turner** and his bunch of merry men, **Cpls 'Gav' Nicholson**, **'Gucci' Lawrence** and **'Richie' Saether** visited various battle sights from the Gallipoli Campaign of WW1. **LCpl 'Andy' Barr** has also managed to avoid any aspect of his daily work, as for the last 3 months he's been away representing the Regt at the Corps OSC.

Following on from the Athletics, the Morrison Cup team was picked. Our very own PTI, **LCpl 'Matty' Evans** somehow managed to win the 800m aided by his usual routine of a Lambert and Butler before and after the race. He and **Sig Johnson** were part of the Regimental 4 x 400m team, which managed an excellent 2nd place.

The day was rounded of with the Regimental Sportsmans Dinner at HQ Land Forces. The event went off with a bang with many people being presented their Regimental Colours. Unfortunately the only member of the Tp to receive them was **Sgt Martin Campbell** for Ex PEDAL FOR PUDSEY, a charity event he organised which raised a substantial amount of money for 'Children in Need'.

We must also congratulate **LCpl 'Laura' Allen** who completed the London Marathon in a time of 4hrs 34mins and has been bugging people for donations ever since. Well done **Laura**!

The Tp has bade farewell to **Cpl Rob Nicholas** on his posting to Blandford, good luck on your Class 1 – the lads in the block say your scent lives on. And it's with a tear of joy in our eye that we say farewell to the legendary **Sgt 'Martyn' Angus** on his posting to 19 Light Bde, Catterick. Life in the Mess has never been so peaceful, all the very best in the future.

The Tp say hello and get the beers in to **Cpl 'Chris' Dooks** who's recently arrived from 30 Sig Regt and **Sigs 'Gav' Ackrill** who joins us from Cyprus and **Sig Johnson** who recently arrived from 16 Sig Regt.

Congratulations go to both **LCpl Wes Neary** and wife **Kate** for the birth of their daughter **Amelia** and also to **Cpl Mike Morgan** and his Wife **Nicola** on the birth of their child.

600 TROOP

OC	**Capt DJ Petty**

Unfortunately this month we seem to be saying more goodbyes than welcomes.

The Tp has recently been on a day's walking with a meeting up of most of its members to bid farewell to **Capt 'David' Petty** who leaves for the sunnier climbs of Saudi Arabia.

Over the course of his 12 month tour of duty at 600 Tp he has brought the Tp on leaps and bounds, although at times the lads may have been kicking and screaming opposing the changes. On his departure, we look forward to the arrival of **Captain 'Daz' Ware** who is joining us from 12 Mech Bde and as a Tp, we will take this opportunity to welcome him beforehand.

We also say goodbye or at least see you soon to **FofS 'John' Ford** and **Sgt 'Randy' Randerson** who have just deployed on Op Telic. The Tp would also like to say a well done and welcome back to **Sgt 'Steve' Poutney**, who has just returned from a short spell of teaching the 506 SATCOM systems in Kuwait.

Although the Tp has been extremely busy this last few months, we have still found time to get involved in Regimental activities and a mention this month must go to **Cpl 'JP' Howe** who despite many other work commitments still managed to arrive and perform very well in the Race the Sun, finishing in a more than respectable 2nd on Leg 12, the 'Cycling Orienteering'. A fantastic day for the Regt, it has been noted that the CO still hasn't stopped smiling after hearing of this success.

ECM (FP) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Billy Bingham**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Kenny**

There is much change in the Sqn hierarchy; we say a fond farewell to **Maj Fraser** as he departs for pastures new and welcome **Maj Billy Bingham**. This is **Maj Bingham's** second tour with ECM (FP). We also say goodbye to **WO2(SSM) Saunders** and welcome **WO2(SSM) Kenny.**

BRAVO TROOP

OC	**Capt Dorrington**
SSgt	**SSgt West**

NORTHERN IRELAND - 6-A-SIDE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

With vital players back from operations and leave, the team were confident of making a good account of them during this fiercely contested competition. With a rock solid pairing of **Sgt Nicol** and **Cpl Dickinson** at the back and the pace of **Sgt Harvey** and **LCpl Rodway** up front, we were starting to cause teams all sorts of problems, and we started to grow in confidence.

By finishing 2nd in the group stage, we had qualified for the Quarter Finals against the Log Support Battalion. It was a cagey affair with very few chances for both teams and it was obvious that it was going to take something special to separate the teams – up steps **Sgt Nicol** to score with a 30 yard half volley. We were drawn against 5 Rifles for the Semi Final. This was a much more one sided affair, as our teams fitness started to pay off. Despite **LCpl 'Yax' Yaxley** missing an absolute sitter, **Sgt Harvey** stepped up with a brace to put us into the Final where we faced the competition favourites, RAF Aldergrove. We knew that it was going to be difficult but we managed to snuff out their attacks, and anything they did get on target was comfortably stopped by **Sgt Knox**. Our pace was our biggest strength, and when **LCpl Rodway** burst into the box, their defender was left with no choice but to bring him down – penalty!!

With no one particularly keen to take the spot kick, **Sgt Nicol** relished the pressure and stepped up to send the keeper the wrong way and ensure that the silverware was coming back to Lisburn.

The winning team: Sgt Nicol, Sgt Knox, Sgt Harvey, LCpl Yaxley, Cpl Dickinson, Cpl Knight, Sgt Gill and LCpl Rodway

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Owen Finnie**
SSM	**WO2 Billy Lilburn**

The Sqn has been busy preparing for its standby Close Support role for the 2008 Parade Season. In April it supported 38 (I) Bde in their first CAST Exercise. This involved weeks of preparation work under the leadership of the Sqn Operations team to engineer the Information Communications Support for a Bde Operations room which is now fully functioning and an impressive facility. The team remain focused on NI activities while other elements of the Sqn have been enjoying taking part in Regimental events such as a Battlefield tour to Turkey, Race the Sun and the Morrison Cup. The Sqn priority remains in NI but is also looking forward to participating in future events including the Princess Royal visit, Reformation Day Parade and Battle Camp, all occurring in July. The Sqn would like to congratulate **SSgt Hickley** on his promotion to SSgt and would like to congratulate **Sgt Good** on his selection for FofS(IS) training.

ALPHA TROOP

OC	**Capt Pete Emsen**
SNCO	**SSgt Dale King**

233 Sig Sqn were informed of the Corps Tour 2008 motorcycling event (3 Blokes, 3 Bikes, 3740 miles) visiting all Corps major units across Europe within 12 days. The Sqn volunteered to host the team when they arrived in Northern Ireland. The Sqn focused its own fund raising efforts in the weeks before the team's arrival by contributing to the 10 Sig Regt fundraising pot. This was led by **Sgt Lowe** and an enjoyable quiz evening helped raise funds. The turn out to the evening was excellent, the prizes on offer impressive and a good time was had by all. 233 Sig Sqn placed 5th out of 12 teams in NI competing in the Lisburn Station Commanders Cup competition. The last event was the 'Superteams' and it had good representation from Alpha Tp in the form of **Sgt Cattell** fresh from her Royal Signals leadership course. Other members were **Sig Allen**, **LCpl Harle** and **Sgt Lowe**. The event was extremely intensive and involved a series of gym activities where repetitions were to be conducted as fast as possible with the total achieved within a time limit recorded. The last event was a mile and a half Bergen sprint relay. The team were just pipped into 2nd place but this was a good result to round off an arduous competition.

BRAVO TROOP

OC	**Capt Rick Gorman**
SNCO	**SSgt Arnie Renforth**

On Thursday 15 May, 'Race the Sun' was held in which minor, major and training units gathered to compete against each other at Imphal Barracks in York. 233 Sig Sqn contributed to 10 Sig Regt by adding **Sgt Morris**, **Cpl Potts** and **LCpl Harle** to their team. **Cpl Potts** competed in the forced march and the stretcher race, which **LCpl Harle** also competed in while **Sgt Morris** flopped out of the swimming leg to shuttle people back and forward in the minibus. To prevent bottle necking in the stretcher race, in which there were over 20 teams, one representative from each team had to complete a 500m sprint to the stretcher, which **LCpl Harle** was volunteered for. He reached the stretcher in 2nd place knowing this was the beginning of the 3km race, he was well impressed....but stuck it in with a commendable effort from the rest of the team to finish in 4th place with 1st place only metres ahead. It was a great day for the Regt as their overall position was 2nd with quite a few shocked faces. The day finished on a high with a welcome BBQ with alcoholic beverages.

SUPPORT TROOP

OC	**Sgt Pullen**

The Sqn were asked to host **Miss Hariet Bell** a potential Officer for 1 week and Support Tp played their part to provide her with an overview of the Royal Signals. She had a varied programme which included, adventure training, sports, installation work, a cultural tour of Belfast and a visit to all Sqn departments. She was very keen to hear about the soldiers' experiences in the Army and she was enthusiastic about joining. She had a good time with the Sqn and we presented her a Sqn T-Shirt before she left and wished her all the best at Sandhurst.

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD

CO	**Lt Col J Langley**
RSM	**WO1 L McGrail**

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JD Morrice CD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Bell**

EXERCISE HOLTON LEE - *by Sig Byers and Sig Steyn*

On Saturday 17 May at 0830hrs half of 1 Sqn went to Poole to do some gardening work for Holton Lee disabled centre. We arrived there by 0900hrs ready to start a day's work and after the briefing from **Cpl Richie Bastow** and **Mr Matt Briers**, the Holton Lee Coordinator, we started work. The 2 main jobs to be carried out were to dig out and clear a 50m drainage ditch to drain the excess water form the marshlands and to clear logs and tree stumps from an area in the woods. This area is going to be turned into a board walk to allow disabled people in wheel chairs to have access over the marshland and reed beds. **Sig Byers** was helping with digging out and clearing the drainage ditches, which to say the least was a very messy job. The work got off to a good start and everyone was putting in a 110% effort. **Cpl Bastow** was supervising and helping out on both tasks making sure we were doing it right. It was a very relaxed atmosphere which made all the hard work more fun and all of us were in good spirits.

The best part of the day was when **Sig Byers** made a witty comment about Driver Linemen and did not realise that **Cpl Bastow** was listening; this resulted in some press ups while clapping in the mud. Unfortunately on his last press up he lost balance and ended face first in the bog of eternal stench! **Sig Byers** was covered head to toe in mud which brought a smile to all our faces and made the day more fun. By about 1500hrs the work had all been done, to the amazement of **Mr Briers** who thought it would take a lot longer. That just left the fun part of washing down all the equipment with a hose, which quickly deteriorated into a water fight! Throughout the day we were made aware of why we were doing the jobs and how people will benefit from our hard work. At the end day we were all shattered and as a treat **Cpl Bastow** took us to McDonalds to say thank you for all our hard work. Overall it was a hard day's work but with our team work and good banter it was good fun.

Ex HOLTON LEE – Sigs Hearne, Park, Georgiou and Steyn

EXERCISE OUSTON CHALLENGE – CHARITY SWIMMING EVENT - *by Sig Hopkins*

On 19 April, 21 of us represented 1 Sqn in a charity swim at Bovington Camp swimming pool. The challenge was to swim the width of the English Channel between 3 teams, one of which only containing 3 people. Two 9 man teams were to swim 11 miles between them, this worked out as just over 39 lengths per individual. However the third team, **SSgt Mason**, **Cpl Potter** and me, had to swim the full 11 miles between us, which worked out at just under 235 lengths each! We arrived at Bovington Camp at around 0920hrs and got the event off to a start straight away as we only had until 1200hrs to finish. Teams 1 and 2 with 9 men began by swimming 6 lengths each but soon each individual just swam what they could before alternating. In Team 3 we had to swim 20 lengths in under 10 mins and then rest for 5 mins and we had to repeat this 12 times to achieve our goal. I found this pretty tough, especially trying to keep up with **SSgt Mason** and **Cpl Potter** who have had some experience of distance swimming. After nearly 3 hrs solid swimming, we managed to complete the distance. We were all wrecked and my shoulders were completely dead. To wind down and chat about the day's events, we headed to a local pub for food and I've never seen so many burgers ordered before. All in all it was a good day and well worth volunteering for. I managed to raise £50 and in total we managed to raise £107 for the Army Benevolent Fund.

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj LD Roddy**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Peace**

EXERCISE CATTERICK WHITE WATER RAFTING
- by Cpl Marlow

When we originally signed up, no-one expected that there would be such an early start. At 0600hrs on 3 May, 22 members of 2 Sqn departed Blandford Camp on a 4½ hour journey to Llangollen, North Wales. The reason – "White Water Rafting" for charity.

The White Water Rafting crew

Our destination, White Water Active, is situated on the River Dee which is classed as a 3 so we knew we were not going to be in for an easy ride. With only the girls showing any reservations, we got kitted out with wet suits and helmets and met our raft guide who explained that rafting is like a big game of 'Simon Says'. He would sit at the back of the raft calling out commands; we just had to follow them. At this point it sounded easy.

Full of confidence we entered the water and began our first run. We smashed through the first round of obstacles with increasing numbers of rafters being launched overboard. Our rescue skills needed to be sharp, instant and controlled. However, as **Sig Wheatman** was swept down rive, I'm sure she thought they were

anything but first class. Naturally many of us were a little apprehensive of falling out and getting wet, especially after the first person went overboard and found out how cold it was! This was quickly spotted by the guide who proceeded to inform us that we needed to get our bodies used to the temperature of the water by sliding down some rapids. Once we'd returned to the rafts, we soon started to play a few games which in turn helped build our confidence. One of these games was to position the nose of the raft in the rapids and keep it there. This resulted in a huge amount of water pouring into the raft forcing a lot of people to abandon ship. **Sig Jameson** and **Sig Howe** seemed to get very excited about this and each time the raft passed an appropriate area all they wanted to do is play. **Cpl Wells** was enjoying the event until eventually he fell prey to this activity and managed to become stuck under some rapids, sliding out of the raft and under the currents. Fortunately a safety canoe was in his vicinity and came to his aid.

A big thanks needs to go to **Cpl Marlow** for the copious amounts of work put into the weekend and the success of a brilliant day on the rapids. More importantly, we also raised £3082 for Kidney Research UK.

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JR Jennings**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) G Padfield**

EXERCISE HARROGATE FOLLY - SQUADRON FIBUA EXERCISE - *by Sig Puckett*

On Friday 18 May, 3 Sqn once again donned their war makeup ready for exercise and headed to Copehill Down for 3 days of intensive introduction into Fighting In Built Up Areas (FIBUA) techniques, organised by none other than Lightning Tp's **Cpl Shipley**. The Sqn arrived at the vast training area late that afternoon and as the last light began to fade, everyone gathered for an in depth 'fancy-schmancy' pyrotechnics display, which set a few ears ringing and definitely set the scene for the arduous weekend ahead. The troops then bedded down for the night in their respective barns while in the HQ, **Cpl Copland** busied himself with the task of making sure **Maj Jennings'** every need was met – a role he endeavoured to pursue throughout the weekend.

Saturday began with a rotation of demonstration stands which included a Molotov cocktail range supervised by the enthusiastic **SSgt Anderson**. Next came a rather rigorous confidence course that included building entries via 15ft high girders, negotiating roof rafters and culminated in a 150m sewer run. A Rhino Ring was used to establish forced entry using a variety of equipment such as sledge hammers, hooligan tools and all that good, good stuff, while **WO1 Icke** gave the recruits a detailed example of building entry and clearance.

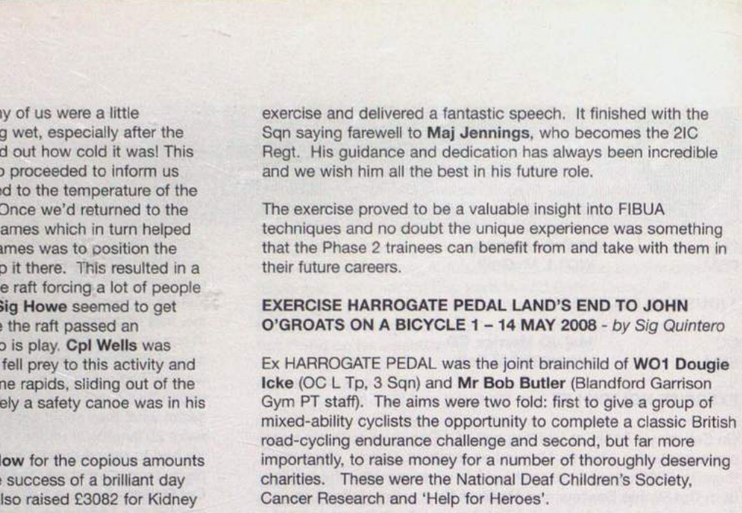
On Sunday, we were woken at stupid o'clock by an over zealous pyromaniac and began a 2 way assault on 2 parallel streets, taking one building after another over an exhausting 2 hr period. **Cpl Blake** took to his role as resident photographer a bit too seriously, sticking his lenses into people's faces and going to the extent of using smoke grenades to get "the right shot"! As the time got perilously close to lunch, an end to the exercise was called. After a painstaking clear-up process and yet another photo opportunity, **Capt Palmer** congratulated all on a successful exercise and delivered a fantastic speech. It finished with the Sqn saying farewell to **Maj Jennings**, who becomes the 2IC Regt. His guidance and dedication has always been incredible and we wish him all the best in his future role.

The exercise proved to be a valuable insight into FIBUA techniques and no doubt the unique experience was something that the Phase 2 trainees can benefit from and take with them in their future careers.

EXERCISE HARROGATE PEDAL LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS ON A BICYCLE 1 – 14 MAY 2008 - *by Sig Quintero*

Ex HARROGATE PEDAL was the joint brainchild of **WO1 Dougie Icke** (OC L Tp, 3 Sqn) and **Mr Bob Butler** (Blandford Garrison Gym PT staff). The aims were two fold: first to give a group of mixed-ability cyclists the opportunity to complete a classic British road-cycling endurance challenge and second, but far more importantly, to raise money for a number of thoroughly deserving charities. These were the National Deaf Children's Society, Cancer Research and 'Help for Heroes'.

The outline plan was pretty straightforward: drop a random group of trainees and permanent staff at Land's End with assorted bikes and a road atlas; fill them up with pasta and energy drinks; press 'go', and then watch them pedal like mad to the North Eastern extremity of the Scottish mainland. The reality was a little more complex, mainly because the route was predicated on the availability of military accommodation and our desire to avoid busy A roads and massive hills. Fitting training around our busy Phase 2 course programme and the daily routine of the other riders also made preparations difficult. Come the start, the furthest some of us had managed to ride in a day was 30 miles – and we were about to ride in excess of 3 times that, day in dayout for the next 2 weeks!



Land's End – the calm before the storm, prepared for the off

So that's how we found ourselves at lunchtime at Land's End on a beautifully sunny 1 May, making final adjustments to our kit ready for the off. Ahead of us lay 920 miles of tarmac, an eclectic range of accommodation and 2 weeks of hard graft to get to John O'Groats. OK, so it wasn't quite the preliminary part of the Tour de France – wrong country for a start, and I doubt the Discovery Channel Team ever fuelled up **Lance Armstrong** on Cornish pasties and Coke before the Grand Depart; nevertheless it felt good to be getting going. The first day was the easiest, taking in a leisurely 37 miles from Land's End to Truro, just as a warm up. Even so, it became apparent that riding as a group wouldn't be practical. On the flat, our various levels of experience, fitness and ability weren't immediately obvious, but as soon as we hit the Cornish hills we became strung out over several miles. Long lines of cyclists and narrow country roads don't really mix well with heavy traffic and our popularity with the South West's motorists rapidly dwindled amid the persistent smell of burning clutches as they tried to get past.

Finished! Sigs Purchase, Chambers, Hodges, Kay, Quintero, Cpl Sinclair, Sig Sealy, Cpl Sealy, Cpl Smith, Bob Butler, Maj Lambeth, Sig Clayton, Capt Palmer, WO2 (SSM) McMullan, WO1 Icke and Maj Jennings

There's not much can be written to 'sex up' long distance cycling. Most days we averaged between 60 – 100 miles. The longest days were Okehampton to Bristol, Carlisle to East Kilbride and Inverness to John O'Groats which were over 100 miles each. The distance itself was well within everyone's abilities but poor road surfaces, some seemingly endless hills – I never want to see Sharp Tor again and a persistent headwind the length of the country all added up to a challenging and sometimes emotional couple of weeks. Cycling folklore would have you believe that the UK's prevailing westerly winds make the route from Land's End to John O'Groats easier than riding it the other way round. So much for these prevailing winds – we stood more chance of seeing the Loch Ness Monster! After 8½ hr days in the saddle, getting back on your bike the following morning could be a real test of character and personal motivation. As **WO1 Icke** and **Sig Quintero** both discovered, liberally applying Deep Heat to this area of the body is unlikely to result in any form of effective pain relief.

Fortunately throughout the ride the weather was phenomenal. Most days were sunny and dry. In fact it only rained twice in the 12 days of pedalling. It came as no surprise that the first downpour occurred during a brief excursion into Wales, and that our next soaking was courtesy of a Scottish hail storm.

Daily routine included an evening brief on the following day's route from **Bob Butler**. Aside from his confidence inspiring inability to read the map without his glasses, his insistence on referring to anything from the most gentle of slopes to the biggest of mountains as "undulating hills" became a running joke to be greeted with cries of abuse from the floor. Still, what goes up (slowly) must come down and the sprinters' Green Jersey award went to **Capt Dave Palmer** who recorded the fastest speed of the trip at 48mph just north of St Helens. He claims this was due to superior power and skill but we all knew it had more to do with his personal embarrassment at having just led us all through the centre of a pedestrian shopping precinct, much to the bemusement of the local onlookers. Most of us managed to fall off our bikes at some point during the trip, luckily without any more serious damage than bruised egos. **Sig Hodges** managed the most frequent and spectacular dismounts, including absentmindedly ploughing into the back of a stationary van while indicating to turn right. Even the group road-cycling bore, **Maj Jim Lambeth** gently toppled over when he stopped to check his map in Keswick. Unclipping from the pedals first might have prevented such a overtly amateur display.

In keeping with the understated nature of our departure from Land's End, our arrival at John O'Groats was a similarly low-key affair that couldn't quite compare with the cheering crowds on the Champs Élysées in late July. Nevertheless, **Cpl Adam Sinclair** pulled out all the stops permissible within the CILOR budget to welcome us over the finish line with a glass of Lidl's cheapest Cava, which after a 100 mile day in the saddle was probably the last thing anyone actually wanted to drink. The fact that everyone who started had made it to the finish and had completed the entire distance was no small achievement and was a definite cause for celebration.

All our thanks go to **WO1 Icke** and **Bob Butler** for organising this epic journey and also to the numerous units who provided us with accommodation throughout the trip. None of it would have been possible without the stoic support of our admin team of **Cpl 'Smudge' Smith**, **Cpl Adam Sinclair**, **Sig Clayton** and **Sig Kay**. They ensured we had regular replenishments of water, energy food, pain killers and endless supplies of bananas, not to mention sorting out the accommodation long before the first riders finished each day, making our lives very much easier throughout.

At the time of going to print, our final fundraising total from Ex HARROGATE PEDAL has still to be calculated. It looks likely that money raised through sponsorship and collecting from unsuspecting motorists at the Camp gates before we left will total in excess of £3000. Not bad for the price of a few sore backsides and a couple of weeks away from work.

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) BRAWDY, PEMBROKESHIRE

CO	**Lt Col TJ Carmichael**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) G Topps**

HQ SQUADRON

OC	**Maj DL Palmer**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Collins**

HQ Sqn keeps moving forward and we move into the busy season. Looking back, however, it has been a very busy period for us. As well as the usual supporting role that we play in all exercises for the Regt and getting ready for RSIT, we have still had time to take part in some interesting activities. Race the Sun was one such event. This gruelling 183 mile event is very challenging to even the fittest people, so a team led by **WO2(RQMS) Stroudley**, faced the challenge with grim determination. Another event that happened was Ex Dragon's Island. This 2 week Cyprus sailing expedition was organised by **Cpl Crosby**. However with a delayed flight on the way back, they got an extra 2 days. I'm sure they felt upset about that!

The Sqn is now preparing for the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal**, providing an excellent opportunity to show her how the Regt works. After that, the real fun will begin with the preparation for the Regimental Exercise which will be coming later this year.

Op HERRICK TECHNICAL REFRESH TEAM- *by Capt 'Taff' Jolly*

It is an established fact that sensitive EW equipment and a harsh desert environment do not mix particularly well together and in order to maintain the EW capability, the Regt made plans to send a team of crack technical experts to Op HERRICK. Unfortunately none could be found so instead the team consisted of the QM(T), **Capt Taff Jolly**, **WO1(FofS) Steve Brown**, **Sgt Adie Field**, **Cpl Stacey Fayers** and **Cpl Greg Boot**. After 9 months of on-the-bus-off-the-bus, the team finally got the nod to go. Following arrival in theatre and with customary enthusiasm **Capt Jolly** and **Sgt Field** deployed to FOB Robinson while **WO1 Brown**, **Cpl Fayers** and **Cpl Boot** made the trip north to Kajaki, or at least they would have if their Chinook hadn't developed a problem and limped back to Camp Bastion in 1st gear. After 5 days of trying to blag another flight they finally made it up to Kajaki where they were able to sample the delights of **Cpl Mark Ross's** culinary skills and his extraordinary 'carved-from-shell-cases' chess set.

After 10 days it was time to bid farewell to the QM as he returned to the UK – he'll just have to try a little harder for that elusive HERRICK medal! For the rest of the team it was back to work as **WO1 Brown** and **Sgt Field** deployed to FOB Delhi, although not without more helicopter jinks as the first Sea King turned back with gear box and generator problems. Eventually the pair reached Garmsir where the prospect of an early flight out led to them working like troopers to get the job done in 3 days.

Once reunited in Camp Bastion the team concentrated on testing an ISO container's worth of spares and overhauling the accounts which unearthed a treasure trove of kit which theoretically didn't exist prior to their visit. Still, it's always better if your stores are up a few items rather than down. With her task complete, it was time for **Cpl Fayers** to wave goodbye to the rest of the team as she jetted off back to sunny Pembrokeshire just in time to go on holiday with her other half **Sgt Dan Peake** who had just returned from a busy tour with 14 Sig Tp on Op TELIC. The remainder of the team then concentrated on the last 2 tasks of dismantling the FOB Robinson detachment and servicing the EW equipment at FOB Price. After numerous flight cancellations they eventually made it to FOB Price (aka FOB Nice due to the high standard of food) where it was realised that the one common factor of their helicopter woes was **WO1 Brown** – his very presence on the manifest is enough to jinx any flight!

Having successfully completed their tasks the team put in some last minute 'Op Bronze' time before boarding their long awaited homeward bound flight and bidding goodbye and good luck to 226 Sig Sqn who had proved to be most generous hosts in what continues to be a very challenging environment.

EXERCISE BAVARIAN DRAGON - *by Cpl Dave Roderick*

On 27 April, Engineering Support Tp set off on Ex BAVARIAN DRAGON for 10 days of trekking through Alpine mountains with the aim that the junior ranks gained the Summer Mountain Proficiency (SMP) qualification. After an exhausting 2 day journey by road and ferry, we arrived at Drei Muhlen lodge in Wertach for dinner, before launching into a briefing of do's and don'ts for the fortnight ahead.

Our first 4 days saw the Tp split into 3 groups, each supervised by one of the MLTs present. Despite the badly out of date maps provided (14 years old in some cases!), the late melting snow on the mountains and the aching limbs of **SSgt Lee Punyer**, several peaks were conquered by intrepid (or decrepit?) explorers. Among the highlights were "Team Extreme", lead by **SSgt Jamie O'Reilly**, finding the most treacherous and dangerous path off Falkenstein rather than simply following the signs pointing up the road; also **Cpl Steve Russell** throwing a hissy-fit on Sorgschrofen, declaring it "the ridge of certain death", and **Sig Beecham** impressing with his ability to make one T-shirt last the whole week – even after doing one-armed press-ups at 1500m above sea level. An honourable mention goes to **WO1(FofS) Andy Amies** and his innumerable snow recces; on one occasion ploughing through to within 20m of the summit of Einstein (1866m).

WO1(FofS) Amies needs directions to the town of Sonthofen

After 4 days of foraging in the mountains, we gave our legs a rest over the weekend. Saturday saw us white water rafting, though **Cpl Dave Roderick** was a bit over keen, and either by design or accident found himself in the water on 4 separate occasions. Sunday was a rather more sombre occasion, partly due to hangovers acquired in Sonthofen the previous evening, but primarily because we had arranged a visit to the Dachau Concentration Camp memorial site just outside Munich. Most people are aware of the suffering that the Jews experienced under Nazi rule in the Thirties and Forties but it's not until you've visited a place like Dachau, read the accounts of survivors and seen the pictures and video footage from the time, that you can truly comprehend the scale of the horror inflicted by one human being on another.

Our 2 days of relaxation and education at an end, Monday saw us back on the mountains, with a trek up to the top of Tegelburg. On the way up, there were photo opportunities galore including Neuschwanstein Castle, made famous in the 1968 musical "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang". Sadly, "Team Extreme" failed to reach the top and therefore didn't experience supping a beer in the bar at 1707m or riding the cable car back down. The following day was spent negotiating a crazy aerial jungle gym, where many tested and overcame any fear of heights they may have, before taking part in a bit of high-speed tobogganing in the afternoon. This proved to be the calm before the storm, as the last day on the mountains (after successful completion of the SMP exam) was a leg-burner up to the radio mast on Grunten, climbing 900m over 3km in around 2hrs 30mins. Thankfully, the 2 day journey back to Brawdy gave us plenty of time for our legs to recover!

Cpl Gary Weller with Neuschwanstein Castle as a backdrop

224 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj S Roberts** INT CORPS
SSM	**WO2(SSM) G Shuck**

Congratulations goes to **Sgt Orme** for being selected for YofS (EW) course beginning this August; each to their own. **Cpl Wood** moves on to far greater and more dangerous heights too. We wish him good luck!

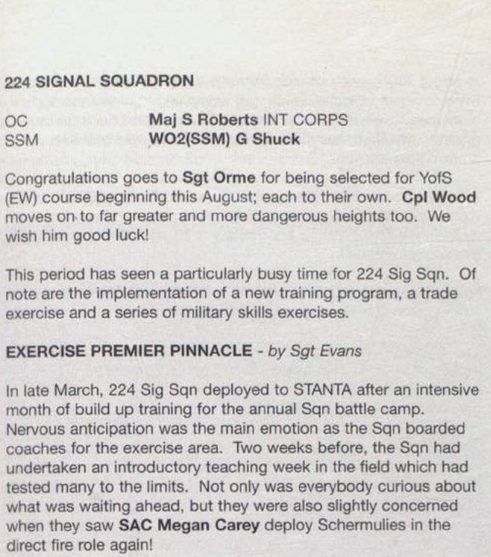
This period has seen a particularly busy time for 224 Sig Sqn. Of note are the implementation of a new training program, a trade exercise and a series of military skills exercises.

EXERCISE PREMIER PINNACLE - *by Sgt Evans*

In late March, 224 Sig Sqn deployed to STANTA after an intensive month of build up training for the annual Sqn battle camp. Nervous anticipation was the main emotion as the Sqn boarded coaches for the exercise area. Two weeks before, the Sqn had undertaken an introductory teaching week in the field which had tested many to the limits. Not only was everybody curious about what was waiting ahead, but they were also slightly concerned when they saw **SAC Megan Carey** deploy Schermulies in the direct fire role again!

Once the Sqn arrived at STANTA, it was straight into the 'meat' of the exercise. Sects conducted Recce Patrols, Observation Posts and Close Target Recces on and around the FIBUA village. The CTRs were particularly impressive, with **Cpl Hughes** and **LCpl Deans** managing to steal the entire exercise scenario from the Directing Staff Land Rover! Unfortunately for them, the DS managed to recover it before they could read it all. However all the activity around the FIBUA village led the Sects to believe that an attack on the FIBUA village was imminent. They were proved right.

The FIBUA phase was a highlight and it was amazing to see RAF personnel, who a month earlier had never lived in the field, were



now scaling ladders and attacking through sewers like true killers. The attack lasted over 2 hrs and was very testing, although everyone was pleased to discover that the enemy had sausage sandwiches in their positions.

The exercise finished with the obligatory dawn attack on an enemy compound. It was a fitting end to a rewarding exercise, although was it really necessary to pick a position surrounded by stinging nettles? Once the attack was complete there was chance for a quick beer at 0600hrs provided by the DS and a long sleepy coach journey back to Digby. A good end to an extremely rewarding exercise.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj C Crowther**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) P Hounsell**

OP HERRICK 8 - *by WO2(SSM) Hounsell*

At the beginning of March 2008, 50 members of the 226 Sig Sqn followed **Maj Chris Crowther** up the steps of the aircraft and onwards to Afghanistan to start a 6 month tour of duty on Op HERRICK 8. After months of training in rainy climates and picturesque quagmires, 226 were ready to take the torch from 237 Sig Sqn and carry on their hard work.

After a number of stop-start, 'will we fly-wont we fly' episodes, we were in the air. I feel it important to note that while the Sqn were in that part of the plane which is lovingly known as 'Cattle Class', **Maj Crowther** and **WO2(SSM) Paul Hounsell** were shown to the aircraft first and accommodated in rather large and comfortable leather seats with lots of legroom. This I have to say was nothing to do with being minor celebrities but rather to do with the OC being in charge of the plane. At the moment of take off, **Maj Crowther** realised that the SSM was a tiny bit nervous and would rather walk to Afghanistan than fly due to his fear of flying!

After many hours and 2 flights, we arrived in Camp Bastion to start our 2 day RSOI package. We were herded into the largest transit tent I have ever seen. Crammed from canvas to canvas were 300 bunk beds, each of which had a soldier and kit shoehorned in. The following morning (and every morning since, as you would expect) broke hot and sunny. After our compulsory 2 days were completed, we were deemed nicely qualified and permitted to 'get on with the tour'. And so began the intricate job of swapping half the members of 237 Sig Sqn with half of our chaps. Our clean and fresh faced men got onto the helicopters, while the tanned, thin and exceptionally hairy got off. After a number of days and a good hand over from 237, the rest set off to take full control of the various FOBs and desks throughout Helmand Province.

The thing with operational tours is that the wonderful people whom we leave behind think that we are not given enough to eat and so began the avalanche of parcels and parcels and more parcels. **Sgt(TQMS) Sean Watson** went into spasms when he started collecting everyone's mail. **Sgt Dean Jones**, **Cpl Edward Soane** and **Cpl Christopher Avis** collected no less than 40 parcels between them in the first week! But this was nothing compared to the colossal number of letters which **SSgt Ian Wornham** receives each and everyday. This would not be a bad thing but he hasn't even got a girlfriend!

So now we are 3 months into our tour and the members of 226 are getting on with their mission with professionalism and dedication, or to use the boss's words 'digging in blind'. The R&R part of the tour is well under way with a well deserved break of 2 weeks. Everyone so far has gone home with a rather nice tan and a smaller dress size!

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj S Cole**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Morgan**

EXERCISE LONG LOOK - *by Cpl H Mathieson*

Kiora! I'm **Cpl Hollie Mathieson** from the New Zealand Royal Signals, currently on Ex LONG LOOK. For the past 2 months I have been working at the mighty 14 Sig Regt based in Pembrokeshire, Wales.

I have been kept busy both in and out of work with various trips and displays and this included a visit to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. A week ago I was approached by my Tp SSgt and asked if I would like to spend a few days at RAF Halton on a Joint Services Adventure Training Course. After digging around for some further information I found out that the plan was to go gliding with 3 other members of the Sqn.

We got off to a great start by arriving in the vicinity of Halton, hardly able to find the base due to it being pitch black and with the rain thundering down on the roof of the car. We began to think that if the weather didn't improve rapidly we weren't going to get the chance to fly very much. So a vote was taken, and we headed to the local pub for a night cap! The day dawned and much to our surprise the weather was looking hopeful, still slightly misty but not a complete write off. We were collected by minibus at the main gate of the camp and took the short drive to the airfield. After meeting some of the staff and instructors, we spent the remainder of the morning being briefed on what to do and more importantly what not to do. Everyone took great interest in the emergency drill for exiting the glider in a hurry; we were going to wear parachutes during our flights but the intention was not to use them!

Now I don't know about you, but getting into a flimsy looking fibreglass plane with no propeller, with very little room to move and having a parachute strapped to my back made me a bit nervous. With a little reassurance and gentle encouragement from my instructor (**Guy**) I clambered in and we were off. We were positioned behind a powered aircraft and attached with a very thin looking piece of rope. The other aircraft towed us along the grass for a short distance then our main wheel left the ground and we were airborne! We followed behind the tug until we were at the desired height, around 2000ft. Then the instructor got me to pull the yellow release handle freeing us from the tug and we were on our own, gliding quietly through the sky. Well with just a little bit more reassurance from my instructor I began to calm down and started relaxing a bit and taking in the view. It really was breathtaking; I think that is one of the things which make gliding so exciting. Another must be the silence when you have no engine or propeller, it is certainly an unusual feeling but great fun at the same time.

The remainder of the week was spent improving aircraft handling skills and with each flight the students were given more and more responsibility. The instructor was always there in the back seat but a function of adventure training is to expose students to unfamiliar situations and put them under a degree of controlled pressure. By the end of the week we were all handling the 'take off and tow' part of the flight and following the instructor during the landings. A student BBQ was organised for the end of Thursday, and between them **WO2 Chris Dunn** and **Sig Dave Dickson** were able to create fire and incinerate dozens of burgers and sausages! For our final flights on Friday, the instructors asked if we would like to try some 'aeros' (aerobatics). Well I was a little apprehensive but said yes anyway. After being towed up to about 2300ft, we released from the tug and the instructor took over. A series of loops, spins, gut wrenching manoeuvres and high speed passes followed before I found myself back on the ground. My head was still spinning but it was an absolutely amazing experience.

Cpl Hollie Mathieson, FO Mark Kennedy, WO2 Chris Dunn, Sig Dave Dickson, LCpl Tom Bintcliffe in front of a K-21 Glider

A fantastic week was had by all and I would thoroughly recommend trying to get on a JSAT gliding course if you feel like a challenge and want the opportunity to try something new and exciting for yourself.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON MEDAL PARADE HAVERFORDWEST
- by LCpl Jordon Black and LCpl Andy Sexton

With the return from a successful tour of Helmand Province, Afghanistan, and subsequently a well earned 5 weeks POTL, 237 Sig Sqn returned to prepare for their welcome home parade through the town of Haverfordwest. Here they would be presented with their NATO medals by the Mayor, **Cllr Roy Thomas**, who was eagerly assisted by the current Miss Wales, the lovely **Kelly Pesticcio**. After a couple of days of practice and numerous rehearsals, led by the recently departed **WO2(SSM) Mark Morgan,** the Sqn were looking forward to marching the streets, not to mention meeting Miss Wales! After a quick glass of port in the British Legion Pub, the Sqn formed up ready for a few words from Sqn OC **Maj Steve Cole** and the parade itself.

The Town Centre was lined with families, friends and members of the public. The magnificent reception was second to none and wholly appreciated by all as we approached the Cenotaph. Once halted, the crowd were addressed by both the Mayor of Haverfordwest and the Sqn OC. Miss Wales and the Mayor presented our medals in front of the public before the Sqn returned to the British Legion to toast the past and present, as well as the members of the Sqn who would be soon leaving us: **Sig Stefan Daxner** and **Cpls Ben Carter** and **Steve Lawton**. Unfortunately missing from the parade were **Lt Tom Skinner**, **LCpls Kevin Gunn**, **Billy King**, **Adam Collins** and **Pete VDC** who were on other duties – which ranged from playing rugby in Cyprus to Ex LONG LOOK in New Zealand!

The Sqn would like to thank the public of Haverfordwest and everyone involved, the huge public display was very humbling and a fantastic experience for all.

With the HERRICK chapter behind us, the Sqn has now welcomed many new faces and eagerly anticipates the coming months and challenges. Special recognition should go to **SSgt(YofS) Jimmy Samuel** for representing both the Sqn and Regt at the recent 11 Sig Bde Boxing Event and winning in spectacular fashion. Finally with adventure training fast approaching, the take over of Spearhead Lead Element upon us, it is safe to say the Sqn has well and truly adjusted back to Regimental life!

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Aitken**
SSM	**WO2 A Minorczyk**

OP VALERO - *by Lt Chris Goslin*

On 29 April, the Spearhead Lead Element (SLE) EW detachment was deployed to Kosovo with the 2 RIFLES BG. Despite being held at R1 (48 hrs NTM), we were afforded plenty of time to prepare all of the deployable vehicles and equipment. The Kosovo deployment has been a possibility for the SLE since Christmas, so when the signal came through telling us our flights were booked for May and the vehicles were moving a week before that, everyone was ready to and extremely excited at, the prospect of actually deploying and using our training to good effect. Until this time, we had seemed destined to be yet another high readiness Tp. After the "This is it boys!" speeches from the CO and OC 245 Sqn, and after a good brief from the RSM had been dished out, we were out the door on our way to Kosovo. We deliberately selected a team of young, enthusiastic but inexperienced soldiers and added a smattering of experience for what was promising to be a tour in a relatively benign environment; essentially a perfect opportunity to get all their first tour nerves and niggles out of their system before deploying to Afghanistan next March. So far the tour has been an excellent experience for all and a perfect opportunity to work with a BG who will be deploying with us to Afghanistan.

The SLE deployed on Op VALERO in Kosovo

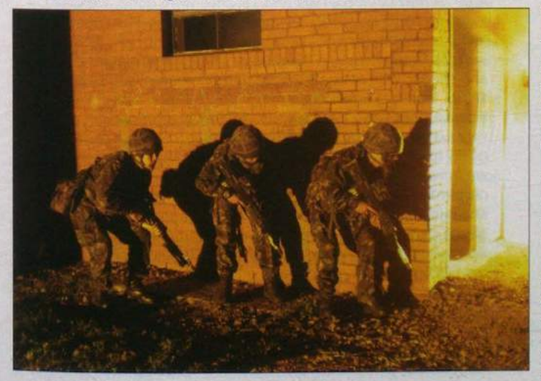
After a few minor hiccups during the deployment phase, the detachment is now fully up and running and everybody has settled into their roles well. It does help that as well as the gorgeous weather and the excellent French cookhouse/restaurant (it's hard to tell!), the 15 of us are "tragically" missing all the "fun" that goes with an RSIT inspection and preparing for a Royal Visit back at the Regt.

EXERCISE MOUFLON WARRIOR - *by Cpl James*

Ex Mouflon Warrior was 245 Sig Sqn Annual Battle Camp. This year saw the exercise split into 2 phases. The first phase was a field exercise around sunny Sennybridge training area and for a change it actually was sunny! The all-star cast of directing staff for the exercise was headed up by **WO2(SSM) Minorczyk**. The Sqn was split into 2 tps for the first phase; Whiskey lead by **Lt Goslin** as 1 Pl, and Zulu lead by **2Lt Ker** as 2 Pl.

The exercise started off with a few battle lessons, the best of which was a harbour area lesson delivered by **SSgt Robinson**, with the funniest being the sect battle drills lesson delivered by **Cpl James** who fell down a hole the size of Kathmandu during his lesson.

We had a very peaceful first night at the observation tower, and the following morning the two Pls carried out sect and pl level rehearsals ready for the big off in the afternoon. The insertion tab went well, with everybody in 2 Pl thinking how fit **SSgt Robinson** was, before discovering that all he had in his Bergen was a Softy 6 sleeping bag! The rest of the phase went successfully, with sect level tasks going on all the time; everything was thrown in from recces, to sect attacks and a night ambush to boot. The Pl harbours were overrun on Friday night just after a massive thunder storm but in true British Army style, the Pl harbour areas were re-established and we went on to destroy the enemy using a massive patrol lane, clearing pockets of enemy and finishing at the Drovers Arms.



House clearance at night in Caerwent

The second phase of the exercise was FIBUA in Caerwent. Due to the loss of a few personnel from the Sqn, some crossing over to the enemy camp, and most to the Sqn's SLE commitment, we moved from Sennybridge to Caerwent as a single Pl. This new pl was headed up by **SSgt Robinson** with **Sgt Ansell** as the Pl Sgt. Once in Caerwent we moved into the Pl Houses.

It certainly wasn't the Ritz, meaning that some of our RAF members were very put out until they where told that they didn't have to dig a big hole and sleep in it. This made them a bit happier. Monday morning saw the arrival of **Sgt Morrison**, our resident FIBUA instructor.

The day was spent getting everybody trained and practised in the skilful art of room and house clearance. **SSgt Robinson** then received his orders for a night clearance of the FIBUA village, and we set to task clearing buildings at about 2300hrs. Considering it was first time for quite a few people to carry out FIBUA, it went exceptionally well.

The only casualty we sustained was **Sig Eyers** who decided he was the Terminator, running all over the area. After a gruelling night we had a few hours sleep and were back at it, this time with more buildings and more friendly casualties.

After a period of hardcore street to street clearing, we had captured or destroyed all the remaining enemy, and 'Brecovenia' could sleep safely again. All in all, it was a fun and beneficial exercise for all involved, with the added bonus of very little rain. It has set a good base level for the fast approaching Regimental exercise and PDT which will see 245 extremely well prepared for these upcoming challenges.

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT
ELMPT

CO **Lt Col J Hodges**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

With the temperature in Afghanistan hovering at around 40° C in some of the Regt's southerly locations, even the smallest amount of physical exertion can feel extremely uncomfortable. The last thing most people would want to do in these conditions is to run 10 miles. However this is exactly what many of the Regt did as part of the 'Helmand 10' race; copying the 'Bruggen 10' race taking place at the same time back in Elmpt to raise money for charity. Soldiers from the Regt and from other units were inspired by the idea and ran the race wherever they could, using treadmills in Kabul to running on the airfield in Kandahar.

On the home front the pace of life has remained highly energetic as the Germany Based Elements Sqn honour their ARRC exercise commitments, concentrate on training and set the conditions for the reconstitution of the Regt.

Below we hear from members of the Regt from across theatre describing what they have been up to lately and how they took part in the 'Helmand 10' as well as other news and activities from the Regiment.

CAMP BASTION – ICS SIGNAL SQUADRON CP
- by WO2(SSM) Graham

The Sqn CP has been a hive of activity this month with the reconstruction of the CP taking place. For the majority of the month the CP has been looking like a local building site. However, after much hard work and effort, it is looking much better and not so prone to taking off in the high winds. The main edition of a sun terrace has cheered up the SSM and he is currently working on a technical way to remote his laptop so he can work from outside!

Both **SSgt(FofS (IS)) Pearson** and **SSgt(FofS) Rogan** have taken to spending all their spare time in the gym but this is not a lot as they have both become fully engrossed in all the new projects around Regional Command (RC) South. Not to feel left out, the 2IC/Ops Officer, **Capt Scaife** has been kept busy hunting down outstanding Confidential Reports from locations around the country.

The Sqn CP had a recent visit from the Regimental mascots, **LCpl Barnaby** and **Cpl Humphrey**. Both have now travelled around the whole of Helmand and have collected a few air miles in the process. Their next trip takes them up to Kabul.

Squadron mascots LCpl Barnaby and Cpl Humphrey making use of the new veranda

CAMP BASTION – TELEMECH SECTION *- by Sig Carter*

The role of the Telemech sect within the ICS Sig Sqn is to install, maintain and repair the communications systems in Camp Bastion. Working primarily with copper and fibre optic cables throughout the Bastion and Tombstone/Shorabak area, we also produce copper and fibre optic patch leads and link cables for the Forward Operating Bases throughout Helmand Province.

The section is one of, if not the busiest in the Sqn and consists of **LCpl Bates**, **LCpl Morrison**, **LCpl Mitton**, **Sig Carter** and **Sig Falkus**.

Since our arrival in Camp Bastion the work load has been for the most part steady. There is no shortage of people ripping out cables whilst attempting to modify their offices and vehicles regularly driving over and parking on cable routes. Of course not all of the problems that we have encountered have been small. Three weeks into the tour, the civilian contractors decided that they were not happy with the amount of work that we currently had on and elected to rectify this situation by digging up 3 ducts with a JCB, all filled with fibre optic cables. However it was not all bad news. As compensation for this error we were given 3 Locally Employed Civilians (LECs) to bolster our workforce until all the fibres were re-laid and the links were back up and running.

The effort of the LECS for the most part could not be faulted, although the work was very challenging as only one of their number spoke any English. This was not ideal in a task that requires constant long distance vocal communication and unfortunately none of us are up to speed with our Pashtu yet.

As ever with this job it is impossible to predict what may or may not occur between now and the end of the tour. However if the first few months are anything to go by, it is clear that we are going to be kept busy for the duration.

FOB PRICE, GARESK – HICS SIGNAL TROOP
- by LCpl Ligthelm

In FOB Price the month started off with an abhorrent spell of strong winds, lightning and torrential rain which had everyone scrambling to keep electronics dry and satellite dishes secure. It did however aid in the weekly detachment cleaning and left everything clean and dust free and rejuvenated spirits.

After all maintenance, IMIs and 1st lines were done, we could focus on some physical activities with a volleyball competition and a march and shoot (our bit for the Helmand 10). The six P's were put into effect and the ranges were prepared for the march and shoot. With teams prepped and briefed and falling plates setup, teams of 5 personnel set off for a 3 mile tab with 15kg including rifles and lots of water. Even just after dawn it was still very warm and with 30 mins to complete the course it was not going to be a walk in the park. As the march came to an end and we moved on to the shoot, everyone had to put into practice their proper breathing exercises in order to be steady enough for the shoot in kneeling unsupported or standing positions. Our teams' efforts paid off when we came second on the day. Over $600 was raised for charity which was an outstanding achievement for the FOB.

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD *- by Cpl Clark*

We are now significantly into the tour with members of 16 Sig Regt already disappearing on R&R. Some individuals have already returned to theatre with a substantial part of the tour still remaining, and our admin clerk **Cpl Bird** is currently on her R&R with her job being covered by **Cpl Muhl**. We are left wondering what he used to do during his normal working day!

Meanwhile on sunny Kandahar Airfield, 16 Sig Regt personnel made their contribution to the 'Helmand 10'. At an altitude of 3000ft, it was a hot and sunny morning with temperatures touching 30° C when the runners set off around the KAF running route. The gravel tracks and strong breeze around the route do not make ideal running conditions but this did not stop the 27 competitors that took part. The eventual winner of the event was **Maj Shakespeare** with an impressive time of 78 mins who was pushed the whole way by **SAC Irving** from the TCW detachment. Third place belonged to **WO2 Davies** from the USSO department who cruised in just behind them. The remainder of the OAPs, sorry JFCIS staff, all finished within the commendable time of 105 mins. **Cpl Ganley** and **Flt Lt Jennings** from TCW completed the course with 44lbs of weight in a time of 3 hrs 46 mins – next stop endurance and the Brecon Beacons?

Staying with the physical theme, we move onto our weekly volleyball sessions within the 'Boardwalk' area. **WO2(RQMS) Young** is by far the most entertaining player showing us what hand-eye co-ordination should not be. With shouts of 'fifty pence hands' or similar names from the opposition and his own team 'taking cover' the sessions have become the highlight of the week.

Our football team has now finally started winning, with the last 2 games going our way. A stunning goal from **Sgt Sheath** in the final minutes against 'The Badgers' was reminiscent of Ronaldo and sealed our first win. Cool calm composure against the dreaded enemy, Inter NSC, proved the deciding factor in the second win.

Regimental personnel stationed at KAF have been luck enough to get on the ranges with the American Airborne Pathfinder Pl. This I believe may be the highlight of the tour for **WO1(RSM) Sheard**. After being given a 'Saw', the American 5.56mm assault rifle by the Yanks he was eventually stopped by the range safety supervisor who was concerned that there would not be enough ammo left for the rest of the group to shoot after his trigger-happy exploits. What the RSM didn't realize was that the weapon had a box of ammunition with 200 rounds on it, not a magazine of 30!

With only a few months of the tour now remaining and the joys of decompression in Cyprus still to come, we are winning the struggle to keep our morale high at this difficult middle stage in the tour when our chuff-charts appear to be marking time.

FOB ROBINSON, LASHKAR GAH *- by Capt Pearce*

This month has been a real mix, with slower periods coming more frequently now that we are into a proper daily working routine, interspersed with spurts of intense activity. The busy early part of the month was due to the reorganisation of the HQ while 52 Bde left and 16AA Bde arrived. This means that we are no longer the newest people on camp. The arrival of **SSgt Griffiths** was a huge shock to the system for the Techs and meant their workload has gone up significantly.

Once the reorganisation was complete, we enjoyed a much needed respite of a couple of weeks settling in to a regular routine with opportunities to organise activities outside of work. **Cpl Key**, **Sig Perry** and **LCpl Conway** organised our contribution to the Helmand 10. As well as raising money together with the other events around theatre it was an enjoyable sporting event that sparked some friendly rivalry. It was not just the us running, as soldiers from all over the FOB got involved.

Outside of work, the weekly quiz has been going well, although scores in the 'Corps knowledge' section have been notably rubbish, prompting a lot of internet research taking place to correct this. We also had a Tp BBQ cooked by **Cpl Key** and organised by **Sig Reid**. This was followed by some more volleyball in an unsuccessful attempt to improve our game enough to give the chefs a run for their money. Unfortunately the chefs remain the untouchable champions of Lashkar Gar…they obviously have too much time to practise!

The Troop takes full advantage of some rare downtime and the sweltering weather to play volleyball against the chefs

VEHICLE OFF ROAD – By LCpl Gardner

Soon after arriving at the unit I was put on to my GS Rover course. All I knew about the course was that it involved driving Land Rovers, and I was going to get very muddy.

The course started with us in a classroom, being instructed on all the points of the Land Rover 90/110 and TUL/TUM i.e. all the specifications of the vehicle and the paperwork involved in booking-out vehicles. We also covered how to check and plan a route through water and other hazards and how to recover a Land Rover when it gets stuck.

After 2 days in the classroom and with all the theory behind us we eventually got out onto the training area to start the practical side of our training. We familiarised ourselves with the various Land Rovers, and then our instructor took us on a route which covered the use of the various controls, manoeuvring and speed work.

For the next couple of days we got given route cards to follow and got to drive the different variants around the locality to get used to the vehicles on the road. We also learnt how to do convoy drives, which was pretty straight forward as long as the lead vehicle actually knew where it was going, which didn't seem to happen very often!

On the penultimate day came the part of the course that everyone had been looking forward to; the off-roading stage. With our classroom theory and countless demonstrations behind us, we were unleashed onto the less hospitable parts of the training area to put the Land Rovers, and ourselves, through the paces. This was an exciting but difficult experience as it takes a lot of concentration to control the vehicle when off-road.

Whilst negotiating one hazard, you already have to be formulating your approach to the next. Despite a few close-encounters, including **Sig Powell**'s disagreement with a tree, which refused to move however many times he hit it, we all got through this invigorating stage with minimal damage to ourselves and our vehicles.

The last day of the course was as entertaining as the off-road stage, and saw most of us up to our waists in mud learning how to winch out a stranded Land Rover. **Sig Albright** got a little more than he bargained for when he fell over whilst running through a filthy deep puddle and was coated in mud from head to toe! Well we were promised at the very start that we were going to get muddy.

Overall this was a great course and now allows me to drive Land Rovers in all sorts of conditions as well as know how to admin and look after them.

Sgt Makin instructs the course on how to recover a stranded vehicle

ANGLING CHAMP

Sgt Buckle was presented with the Royal Corps of Signals Colours for coarse angling on 6th June by Second in Command of 16 Sig Regt, **Maj Meadowcroft**. **Sgt Buckle** has represented the Corps for the last 5 years.

Sgt Buckle was a founding member of the Blandford Angling Club and, now in Germany, he is a very active member of the Rhine Garrison Angling Club. He is currently one of the strongest anglers in the BA (G) League.

Sgt Buckle is presented his Corp Colours by Maj Meadowcroft

21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT) COLERNE

CO **Lt Col DA Craft**
RSM **WO1(RSM) A McBean**

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

OC **Maj G Johnston**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Pollock**

As we approach the half way point of the year, the pace has not stopped in HQ Sqn or the Regt. The ISM team never seem to be in Barracks, whether that is supporting units on MRX and CAST or being bedded down with man flu or days out. The focus for the management team within HQ Sqn has been this years Lanyard Trophy and we are now into the magnifying glass stage of planning the all new competition. The most important impact will be unit T&S budgets getting their teams and admin support to the Pyrenees where this year's competition will be held.

Welcome to **WO2 Darran Brown** as MTWO, **WO2 Spats Brodie** as the Training WO (at present on a language course learning English!). Farewell to **WO2 Fudge Macphee** across the valley to DGISS Corsham to cut grass for the next 2 years. Farewell also to **SSgt Mark Collins** on promotion to 14 Sig Regt, **WO2 Mark McMullan** internally to SSM 244 Sig Sqn (couldn't cut it in HQ Sqn!)

EXERCISE COASTAL BEAUFIGHTER - *by Sig Taylor*

Fourteen members of HQ Sqn took part in the 'Casual stroll' along the south coast from Lulworth Cove to Weymouth. As with every Beaufighter exercise, the day began with those familiar words 'Get on the bus'. Normally it should have taken just under 2 hrs, but as we had the ultimate in satellite navigation it took 2½! After passing Scotch Corner 3 times we finally arrived at about 1010hrs. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, the sun was blazing and after a quick toilet run, we were setting off up the first hill. At the top was the first point of interest, Durdle Door, a giant stone archway carved naturally from the ocean. At this point **SSgt 'Boggy' Marsh** told us that the fitter lads could carry on at our own pace. At the base of the next hill **Sig 'Frank' Skinner** and myself decided it would be a good idea to run up it, until we creamed in halfway up and realized that maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all. Some of the other lads like **Sig Agyepong** and **LCpl Pindeni** decided to take the more relaxed slow bimble method. The next few gradients were pretty much uneventful until we hit a fairly even slope where a plague (an understatement) of flies decided to attack us just for the fun of it. We ran! A few more miles on and half of us reached our reason for enduring this madness, The Smugglers Inn, with the other half arriving only 20 mins later – just goes to show that running didn't actually get us there that much quicker. After something to eat and 're-hydrating' we carried on the last few miles to Weymouth.

When we finally arrived at Weymouth, we were given some free time to do as we wished. A few lads went off for a play at the arcade, some for a stroll along the beach and myself and a few others for a paddle on the sea canoes, a task which proved more demanding than expected. With the clock ticking it was time to get back to the bus and make our way home. The Sat Nav got the size 10 and **Sgt Sam Osmond** showed us a quicker way back, cutting off that extra half-hour we would have had to endure. All in all it was a good day, lots of morale and tp bonding and a bit of chill-out at the end of the day. Surprise, surprise though, on the way back there were already talks of the next 'day out'...

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj B Bryan**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Baynham**

MOBILE AIR OPERATIONS TEAM (MAOT) TASKING
- by LCpl Price

It was a sunny Friday and I was out shopping with my girlfriend when I had the dreaded call. My phone started vibrating in my pocket and when I looked at the screen it said 'unknown'. That could only mean one of two things; some random company trying to sell me something, or work. After a brief deliberation on whether or not to answer, I pressed accept and was praying to hear the voice of a telesales rep. I was greeted by the sound of **Sgt Thomas** from Sqn Ops informing me that I was to return to camp as the standby 2 MAOT detachment had been called out. I thanked him kindly for the call, broke the news to my girlfriend, endured several minutes of earache and set off for camp.

On return to camp I was informed that I was to deploy to Iraq on a MAOT tasking, joining **LCpl Brown** who had already deployed. I was to take a 346 from the stores and head for Brize Norton. That was the only information I received and I was eager to deploy and find out what tasks awaited.

On arrival in theatre I was greeted by **LCpl Brown** and told that we were deploying out to Basrah Palace to clear the Helicopter Landing Site (HLS). Freight has been dropped at the site and the Iraqi Army were not clearing it, resulting in helicopters not being able to land to extract casualties.

When they were finally able to land, there was a mad rush to get casualties on board so we were deployed to control the site and ensure the safety of both ground personnel and aircrew alike. After a few days in the palace we returned back to the COB to await out next tasking. This came all too quick and we were shortly on our way out to the BOC.

Our job there was to recce the site for possible dangers to incoming helicopters and to assess and train the infantry units based there in handling all aspects of the HLS. Our job was soon done in the BOC as the Scots based there proved very competent, so we quickly returned for the second time to the COB.

Our return from the BOC marked the end of the busy period. With the situation in Basrah calming, our focus now turned to updating the HLS directory. This involved visiting all the landing sites in Multi National Division SE and reassessing and updating the literature that the pilots and crews have when using an unfamiliar site. It was deemed by our boss **Flt Lt Stu Gerrard** that this job did not require 2 radio operators so I did the honourable thing and let **LCpl Mario Brown** stay out, as he does not yet have the Op Telic medal. He is still deployed as I write these notes and all of us at 21 Sig Regt wish him a safe return

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Hale**
SSM **WO2(SSM) McMullan**

It has been a busy period for 244 which has also seen several comings and goings within our ranks. Recent postings out include **Maj Blower** to HQ 11 Sig Bde, **LCpl Cryle** to HQ SOinC (A), **LCpl Abdulrehman** to 216 Sig Sqn, **Sig Hammond** to 7 Sig Regt, **LCpl Owen**, **Sig Powell** and **Sig Nelson** to 14 Sig Regt, **Cpl Thomson** to 2 Sig Regt, **LCpl Duffy** to 603 TACP and **Cpl Taylor** to DSDA Ashchurch. We wish them all the best in their new posts. Among the many posted in to replace the above include **Maj Hale** from DCI(A), **Sgt Harris** from BATUS, **Sgt Dinsdale** from 216 Sig Sqn, **Sgt Tinsley** and **Cpl Tucker** from 14 Sig Regt, **Cpl Grimes** from ATR Lichfield and **Sig Smith**, **Sig Young**, **Sig Rowe** and **Sig Kay** from RSS Blandford, Congratulations also to **SSgt Steve Brown** on being presented his LS&GC Medal recently after 15 years of exemplary service.

EXERCISE WALKING TIGER 08 - *by Sig Lunness*

Members of 244 Sig Sqn, took up the opportunity for a week adventure training at the end of May. Departing to Capel Curig (North Wales) on the Sunday afternoon, everyone was in good spirits as the week was to include rock climbing, kayaking, hill walking, mountain biking and paint balling. The first morning brought the requisite kit issues and every morning groups were split down and sent on there merry ways around North West Wales. Highlights of the week included a group reaching the summit of Mt Snowden after previous groups were forced to turn around due to the bad weather, which hampered the whole week. **2Lt Edward Bodger** attempted some kamikaze manoeuvres in the paint balling only to be turned back in a hail of paintballs to everyone's amusement and his pain. Evenings were spent either in the local watering hole or attempting to throw things into empty bins from a certain distance to see who had the best technique, which surprisingly was **Sig Gary Smith**. In summary I can say that all members of the Sqn thoroughly enjoyed the package we received this year and are looking forward to future packages with the Sqn. Lastly a big thank you to all the instructors who made all of this possible.

XXII 22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD

CO **Lt Col ND Fraser**
RSM **WO1(RSM) J Pritchard**

FREEDOM OF STAFFORD PARADE - *by Lt Smith*

On Saturday 19 April, 22 Sig Regt were joined by Tactical Supply Wing (TSW) of the RAF in a very proud day for both units. Having only officially reformed in July 2007, it is a great honour for the Regt to have been given the Freedom of the Borough of Staffordshire in such a short space of time.

With a full day of events planned, the organisation for the day started early with **Maj Colin Alexander** taking the lead. Certainly some vital preparation was required for the parade itself with 50 members of the Regt and Officers taking part. The practice was most obviously needed for the Officers to the great amusement of all the guys taking part.

On the Saturday morning the members of the Regiment taking part in the events were split into two parts, the first group consisting of the CO, **Lt Col Neil Fraser**, scroll bearer party and remainder of the Officers and WOs who were going to the church, the second group comprising the marching contingent.

During the church service the CO, on behalf of the Regt, received the scroll signifying the Freedom of the Borough. This was when

22 Sig Regt preparing to exercise the Freedom of the Borough

the scroll party came into play with **Lt Craig Smith** getting much needed direction from the scroll guard. After the Church service everyone then made their way to the market square for the parade and for the Regt to exercise the right to bear arms through Stafford. With the parade going flawlessly and the Regt exercising their right to march through Stafford with Colours

flying, swords drawn and bayonets fixed, it really was a brilliant sight for the hundreds who lined the streets.

Lt Col Neil Fraser receiving a gift from the Mayor of Stafford

After the parade had concluded, the Regt, their guests and members of the Council were brought back to Fraggers Bar for refreshments and food and to see an excellent display set up by **SSgt Rob Luke.** This was also a good chance for several speeches to be made and gifts to be exchanged between the Regiment and the local Council. **Maj Colin Alexander** and his team should be congratulated on a very well organised and superbly run event, which showed the Regt in its best light on such a memorable day.

REGIMENTAL FOOTBALL THE SIGNAL CUP - *by LCpl Doorbar*

After a very successful year, 22 Sig Regt reached the Final of the Signal Cup final facing the redoubtable 18 Sig Regt. After some sterling work form the Adjt, **Capt Graham Clarke** the Final was moved from Blandford to the Stafford Rangers Football ground, a superb location for an excellent match.

After a training period in the morning under the management of **WO2 Stuart Abbott** and the guile of coach **SSgt(YofS) Joey Collins** the team were well prepared to face their opponents in front of the loud and boisterous home support. The match saw excellent performances across the pitch, with the defensive partnership of **Cpl Riley** and **Sig Langley** being a highlight of the first half. After a very tight first half, the game needed a goal which was thankfully delivered by 22 Sig Regt with **LCpl Mitchell** finishing well after **LCpl Hodge's** spilt shot. This duly opened the game up with 18 Sig Regt throwing themselves forward. With excellent performances all over the pitch, in particular from **LCpl Brice** in the middle of the park, 22 Sig Regt were able to hang on to win the Signal Cup on the first attempt.

RACE THE SUN

On 15 May 2008, 22 Sig Regt entered a team in Race the Sun held in York. Travelling up at 2300hrs seemed like a good idea in theory but it did mean that many competitors looked like death when warming up at 0200hrs in the morning. Overall everyone put in 100% effort and the team achieved a very respectable 7th out of 12 Major Units. The highlight of the race came from an excellent performance in the stretcher race where the team come 3rd only a fraction behind the 2nd place team. This is the first time since the reformation of the Regt in July 2007 that a team has been entered and the competitors should be congratulated on their brilliant effort.

2 Sig Regt held a well organised Race and cannot be faulted on their preparation and planning. The execution was clinical and all commented on how much they enjoyed the event and the whole day. Well done to all that took part and a big thank you to 2 Sig Regt from all at 22 Sig Regt.

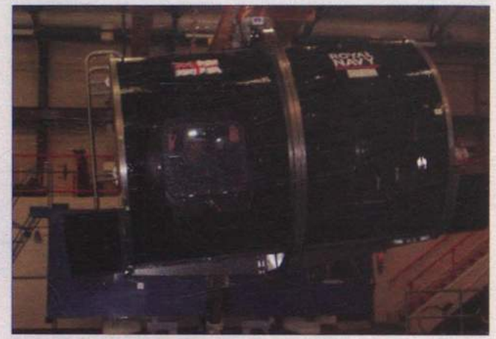
217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj S J Abram**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Burdus**

UNDER WATER ESCAPE - *by Sig Price*

To get into the spirit of the upcoming deployment to the driest place on the planet, our Tp OC, **2Lt Pete Crawley**, thought it would be a good idea to take Bravo Tp to *RNAS Yeovilton* to participate in some 'heli-dunking'.

After our initial brief about drowning and burst eardrums, we were nervous but very keen to get going. The first six lucky souls then jumped in to make their way to the capsule hanging precariously over the water. The capsule was raised to four metres and then lowered gently allowing everyone inside the chance to retain their bearings and escape in good order; not without some jittery nerves from unfortunates who were in the third seat and waiting for the others to make their escape.



Thrown in at the deep end. Literally!

After an initial run through as a starter the second time around was rather tastier. The second run consisting of the capsule being flipped upside down when submerged. After what seemed like an eternity under water, everyone was able to make there escape with only minor glitches to loud cheers and hoots from the audience.

The Navy staff now upped the pressure considerably for the third drop; the capsule dropping faster, turning upside down under the water and most of the lights being turned off. This was a pretty hairy situation with **Cpl Jon Stray** failing to locate the window release catch in an acceptable time (anything longer than instantly was deemed unacceptable by those behind him in the queue) and **LCpl Ady Stewart** came out having swallowed more than his fair share of the pool. On another of these twilight runs, **Sig Sharky Morrison** became so disorientated that he kicked his way through the underwater safety staff and lodged himself in the cockpit. An emergency raise was called and up came the capsule, although Bravo Tp's finest was still under the water trying to work out which way was up!

The day ended in triumphant style by doing the whole thing again, this time faster, deeper and with the lights completely off. Another good day out for Bravo Tp had ended and it was only 1100hrs.

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj C Alexander**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) A Ingham**

STIRLING BATTLEFIELD TOUR - *by Sig Mudie*

Under the organization of **Sgt Si Powel**, 10 members of 222 Sig Sqn took part in a battlefield tour to Stirling in Scotland. After a 9 hr journey via the East coast of Scotland we finally reached Stirling (situated in the West of Scotland). Many thanks go out to **Sgt Si Powell** for his wonderful directions. After meeting up with the tour guide at the Stirling Memorial we were treated to an excellent tour that took us back in time over the many battles that had taken place in that area.

The guide was a fount of knowledge and his extensive tour was well received by all taking part. The highlight of the tour was the William Wallace memorial (Braveheart more than anything else I'm sure). All in all it was a brilliant tour with a superb tour guide and an interesting location and to top it off a very good pub for the end of the day.

248 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj KA Jeeves**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Nimbahadur Pun**

BOSWORTH VISIT - *by Sig Ramesh Gurung*

On 2 separate days in March, 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn went to Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre to increase their knowledge of English History and to consider parallels to today's conflicts. JNCOs from the Sqn were also tasked to deliver short presentations on the aspects of the battle, in addition to the expert guides who took us on a tour of the battlefield. This gave an excellent opportunity to explore deeply into what happened and also for discussions (some heated) to take place between the members of the Sqn.

After a very interesting tour, some excellent and thorough presentations and several quite robust discussions it was a very successful and educational day for the Sqn. Finally the tour ended up with a look around the recently upgraded exhibition and a group photograph. In my view, it was a fantastic tour for all of us, which provided us with a lot of knowledge about the history of the battle.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM AND PALACE OF WESTMINSTER
- by Sig Sailendra Gurung

In April under the direction of **Capt Kedar Rai** and **Sgt Pitamber**, Oscar Tp organised an educational visit to both the Imperial War museum and the Houses of Parliament in London. Joined on the day by the OC, **Maj K A Jeeves**, the Tp spent the morning and early afternoon exploring the Imperial War Museum which is undoubtedly a must see visit for all serving soldiers.

The Tp then made its way by foot to the Houses of Parliament where it was split into 3 groups for an excellent guided tour. The guide took us throughout the whole of The Houses of Parliament, commonly known as the Palace of Westminster. There are 2 main parts to the Palace: The House of Commons and House of Lords. All in all, the visit was hugely successful, providing us with a wealth of historical knowledge, as well as a break from the daily routine of work. There was a lot to take in from the tour, especially for the junior soldiers, who have not long been in the Army or in the United Kingdom, for that matter.

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron at the Palace of Westminster

FAREWELL TO GURKHA MAJOR QG SIGNALS
- by Sgt Pitamber

On 26 March, all Stafford based Gurkha solders said farewell to outgoing Gurkha Major Queen's Gurkha Signals (GM QG Signals), **Maj Krishnabahadur Gurung**, who was due to handover his appointment to his successor **Maj Yamkumar Gurung** on 13 April. It is our Gurkha tradition to formally bid farewell to outgoing GMs at the end of their tour.

At 1430hrs, 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn and Alpha Tp from 217 Sig Sqn assembled in the gymnasium for farewell sports and were later joined by GM QGS and CO 22 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Fraser**. All SNCOs and officers played basketball and Cpls and below enjoyed outdoor football. The sports concluded at 1550hrs and everyone reassembled in the gym.

OC 248, **Maj Jeeves**, delivered a farewell speech to the GM on behalf of Stafford Based Gurkhas and thanked him for his direction and dedication to the Regt. Then, as per our tradition, all officers presented flower garlands to the GM. In turn, GM QMG delivered his farewell speech, emphasising the importance of Gurkha KAIDA essentially the esprit de corps.

GM QG Signals delivering his farewell speech

In the evening all Gurkha SNCOs and Officers (including the CO) went out to the local Chinese restaurant. All involved had a great evening and given that it was a buffet we all ate far too much as well. Finally, all at 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron would like to wish **Maj Krishnabahadur Gurung** and his family all the best for the future particularly in his post as QM in 37(V) Sig Regt.

WELCOME AND FAREWELL

222 Sig Sqn welcomes **Cpl Winters** joining from 1(UK) Div, **LCpl Gurung**, **LCpl Jones** and **LCpl Parry-Hall** all arriving from 2 Sig Regt, **LCpl Broxton** and **LCpl Prescott** arriving from 14 Sig Regt and finally **Sig Beasley** and **Sig Donnisson** joining from 35(V) Sig Regt. 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn welcomes **WO2(SSM) Nimbahadur Pun** as the new SSM and **SSgt(FofS) Rupkumar Gurung** as our new Foreman of Signals.

222 Sig Sqn bids farewell to **LCpl Sadler** on promotion to 21 Sig Regt, **LCpl Cartwright** and **LCpl Walton** both departing for 11 Sig Regt, **Sig Hutchinson** on promotion to 14 Sig Regt, **Sig Hackett** and **Sig Wardlaw** both posted to 10 Sig Regt and last but not least **LCpl Doorbar** and **Sig Baines** departing for the pastures new of 1(UK) Civ Div.

248 Ghurka Sig Sqn bids farewell to **WO2(SSM) Bharat Shrestha** who is posted to 30 Sig Regt as RQMS Admin and **SSgt(FofS) Vishal Pun** posted to 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn on promotion as WO2 FofS. Good luck to both of you on the new postings and thank you very much for your dedication.

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT
BRAMCOTE

CO **Lt Col C Ford**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Morris**

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj E Dallyn**
SSM **WO2(SSM) S Robinson**

CURRENT UPDATE

256 Sig Sqn have enjoyed a well earned period of POTL after a recent tour on Op HERRICK. The return to work signalled a decided upturn in the pace of work and all Sqn personnel are working hard to ensure that we are ready to assume our new role on 1 August 2008.

With the departure of **Capt Rich Gardner-Clarke** comes the arrival of **Lt 'Rick' Hammond** who has taken on the mantle of B Tp Comd.

FREEDOM OF NUNEATON PARADE - *by 2Lt Alex McPhun*

'Twas a frosty morning in Nuneaton and not a shop owner was stirring when the illustrious men and women of 30 Sig Regt were already sharpening and fixing their bayonets in preparation for the parade. With the admirers slowly thickening, the CO, **Lt Col Chris Ford**, made his initial introductions to an awestruck and neck strained Mayor.

To his rear, strong and intimidating with the morning sunlight split by their bayonets and illuminating the streets, **Lt Col Ford's** soldiers had formed crisp blocks of warriors.

With a shout to which only wild pack animals and highly trained soldiers react, the RSM, **WO1 Billy Morris**, gave the order to stand to attention.

Like the sound of a shifting ice shelf and with exactly the same earth moving force, this block of warriors moved together in complete unison. Only the birds falling from the sky and hitting the bus shelters broke the subsequent silence.

To the sound of cheers and applause, these heroes and now veterans of the British Army's most intense campaign since WW2, marched through Nuneaton. Local residents strained their voices and applause in an effort to catch the eye of one of these veterans, whilst struggling to control themselves at the sight of highly polished leather and newly fitted medals.

ADVENTURE TRAINING - *by Lt Alun Kelly*

With 256 Sig Sqn back from Afghanistan and working hard to reconstitute and take on it's new R1 tasks, we where lucky enough to have some time spare to get some of the troops away to do a little adventure training down in Pembrokeshire.

We were accommodated in Penally Camp, just outside Tenby and took advantage of our proximity to 14 Sig Regt Adventure Training Wing in Castlemartin to use of some of their kit. The main aim of the week was to help to integrate the new arrivals in the Sqn with some of the old hands who had been to Afghanistan.

We arrived at Penally on Sunday and took over our accommodation and had our evening meal before some of us went to explore the "delights" of Tenby.

One of our new Sigs managed to forget where he was and wear an England football shirt into town, which gave us plenty of amusement watching the barman ignore him, while he couldn't work out why! The next day we went to Castlemartin and signed in the Wing and were issued with the climbing kit.

Due to the restrictions with instructor to student ratios, we split the group in half and while one half went climbing on the crags around Maiden Castle, the other went on a cliff top walk around Stackpole Lily Ponds and Barafundle Bay, voted the most beautiful beach in England and Wales in the 2004

The Good Holiday Guide and in the top 12 in the world. We were extremely lucky with the weather, which was excellent and both groups enjoyed long hot days.

The following days we swapped around the climbing and walking, to give everyone a go and also went onto some more challenging walks.

The walk at the end of the week ended at the beach, which given the weather was a welcome relief, with some time for a little fun. Overall it was a great week and all involved enjoyed themselves.

We would like to thank Penally Camp for the great food, accommodation and understanding that they showed us and 14 Sig Regt Adventure Training Wing, who provided equipment, advice and instructors to us and were excellent in helping make sure that the week ran smoothly.

250 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON
– by Lt Harrison and Sgt Bikal Gurung

OC **Maj JR Anderson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Amrit Gurung**

CURRENT UPDATE

A warm welcome to **Capt TolBahadur Khamcha** who has just taken the post of 2IC 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn from **Capt Nirmal Gurung**. We wish him all the best.

Life as a Gurkha serving within the Bde is very unique due to its tradition and ethos. For some there are things to be seen and more challenges to be met.

Since the new rule changes to the Bde of Gurkhas, there are many who are going through the period of transition in their lives as they change cap-badges to join the wider Army. The most recent member of the Queen's Gurkha Signals to change his cap badge was **Cpl Lilasing Gurung**. He has been serving in the Bde for 15 years after enlisting as a Gurkha in 1994.

Throughout his service, he has been participating as well as representing the colours of the Regt in various shooting competitions and he has also been an active member within the community with his musical skills.

His final day with the Bde was 2 June 2008 where all the members of 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn joined him for a drink. **Maj Anderson** presented a Queens Gurkha Signals plaque as a token of appreciation for his commitment.

These are just a few of those who will be beginning a new career and challenge; but I am sure this is not the end. It is just the beginning for those wanting a different view in life.

It has been a hectic month for the Sqn. We have been heavily involved in RSIT, exercises and operations. Victor Tp has handed over JTFHQ 2 to 256 Sig Sqn while X-Ray Tp and Whisky Tp are still on R1.

From 1 August, 256 Sig Sqn will assume full R1 responsibility from 250 allowing members of the Sqn to take some well earned leave and the opportunity to get home to Nepal.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Balsdon**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Hodgskins**

Now that everyone has returned from POTL, the Sqn continues to support the Regt in preparing for their new tasks but the Sqn still finds time to do the fun things and here is an example of the troops in action.

Sgt Mick Brennan showed the Mayor of Nuneaton life in the fast lane in the Regt sponsored car. **Sgt Brennan** was later to go on and drive the hand controlled Nissan Micra.

The Mayor and Sgt Brennan before the start of the rally

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) LONDON

CO **Lt Col S Walker TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Concepcion**

It has been a time of change at RHQ with the Regt saying a fond farewell to the outgoing CO, **Lt Col Sarah Streete MBE TD** who was sent off in style at the TA 100 dinner held at Bisley in April.

In welcoming the new CO, **Lt Col Simon Walker**, certain roguish elements of the RHQ team are wondering whether the lacy net curtains in the old CO's office will go! We also welcomed the new Adjt **Capt Neil Matthews** who, it's believed, should find his welcoming card as soon as he reaches the bottom of the old Adjt's in tray.

Amongst the other new arrivals was **SSgt(FofS) Andy Dobson** who, within minutes of his arrival, was snaffled by the Regimental orienteering team. What do they all get up to in the woods? We say hello to the MTWO, **WO2 Mick Warrington** who has just taken up his post across the Square in the MT Dept.

A welcome return to the fold was the appointment of the new PSAO for 83 Sqn. **Capt Dave Thomas** who previously served with the Regt as PSAO of 83 Sqn when it was based at White City. You can't keep a good man down!

5 (QUEENS OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj CL Murison**
SSM **WO2 M Taylor**

As the celebrations for TA 100 started across the nation, so the soldiers of Oxfordshire took part in a joint service and parade in Oxford. The event took place in Christ Church Cathedral and the adjacent ground. It was a very moving service in a fantastic location full of history for the Sqn.

SSM Taylor and **Maj Murison** gave readings to the prestigious audience of past and present members and invited guests, including the His Grace, the Duke of Marlborough.

After the service, it was outside to the Broad Walk where the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire inspected the assembled troops and took the salute. This was followed by a reception where all those involved and more importantly their families, could join in the celebrations.

As part of the Sqn's role in UK Ops, members took part in a livex for the Thames Valley Police. This involved a collision between 2 aircraft over Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. As a result the military was called upon to give support. The Sqn was tasked to set up support 145 (South) Bde to provide communications between Gold and the Bde Ops Room.

This was an ideal opportunity for soldiers to train on REEBOK. **Sig Salmon** and **LCpl O'Sullivan** took up the challenge and by Sunday morning had mastered the required skills needed to operate the system.

Well done to **LCpl Clive Wragg** and **Sig Chris Welford** for attempting to mimic the Regt Ops team of **Maj Pete Griffith** and **YofS Daz Bailey** by having their hair shaved off!

A close shave with OC 5 Squadron

It was all in a good cause, the Sqn raised funds for Childhood Leukemia in support of **LCpl Wragg's** nephew.

Well done to **SSgt Claire Goodwin** who was awarded the Maj Gen Stokoe Cup Leadership Award. She was the first recipient for the award which was presented to the Regt when **Maj Gen Stokoe** retired from his role as Regimental Honorary Colonel.

41 (PLK) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Fensome**
A/SSM **WO2(FoS) M Byrne**

April saw the Sqn join the Regt for a demanding MATTs testing weekend and the TA100 Dinner. A large number of the Sqn passed their tests first time with flying colours. For many though the highlight of the weekend was the lavish dinner at the Bisley

pavilion were the Sqn joined serving and ex-members for good food, good wine and some excellent entertainment.

Later that same month the WOs and SNCOs mess dined out **SSgt Craig Brooksbank**, who finished his Regular Army career as our PSI – we all wish **Craig** well for the future. May arrived and the Sqn made the journey to Kensington Town Hall for the annual "Kensington Dinner". The Mayor of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea welcomed us all and made a wonderful, supportive speech, reinforcing the Borough's strong ties with the Sqn a great night was had by all!

The following weekend found the Sqn in the field on exercise with our LANWARDs, Chirpcom and Clansman HF assets, practising our Long Haul communications to the USA. Tied into the weekend was a range package to provide a respite from all the signals traffic! In early June the Sqn visited RHQ to see 5 of its officers and soldiers receive medals which were presented by the Deputy Commander of HQ London District, **Brig JE Paterson OBE**.

Capt Sam Osei-Agyemang received his Op HERRICK medal, **Capt Justin Harris** received a second bar to his VRSM whilst **Capt Matt Cahill** and **SSgt Dave Holman** each received the first bar to their VRSM's. Finally, **Cpl Barbara Ennis** received her VRSM.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj IG Holland**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Hall**

Highlights of our training year to date have been the various events held to mark TA 100. First the Regt laid on a black tie dinner at the Bisley ranges, where previous members of the Regt and its forebears gathered to celebrate the commencement of the TA's one hundredth year.

On 15 May 12 members of the Sqn attended the TA service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral in London. The troops taking part then marched through the city of London to the Guildhall for refreshments. It was a thoroughly good day out and a chance to get into our best bib and tucker in front of lots of VIP guests.

We will also be deploying some of our signals assets to Aldershot's TA 100 show in early July as part of the ongoing events being held across the country. We look forward to the ABF event at Hertsmonceux Castle in East Sussex, which we are supporting during which there will be a beating retreat ceremony as the show closes. It is there that the Sqn will launch its own TA 100 event, an 'end to end' cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats which is being undertaken by members of the Sqn.

Several of our recruits recently passed their recruits courses – so well done to **Sigs Canavan, Tongue** and **Jones**. It was with much sadness that we heard the news of the passing of **Cpl Sean Reeve**, a former member of our Brighton based Tp. Sean died on active service in Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his many friends in Brighton.

Sgt Eric Gardyne attended the Corps wreath laying service at the National Memorial in Staffordshire which is dedicated to members of the armed forces killed in recent conflicts. He drove members of the local Eastbourne and Brighton Royal Signals Associations to the service which was attended by our Colonel-in-Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal**. As a Sqn we continue to support local cadet associations and recently sent several members to act as instructors and DS on a local camp with the Eastbourne College Combined Cadet Force.

Preparations are well under way for our participation in the Airborne show in Eastbourne in August and, as well as being our main recruiting event of the year, we are also organising the annual (and hard fought) cricket match between the Officers Mess and the WO and Sgts Mess on the final Sunday of the show.

83 SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj T Crosby**
2IC	**Capt S Bumby**

With TA manpower always scarce, it was good to see our latest batch of recruits pass out at Grantham in May. Well done to **Sigs Olly Banks, Anya Woolliams** and **Cfn Justin Prins.**

Congratulations to **Sgts Liz Lafferty** and **Kirstin Morris** for completing the London Moonlight walk, especially **Liz** who is rather pregnant at the moment!

With the next Regt major overseas adventure training expedition in mind (to New Zealand this time), 12 members of the Regt went down to Brighton in June to begin their sea kayak training. As the sea had a decent swell on it, no formal training in self rescue techniques was necessary, there was plenty of that going on!

The dreaded 'purple boat' with its narrow body soon got the better of **LCpl Justin Goodchild** and **Sig Ben Hick** as they climbed ever higher on the rescue list, managing to remain upright for an average of about five minutes at a time. **Cfn 'Pirouette' McLaren** was struggling in his yellow submarine but all in all, an excellent weekend's work on the water in difficult conditions.

Sgt Tim Still desperately tries to get the hang of this steering wheel thingy

The Regt continues to emerge as a force to watch as it brought home more silverware from the Royal Signals Regular and TA orienteering championship events. As a parting gesture from the unit, the evergreen and consistent **Lt Col Sarah Streete** won her category titles with **LCpl Ali Rowsell** proving to be a star in the making. A mere 3 mins behind experienced Army orienteer **Capt Sarah Clifford**, she was the runner up in the Open Ladies class leaving many top names in her wake.

The Ladies team was by far the fastest on the course and did eventually take the runner up spot despite a 15 min penalty imposed for a non punch (as opposed to a mis punch). The Regt welcomes **SSgt(FofS) Andy Dobson**, a very experienced and capable orienteer who will no doubt add to the Regt's strength.

32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT GLASGOW

CO	**Lt Col HA Jenkins**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Wilson**

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Lindsay**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Poulson**

We welcome recent transferees **LCpl Willis** and **Sig Veitch** and wish all the best and congratulations to **SSgt Campbell**, our PSI(T), who has been promoted just before deploying on a tour to Iraq. Congratulations to **WO2(SSM) Poulson** and **Jules** on the recent arrival of their twins **Daisy** and **Jack**, and also to **Cpl McRobbie** and **Kas** on the birth of their baby, **Maya**.

In May, **Sgt Kelly** completed the 10km of the BUPA Great Edinburgh Run in a commendable 1 hr 3 mins beating **LCpl Brown** by 6 mins! **SSgt Forbes** and **Capt Gaw** also finished the run in 44 and 55 mins respectively.

MILITARY ANNUAL TRAINING TESTS (MATT) WEEKEND 25 – 27 APRIL 08

Keen to qualify for our bounties early, we attended a Regimental MATT training weekend at Redford Barracks in late April. As well as the financial reward, being up to date with our MATTs is doubly important this year as we are conducting the High Readiness Reserve trial and preparing for Op TOSCA later in the year. The weekend was a great success with most of the Sqn battling through all 6 tests in record time, all that is left to do now is 27 days of training including annual camp.

The weekend also confirmed our worries that **Cpl Lowe** is happiest when fully suited in his CBRN gear, although we did see a different side to him as he took **LCpl Cornish** through her emergency eating drills with a Tunnocks tea cake.

LYKE WAKE WALK 16 – 18 MAY 08 - *by Capt Gaw*

Although it seemed a good idea at the time, as I sit here unable to feel the toes on my left foot with my knees throbbing and calves aching, I'm not too sure.

After completing the Caledonian Challenge in June 2007, we were sitting in the bar analysing our performance and we decided that next time we would actually do some training before launching into a 54 mile race along the West Highland Way. The training would be gradual, starting in January and getting progressively longer. The local hills in Edinburgh provided the perfect territory to train on but when the distance we had to achieve reached 40 miles we had to look further. Someone, and I'm really annoyed I can't remember who, suggested the Lyke Wake Walk – a 40 mile crossing of the North Yorkshire Moors – not too many hills and a good tester before the big day. Hoping to kill two birds with one stone we planned to complete the walk on a Sqn training weekend so we could deploy with complete support teams and test the remainder of the Sqn on their communications skills over unfamiliar terrain.

We deployed early on Friday to Osmotherley in order to setup camp at the Cote Ghyll Caravan and Camping Park. Whilst **SSgt McGinaly** snapped photos of everything from the camp toilets to colourful caravan awnings with a view to returning later in the year with her own caravan, everyone else set about setting up a small tented village to house the Sqn. First up was the kitchen so that **WO2(RCWO) Wren** could start cooking our steak and chips for dinner. Next was the accommodation and I don't know if it was the shortage of tent poles but Support Tp decided to pitch their tent well away from everyone else and do their own thing! Trying not to wake the rest of the campsite we all rose at 0400hrs and tip toed en mass to the ablutions. I doubt there was any hot water left for the holiday makers later in the day. A full Scottish breakfast at 0430hrs was just what the doctor ordered, admittedly it was our own **SSgt Dr Cook** who ordered it, but nevertheless it tasted great.

We should have set off at 0500hrs but we eventually left the Lyke Wake Walk start stone at 0528hrs, once we'd got the radios squared away and call-signs worked out. Despite most people wanting to go straight up the road to the next waypoint we stuck to the guidebook and went straight up the hill. It was misty to start with, but not to worry – the Met Office had told me that it would brighten up and be a lovely day! Try telling that to the mist and rain battering the top of Live Moor and Carlton Moor. A fairly swift first leg saw us arriving at Checkpoint 1.

Everyone at the top of Carlton Moor

Expecting to see Comms Tp at the first Checkpoint after 6 miles, we were surprised to find Command Tp staffing the water stop, apparently someone had been navigationally challenged (mentioning no names, **Sgt Leslie**) and was still conducting anti-ambush drills in Osmotherley. Leaving Checkpoint 1 with promises of fantastic views from Cringle Moor, we were shrouded by thick mist. Barely able to see 100m, we trudged on before reaching Broughton Plantation where the mist lifted but we were blocked in by trees.

We hardly spent 5 mins at Checkpoint 2 before crossing the road and battling our way up Carr Ridge led by **Sig Whiffen**. The mist seemed to have followed us AS we peaked on Urra Moor and couldn't see a thing! It eventually lifted as we passed Bloworth Crossing on to the old railway line but then there was nothing to see any way!

Sig Whiffen and Sig Addicott having a well earned rest

We arrived at Checkpoint 3 absolutely starving. It had been almost 8 hrs since our last meal – almost unheard of, even in the TA. The last mile or so of road had pounded our feet relentlessly. A hearty bowl of pasta cooked up by **Cpl McCormack** and lots of nibbles and we set off. This time there were no paths to follow, just old boundary stones in the heather. As **Sig Galliers** kept us on the right bearing, the rest off us concentrated on not losing feet in the peat bogs and long grass.

At Checkpoint 4 we were greeted by a smiling **Sgt Leslie** who denied all knowledge of getting lost earlier. A quick refill of our water bottles and we were soon off again. This time we were following narrow paths through the gorse that put extra pressure on our knees as our feet were placed directly in front of each other. After passing the stone circle at Simon Howe we were sadly too late to see the steam locomotive on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

It took a strong pair of legs to leave Checkpoint 5, straight back into the narrow, knee crushing paths in the gorse. There was little to see along this leg but with your head bent over desperately looking out for rocks in the path, we wouldn't have seen it any way. Keeping RAF Fylingdales on our right we navigated the Eller Beck before passing the Lilla Cross and made good progress until the Jugger Howe Ravine.

The stone steps into the ravine were utter agony with each step down sending needles through our knees and the climb up the other side had our quads screaming.

After 40 miles we were finally there. The mast at Ravenscar that had remained a speck on the horizon for so long now loomed magnificently before us. We had finally completed the Lyke Wake Walk in times of between 12 hrs 30 mins and 13 hrs 20 mins. Tired, aching and emotional, we retired to the Hayburn Wkye Inn for a well deserved drink and feast before the drive back to Edinburgh on Sunday. Fifteen had started the walk and only 8 completed the full 40 miles.

Our heroic support team

Communications planners will be pleased to know that there is complete AIRWAVE coverage of the route, although your voice sounds like C3PO the closer you get to RAF Fylingdales! Many thanks to **SSgt McGinlay**, **SSgt Taylor** and **Sgt Kelly** for supporting the event so well.

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) MIDDLESBOROUGH

CO **Lt Col MJ Finch**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Tench**

The first significant event to report is the changeover of RSMs. We bid farewell to **WO1(RSM) Mark Tench** and welcome his replacement **WO1(RSM) Steve Legg**.

The past 2 months have included a series of Regimental events that have provided a great deal of sub unit cooperation and bonding. This has meant good opportunities for the new RSM, **WO1 Tench,** to get to meet everyone. We say a fond farewell to **WO1 Legg** and wish him luck in his new venture as a gas technician and look forward to our obligatory military discounts!

EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH (EES) 2008

The planning was over and suddenly Ex EXECUTIVE STRETCH (more like Op EXECUTIVE STRETCH) was upon us, Op MARKET GARDEN had seen nothing like the operations room activity of Ex EXECUTIVE STRETCH (EES). Under the guidance of that wily old dog himself **Maj Guy Benson** (BOB), 34 (N) Sig Regt (V) took on the responsibility of hosting the exercise. EES is an annual event aimed at providing Young Executives (YE) an insight into Army life and to develop their own leadership and problem solving skills.

BOB's plan of campaign was to provide an exercise based around a series of leader-led and leaderless tasks, in field conditions with the final crescendo being the reputably tough Vimy Barracks steeplechase. As ever, BOB invented some wacky ideas and with his trusty No 2, **Capt (QM) Pete Griffiths**, they set about making this EES the most successful to date. Without doubt, no stone was left unturned, no area left to chance and the YEs arrived with some choice haircuts and beards in evidence. They were treated to a 'Ready, Steady, Cook' extravaganza by **FofS Dave Walker** and **Eve Eden** and shown the art of basha building by **SSgt Hector Heathcote** before **SSgt Daz Cattle** led the way with ropes and knot techniques. After this thrill a minute roller coaster of events, the YEs settled into a night of comfort in the surrounding woods of Bellerby Camp.

Young Executives making a splash on the Comd's Challenge

The following morning the YEs were put through their paces, completing a series of command tasks and after a gruelling day of VIPs and Senior Executives watching the rabbits in the headlights, they were treated to a master class in burning in the form of a BBQ by **WO2 Cornelius Berry** and his No2 **Arthur**. Suddenly the final event was upon us and the teams battled their way around the steeplechase, supported by members of 34 Sig Regt, notably the Adjt, **Capt Ian Flannery**, who demonstrated the art of swan diving on more than one occasion. All too soon the final ceremony and champagne breakfast was done and dusted and the YEs departed back to civilian life. All that remains now is for BOB to receive his well earned MBE! Well done Sir, **SSgt Heathcote** has volunteered to pin it on your chest!

TA NATIONAL FOOTBALL FINAL - *by Cpl Cairns*

The TA National Final was held on 20 April at the home of Army Football – Aldershot. With members of the Regt travelling from Newcastle, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Leeds, it was going to be a long drive. The usual dramas of the M25 didn't help matters but expectations were high and so was the excitement.

On the day, 34 Sig Regt came storming out of the blocks with 3 excellent chances in the opening few minutes – was this going to be a walkover? Unfortunately not, as the Exeter side settled down and began to play some expansive football with the long ball causing all sorts of problems with our supposedly experienced back line. The youthful pace continued to threaten and the Exeter team opened the scoring after a goal mouth scramble. The Exeter goal galvanised 34, and once again we began to dominate. With a free-kick awarded on the edge of the Exeter box, up stepped **SSgt Morrison** to curl a delightful free kick straight into the top corner of the Exeter goal.

After a brief 'coaching' chat at half time from **Sgt Graham**, the team were straight back onto the now bare pitch. The Exeter team were clearly still finishing half time brews. Once again 34 were fast out of the blocks but could not break down a tight Exeter defence. With chances being missed at both ends, the clock was ticking fast. As time ebbed away, extra time loomed. The tension was unbelievable and just one goal would settle matters but with neither side able to finish their chances, the final whistle blew and so to extra time.

The first half of extra time came and passed with both sides still unable to settle the match. It was left to the second period when **SSgt Morrison** floated a cross in from the left. **Sgt Graham** was unlucky with his header but continued to battle with the goalkeeper and the ball popped out for **Cpl Cairns** to coolly send the ball into the Exeter goal. The deafening support of the travelling Exeter fans was silenced.

Exeter continued to push until the end but with some resolute defending by 34 Sig Regt they could not get the equaliser. The TA National trophy was coming North for the first time in the Regt's history. After the match, the ceremony saw team captain **Sgt Graham** lift the trophy aloft to the thunderous applause of the 2IC!

The victorious football team

Many thanks for support from the Regt and a very well done to all members of the team. Finally, farewells must go to team manager **Sgt Luke Hitchin** and **Sgt Mark Middlemiss** who having finished on a high, now depart for pastures new at sunny Blandford. The team has now lost its entire right flank and are looking for any potential stars for next year's assault on the Army Minor Units and in retaining the TA National Cup. Interested?

EXERCISE MARTIAL MERLIN - *by 2Lt Seaton*

Ex MARTIAL MERLIN is the annual 15 Bde Military Skills Competition run over Catterick Training Area. The exercise is designed to test basic military skills such as patrolling, CTR's, anti-ambush, first aid and CASEVAC drills. Teams were to be of sect strength and led by a young officer. Unfortunately we began a man short which impacted on our timings as we still had to carry the equipment that the missing patrol member would have carried.

Call sign Bravo Two Zero, the Ex MARTIAL MERLIN Team – Sig Kirk, Sgt Knapman, 2Lt Seaton, Cpl Allinson, LCpl Hewitt, Sig Ness and Cpl Riches

On Friday 14 March, the Team arrived at EXCON and we began to prepare our kit for the coming 24 hrs. **Sgt Graham** had managed to acquire all the required kit for an Infantry patrol; we were furnished with all the Gucci infantry kit that as a Sig Regt we rarely see, everything from CWS to prismatic compasses!

Having received our call sign of Bravo-Two-Zero from EXCON and completed the DCCT, we deployed to the FOB at Gandale Farm by armoured vehicle. Once there, the team had a kit inspection while I received my orders and conducted my combat estimate. Having successfully delivered the patrol orders we ran through some quick rehearsals before setting off at 0200hrs.

Moving north-west past 'six tracks' junction, we found signs of enemy presence in the area and took a short detour around an obvious choke point. Our suspicions were confirmed when a few minutes later we heard 30 cadets making their rifles safe! We had successfully avoided the first of many ambushes! We were the first team to arrive at the CASEVAC stand, but unfortunately an hour late due to the very tight timings. We had however managed to overtake the 4 YORKS team ahead of us, thanks to **Cpl Riches** expert map reading skills.

We then moved onto the CTR of the enemy position but by this time it was broad daylight and the enemy had positioned themselves in Quarry Plantation; the approach to which was devoid of any concealment. After establishing an OP consisting of **Sigs Kirk** and **Ness** on the spot height to the east of the objective, we made 3 unobserved approaches to the objective each time coming within 400m of the enemy.

We then extracted from the CTR to the Signals stand. En route to this we were contacted by an enemy vehicle mounted patrol – our only contact of the exercise. At the Signal stand, **Cpls Allinson** and **Riches** used a Clansman 320 radio to establish comms with Battalion Tac HQ while the CTR report was encoded. Then came the final leg home, during which we avoided another 2 enemy ambushes but were found by the media! After a quick media session on the move, we returned to Battalion Tac HQ for the patrol debrief and further media interviews.

Upon returning to the FOB we received our scores and despite starting 1 man down we achieved a very creditable silver medal. A great effort by all those involved and strong position to improve on for next year.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Congratulations go to **Sig Nat Lawrence**, **Cfn Lizzie Cummings** and **Sig Phil Newman** on completion of their Phase 1 training. Congratulations also go to **Sig Newman** on completion of his Class 3 RS Elect (V) with 12 Sig Gp in April 08.

Maj Graham Jennings (OC) and **Capt Neal Dixon** (2IC) made the most of the sunshine and the hospitality of the locals while conducting a recce of Halton Trg Camp near Lancaster in preparation of Ex SUMMER BREEZE, the Regimental Adventure Training exercise in August.

It is hoped that the Regt will deploy complete to conduct a host of activities from rock-climbing to canoeing.

We would like to wish 2 of our Junior Soldiers, **Sig James Bryceson** and **Sig Danni Griffin** good luck with their selection and pre-deployment trainingT for Op TOSCA, a deployment to

Maj Jennings and Capt Dixon meet Eric Morecambe

Cyprus. Make sure you have the factor 50 with you and best wishes to you both from HQ Sqn, don't forget the postcard.

36th (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) ILFORD

CO **Lt Col M Lansdown TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) JF Lyons**

The last few months within the Regt have been challenging to say the least. The QM, **Capt Steve White** and his G4 team have successfully undergone both the annual Equipment Care Inspection (ECI) and Logistics Support Inspection (LSI) achieving creditable results in both.

The tempo of the TA 100 celebrations has increased to a sprint with the Regt covering the geographic boundaries of Greater London, Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Rutland and being expected to participate in each of the counties' main TA 100 events.

FREEDOM OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

On Saturday 14 June 2008 the Regt had the honour to re-affirm its bond with the London Borough of Redbridge by exercising its right to the freedom of the Borough.

Despite the gloomy weather picture earlier in the week, the sun was shining and a large crowd assembled outside the Town Hall in Ilford to watch the Regt get on parade.

The Mayor of Redbridge **Cllr Loraine Sladden**, the Deputy Lieutenant **Col Alan Hall TD DL** and the CO **Lt Col Mike Lansdown** took the salute before the Mayor inspected the ranks.

This was a particularly poignant occasion as it is probably the last occasion the Regt will exercise its freedom due to the forthcoming move of RHQ to Cambridge.

The Regiment marches past the Town Hall

The Lady Mayor and the CO with the Freedom Scroll

The parade culminated in a mass march past of the Regt, the Royal Signals Association branches from East London, Colchester, Bedford and Cambridge, the 4th Bn the Essex Regiment Association and the City of London Army Cadet Force, all led by the Royal Signals Northern Band.

The parade was honoured to have 3 former Corps members, now In Pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, lead the association members.

After the parade around 400 soldiers, families and guests assembled in the TAC to watch the Mayor present medals to 5 of the Regt's soldiers and receive a presentation of a tapestry to mark the occasion.

Medals were presented to **Capt Mark Ward** – VRSM, **WO2 Keith Smith** – VRSM, **Sgt Paul Whenman** – LS&GC, **Cpl Cyrille** – OSM and **LCpl Hill** – VRSM.

The CO and The Lady Mayor with the medal recipients and their partners

The day concluded with a VIP lunch and Families day and the RSM putting his feet up.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SERVICE AND MARCH PAST 15 MAY 2008

A team of 10 soldiers led by the SVWO, **WO1 John Davis** attended this, the first of the TA 100 National Events at St Paul's Cathedral which was attended by the Lord Mayor and CGS and culminated in a march past of 900 TA soldiers through the streets of London. Many had recently returned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The unit was well represented with the soldiers parading in different forms of dress to represent the variety of tasks that they could be expected to perform.

WO1 Davis with some of the Regt's contingent at St Paul's Cathedral

54 (EAST ANGLIAN) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj LJC Scott**
SSM **WO2(SSM) R Price**

54 Sqn continues to grow from strength to strength and the recruiting campaign in Cambridge is starting to bear fruit in preparation for the full move of the Sqn and the RHQ to the new TAC in Cambridge later this year. Cambridgeshire's contribution to TA100 was a Service of Dedication held at Ely Cathedral on Sunday 8 June 08.The Regt was represented by members of 54 Support Sqn from Ilford and Cambridge. A recruiting stand was manned prior to and after the parade.

EXERCISE SAXON BOND – LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- by OCdt Amanda Washbrook

Members of 54 Support Sqn attended a weekend of leadership skills training at Blandford. The aim was to help prepare soldiers for JNCO cadres and to equip others to deliver leadership training within their Tps. A mixed group travelled to Blandford, from a handful of Cpls down to a keen Recruit.

We were expecting a weekend of ammo boxes, mine tape and impassable areas of shark infested custard but what the training team had in store was refreshingly different. It became clear that the tasks were likely to be a little more complex than usual when we spent the second part of the morning learning how to tie a range of exotically named knots. Most of us hadn't tied anything more than our shoelaces for quite some time! Finally, with an arsenal of bunny-ears, re-threaded figures of eight and clove-hitches and having tied our hands together a few times, we were ready to put our new-found skills into practice.

After lunch we kicked off with a conventional sort of command task to demonstrate the formula we'd been taught for approaching problems. Then we donned helmets and disappeared into the woods to learn how to set up a rope-tensioning system for crossing a gap. All that was needed was a few carabineers, a length of rope and a willing team to set it up – and, of course, a foolhardy volunteer to make the first crossing. Being an OCdt and therefore the most expendable, I went across first. Luckily, the ropes all held and I made it to the other side without falling to my doom or making a fool of myself. The next phase was using what we'd learned to solve some problems. As well as designating task leaders, the training team appointed some of the more senior members of the group to DS each task and deliver feedback at the end. The inclusion of training on how to DS tasks as well as take part in them meant everyone got involved and helped to equip us all for running command tasks back at tp level.

The first scenario we faced was called 'Downed Pilot' and involved setting up a rope tensioning system to retrieve one of our team, who was behaving strangely on the other side of a ravine. We set about choosing our trees and selecting our knots and rigged up a system for crossing the gap. In a short time **Sig Leggett** had made it safely to the other side with a rope and a makeshift harness for recovering **Cpl Peachey**, the downed pilot, back to the home bank. **Sig Leggett** used an unconventional lift to hook her up on the rope above his head, which prompted some laughter from the rest of us, but eventually she was suspended quite happily between the trees and on her way to safety. In fact, by the end of the weekend, a few people were so at home hanging about from the trees we considered leaving them behind to revert to the wild. Another of the tasks involved escaping from a POW camp within a head high 'electric fence'. No one fancied attempting the Fosbury Flop, so a couple of us were posted over the top to select some trees from which to rig another tensioned rope for getting everyone out. We were helped by having a seasoned climber, **Cpl Wright** in the team who was quite at home with his sheepshanks and knew which way up his rabbit ears were supposed to go and despite a few electrocutions everyone made it out in Fighting Order and good spirits within the time allowed.

We ended the weekend with a trip to the Corps Museum. Those of us who had never been there before were quite taken by the story of **William of Orange**, a pigeon, who travelled 150 miles with a message that saved 2000 soldiers during the WW1. Although not blessed with wings, we could at least congratulate ourselves that, like the pigeon, we are no longer dependant on the ground for crossing obstacles – provided someone remembers to bring the climbing rope and carabineers of course!

37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) REDDITCH

CO **Lt Col JE Sutton**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DE Cupit**

INTRODUCTION

The Global concept training package continues to develop within the Regt. These training weekends are planned and organised by the Sqn Comds with the aim to deliver a more rounded and enjoyable training environment and a single standard of testing throughout the Regt.

EXERCISE GLOBAL MATTS II

GLOBAL MATTs II was run and organized by Support Sqn. A full weekend of MATT testing had been planned and also a last minute request for Reebok to deploy to provide soldiers with access to JPA throughout the weekend was factored into the plan. The location was set to be Swynnerton, a lovely part of rural Staffordshire and will be remembered for the not so gentle shriek of the resident peacocks, who by the way stay up way too late and rise far too early. As ever with these events, nothing of comedic value ever happens, more so when there is a requirement for *Wire* notes. The training and testing went smoothly without even a chuckle worth reporting. However the Reebok deployment has been rumoured not to have been such a trouble free event, with keys being locked in various offices leaving a trail of broken padlocks from Redditch to Swynnerton. The detachment commander has staunchly refused to comment, so again the story trails off without so much as a grin.

I am beginning to suspect I have been far too obvious in the collection of these *Wire* notes. But congratulations must go to Support Sqn for a well run and executed event. Special commendation to **SSgt 'Sammy' Lee**, who still managed an incredible assist despite his resettlement commitments.

EXERCISE GLOBAL CONCEPT II

Ex GLOBAL CONCEPT II was tasked to OC 53 Sqn, **Maj 'Marcus' Cosgrove** and the planning was immediately put into place. A huge effort by the permanent staff and TA alike helped to ensure that it was going to be a hard act to follow. On Friday, all Sqns arrived by 2230hrs at Nescliffe Training Area and sorted themselves into the accommodation in preparation for the weekend's activities. Saturday started very early in the morning with an enjoyable PT session under **Sgt Pete Langton**. This involved throwing a rugby ball between each other and when it was dropped, the penalty was an exercise of the PTI's choice. The under 35s did some more interesting exercises including using muscle groups not normally covered in a typical training session, including 'the plank', which involves balancing on your toes and forearms and keeping the body rigid for as long as possible, it does hurt. The Regt was split down into its trade groups to carry out specific trade training:

Technicians. The Techs looked at Reebok with a view to being able to deploy and operate the detachment without the assistance from the Regular Staff, much to the delight of **SSgt 'Val' Vallance**, the Regimental IS Eng and **Sgt 'Biggles' Brooksbank** the potential RAF technician if he can pass the 9 weeks basic training. Apparently it's quite tough learning how to book in and out of hotels.

Operators. The Operators were treated to a demonstration of the Saint Refresh Project, now at IOC. This was the replacement radio equipment for the current Airwave Gateway Vehicle. Recent testing has shown excellent results across all areas. There was also a demo of the new Incident Commander's Radio Interface (ICRI). This device provides an interface between most military and civilian communication equipments. An outstanding bit of kit that will be of great use in our role of UK Ops, I'm sure the other Regts will concur when they receive theirs.

Electrician Drivers. The EDs were put to good use with practice on servicing generators and correct use of the MT 1000 series. This proved to be very handy with the ECI approaching fast – one less thing to worry about. A world record attempt was made but sadly 3 hrs for an ED to change a flashbulb was just not quick enough – better luck next time.

Seniors and Officers. The management teams firstly looked at the process that a Potential Officer has to go through, from initial contact to commissioning and subsequent training within the Regt. This was followed with equipment demonstrations of INMARSAT and VTC, their capabilities and the uses they can be put to looking at a UK Ops scenario. This was followed by some high level doctrine and command relation discussion groups.

On Sunday, the junior ranks attended lessons on management and leadership, while the senior ranks and officers covered Staff Estimates with the RSM. After these lectures all ranks conducted a round robin of 4 command tasks. As the picture clearly proves some plans are best left on paper. A very enjoyable morning was had by all and special thanks must go to **2Lt Lee Clifton** and **2Lt Gareth Evans.** Once the command tasks had been completed and as the weekend was coming to a swift conclusion the Regt paraded and dismissed back to their Sqn locations. A great weekend and a high bench mark had been set by 53 Sig Sqn.

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) SHEFFIELD

CO **Lt Col SJ Baker TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) AJ Wyatt**

FAREWELL AND WELCOME

Among the recent turnover of the Regt's Regular personnel, one is particularly worthy of note. **WO2(RQMS) Billy Duggan** of the Regular Army and the Regt on 9 June.

Under our new Future Army Structures (FAS) Establishment Table, the post of RQMS has changed from Regular to NRPS. As a result, on 10 June our new NRPS RQMS took the Oath of Allegiance, accepted the Queen's shilling and we welcomed him to the Regt. His name? **WO2 (RQMS) Billy Duggan**. What goes around, comes around.

ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND – ABF GOLF COMPETITION

The annual ABF Golf competition sponsored by the Regt was once again held at Rother Valley Golf Club on Wednesday 14 May 2008. The weather was extremely pleasant and there was a good turn out in support of this worthy cause.

The competition commenced with a warm-up round of 9 holes of golf in the morning followed by a lunch. The main 18 hole competition in the afternoon gave the competitors a chance to reveal their true handicaps and by the scores entered on completion of the day's golf it was obvious that one or two players had played well below their declared handicap. These unscrupulous people are called 'bandits'.

Support Sqn's Tech Sgt, **Sgt Gaz Myres** was particularly embarrassed having declared a handicap of 28 and then scoring a total of 37 Stableford points. By contrast, **SSgt Chris Noviss**, SPSI 64 Sig Sqn, was just pipped at the post on count-back for the prize for the Longest Way Round or as some will say "Most Golf Played". However, he was extremely happy that this prize had eluded him. The winners of the individual morning and afternoon competitions, **Eddie Edwards** and **Daz Holmes**, were both members of ITC Catterick and played extremely well. The winners of the Team Competition for the fourth year running were ITC Catterick. The runners-up were 4 YORKS and in third place was the 38 Sig Regt A Team. **Capt Les Jordan BEM**, PSAO 64 Sig Sqn, has successfully organised the Regt's ABF Golf Competition for the past 9 years. In preparation for his retirement next year he handed over the mantle to **WO2 Phil Horton** who has volunteered to continue to run this excellent fund-raising event.

93 (EAST LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj NP Reid**
SSM **WO2 S Hopkinson**

Ex WITCHES ENDURANCE was a charity cycle ride through 5 countries in 5 days. It was fully reported on in the December 07 issue of *The WIRE*. The final amount raised was £3500. This was divided equally between 2 very worthy local causes: the East Lancashire Hospice in Blackburn and the New Children's Hospital Appeal in Manchester.

The exercise organiser and participant, **Capt Dale Ikin**, assisted by another participant, **LCpl Kathryn Wilkinson**, presented the cheques to Harry Grayson of East Lancashire Hospice and Meg Edwards of the New Children's Hospital.

Capt Dale Ikin and LCpl Kathhryn Wilkinson present the cheque to Meg Edwards of East Lancashire Hospice

PROJECT DOG - *by WO2(AQMS) Damian Hardy*

Now we all know what the format is for a new OC taking up post. This may involve moving the desks round in the office until it was 'like it was 2 years ago'" or maybe the addition of a few pot plants (that's plants in pots) or some hair-brained plan straight out of the David Brent book of management to 'Pull the team together'. So now the desks have been moved and we all have somewhere to empty the dregs from the bottom of our mugs, it was time to get on to the 'Pull the team together' with a 'common goal'.

The Boss. The OC, **Capt Nick Sims**, is employed as a senior technical author for a subsidiary of Boeing, the aircraft company. Mindful of the OC's wealth of experience, technical expertise and project management capability, the LAD was full of confidence to begin our 'Engineering Project'. That was up to the point when that Boeing 777 only just made it over the perimeter boundary at Heathrow. Amazingly the OC was keen to point out that he had not had any involvement in that project.

The starting point. We made various enquiries to local companies as well as investigating the possibility of getting something which had been CAST. The idea began to materialise that something akin to "Pimp My Truck" would be good and this was well received by the rest of the LAD who by now could not wait to get cracking – but what with? We had no idea how our luck was to change. Tucked away, sitting around the back, in a dark corner of the car park at our TA Centre in Nottingham was the answer to our problem. It was a 1957 Austin K9 complete with a Royal Signals box body.

The Austin K9 as we found it

This truck was owned and driven by a gentleman know only as **'K9 Dave'** a member of the Nottingham branch of the Royal Signals Association. **Dave** used to travel around the area visiting summer fairs complete with period dress. According to the DVLA, the last time the K9 was taxed for road use was 2000. Unfortunately **Dave** passed away in 2000 but his family kindly donated the truck to the LAD to be used as the engineering project.

The Logistics. Our first problem was getting it from Nottingham to the workshops in Sheffield. I had previously been to look at the K9 and my first impression was how intact it was. At first glance it was surprising to see all the bits in place under the bull-nose bonnet. It had been brush painted at some stage over the years and this had helped to prevent most of the cab from rotting with the exception of the base of the doors and cab floor, both of which will need some work. It also had flat, perished tyres, a dissolved canvas cupola cover and perished windscreen rubbers but these were just the aesthetics. It was going to need some TLC. By now it was clear that this could not become a "Pimp My Ride", it had to be a restoration job much to the disappointment of some of the members of the LAD but out of respect for **K9 Dave** we decided to give it some TLC, and Project DOG was born.

The move from Nottingham to Sheffield was headed up by the PSI, **SSgt Tony Simpson**, assisted by most of the LAD Including **SSgt Steve Gillespie** and **Sgt Ray Boulton**. This all had the perfect ingredients for the making of a Morecambe and Wise sketch but I am not referring to comic genius or perfect timing!

Can we fix it? Yes we Can! Needless to say all went to plan and the K9 now occupies its own bay in the Sheffield Manor Top workshop. Without hesitation, the members of the LAD developed an overwhelming interest in the project even though

most of us, including me, were not born when it was in service. We are keen to plan the restoration and see the finished result. First and foremost one major question had to be answered – will it run? On 30 April this year, after 8 years of neglect but some sensible preparation work, the DOG fired up first time. The 4 litre straight 6 petrol engine ran up and could not have sounded much better. The clutch worked, we could select all the gears and the brakes worked, just, That said, we understand that the brakes 'just' worked when this model of truck was new so things were looking up.

The Planning. We are in the early stages of putting together a business plan for both funding and expenditure on the project. As a predominately white fleet unit, the LAD has limited real-time work. This project will offer us the platform to carry out the basic skills of our respective trades. Whilst this is not modern equipment, it will allow the less experienced members of the LAD the opportunity to apply engineering principles, from Health and Safety to methods in the use and care of hand tools. As a result, Project DOG will achieve its long term goal. When the K9 fired up for the first time in almost 9 years since the last time it ran, one of our recent recruits, **Cfn Matt Howe**, commented how things can be achieved when we all work together. And how he felt part of a team - a potential 'tiffy' or what?

EXERCISE NORTHERN BLUEBELL

Ex NORTHERN BLUEBELL 2008, the 2 Div REME Special to Arms Competition, was held over the weekend 16-18 May 08. The 38 Sig Regt team consisted of the following people:

Sgt Graham Cooke	(Team Leader)
SSgt Ray Owram	(Guest from 299 Para Sqn RE)
Cpl Tom Warren	
LCpl Rob Grimbley	
Cfn Matt Howe	
Cfn Rick License	
Cfn Leon Mason	
Pte Ray Turner	(Medic)

With team assistance and support from **Sig Rachael Damms**.

The LAD also had to assist in the planning and running of one of the competition stands with 150 Tpt Regt RLC LAD. The following were completely involved in that particular task throughout:

SSgt Tony Simpson
SSgt Steve Gillespie
Sgt Ray Boulton
Sgt Phil Preston

It was an extremely healthy turnout and a big thank you goes out to all that attended and to everyone who provided personnel and equipment in support of the team and the stand. Special thanks go to 38 Sig Regt for trawling and providing FEPS equipment as well as a team medic and to 299 Para Sqn RE for releasing **SSgt Ray Owram**.

The efforts of those taking part in the competition and those running the stand did not go unrewarded. Our stand picked up the trophy for best stand and deservedly so. It was an extremely professional piece that fulfilled all the objectives set out for the competition. Well done to everyone involved in the planning, deployment and running of that stand.

The team also picked up some silverware for being runners-up on one of the patrolling/military skills stands. The team were also 6th overall out of 24, which is a commendable achievement given that 3 Regular units were also in the top 6. We never seem to have enough time to train and prepare teams correctly prior to these events, so elements such as team spirit and performance are entirely down to the determination, enthusiasm and character of those individuals that took part.

39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BRISTOL

CO	**Lt Col CM Lankester TD**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) MJ Petts**

EXERCISE HORSESHOE EAGLE 08 - *by SSgt(FofS) Howard*

After weeks of anticipation and preparation for one of the busiest weekends of the year, the Regimental Yeoman, **WO2(YofS) Dave Carter,** Foreman **SSgt(FofS) Ian Howard** and **SSgt Jayne Thompson** deployed to HQ 43(Wessex) Bde Ops Room to begin preparing for our Bde CPX. They were soon joined by the Regt Command team, augmented by **Maj Pink** FANY and **Capt Shannon** FANY. To the surprise of the Command Team, the exercise started 3 hrs earlier than expected, the majority of the Command team contingent, headed by the CO, **Lt Col Carla Lankester**, had already arrived and set to work.

As multiple scenarios developed and information started to arrive, the staff started to shake out and settle into the hectic routine. Multiple rail crashes, Airwave blackouts and freak snow storms soon tested the team's ability to respond to the ever developing carnage that was erupting over Northern England.

By 2200hrs, the Command team was complete and all staff branches had started their work in earnest. Over the ensuing hours problem after problem was digested, resolved (and occasionally forgotten about). Assets were deployed and manpower put to task across the North of England as 39 Sig Regt resolved the problems at hand (or was it 32 Sig Regt?)

Morning brought further dilemmas which proved to stretch the resourcefulness of the Command team, with further taskings to support Regional Force units. These taskings included search and rescue operations, evacuation of the local population and route clearances. In the middle of the planning cycle we were visited by the Bde Comd, **Brig Hargreaves**, although I was suffering from "whiteboard hands" along with "whiteboard mouth", I believe I made quite an impression!

Some useful lessons have been identified and as such, **Maj John Williams** has now applied for his All Arms white board marker course. **WO2(FofS)(V) Chris Klass**, proved that ORP could easily provide the required sustenance, when he managed to rip the lining of his veteran "Argos Special" camp cot, leaving him with egg on his face and his reputation in tatters after one to many boil in the bag.

The CPX challenged the entire Command Team, while providing us all with an excuse to stay up past our bed times, it has also developed the Regt planning cycle and all who attended will have a far better understanding of the estimate process. Bring on Ex HORSESHOE EAGLE 2009!

SHOOTING TEAM AT DIVISIONAL OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION (OSC)

On 17 May, 8 members from HQ and 57 Sig Sqn went to Div OSC for the first time. Under the leadership of **SSgt Dyer**, the 2 four-man teams were pitted against about 6 other teams, including those from the Infantry and the OTC, in 7 different shoots. Considering the majority of the team had never taken part in or practised about 6 of these shoots, the team did exceptionally well!

The first shoot of the day was the Britannia Cup: a 100m sprint with varying obstacles en route to either climb over or crawl under. Despite **Sig Herniman** leaving his team mates behind to struggle over the walls on their own, the B team did very well, outshining the A team's effort (which was also hampered by **Cfn Tibbatts** pushing **Sig Chapman** over a style onto her head and breaking the obstacle and then subsequently receiving a kick in the face in return while helping her over a wall!).

The following 2 shoots were slightly more familiar for the shooting team – the Roberts and the Roupelle Cups. Luckily our not-so-good run of the Roupelle (our most practised shoot!) was made up for by some excellent shooting from the team in the Roberts and we managed to achieve 2nd place overall. However, I think the fact that the team ran the Roupelle straight after the Roberts might be partly to blame for our performance there!

The Whitaker Cup was much more fun; shooting moving targets of varying speed from the standing position. Although we had very few rounds each, the whole shoot ended up taking about an hour, after several target stoppages and callouts to the engineer to fix them! We completed it in the end though, with some decent scores.

Although by this point most of the team were tired, our 2 gunners, **Cfn Tibbatts** and **Sig Herniman**, very bravely entered the Machine Gun Match (a gruelling concoction of nausea-inducing sprints mixed with little time for lots of shooting) and managed to survive and hold up long enough to join the other 6 members for the Parachute Regiment Cup straight afterwards. A 2-mile run and 3 x 100m sprints later (with pepper-potting in the middle), the team thought they couldn't handle any more!

However, glory came at the last with 4 of our best shooters entering the Falling Plate competition. **SSgt Dyer**, **Cpl Jones**, **Cpl Cemlyn** and **LCpl Downs** staggered to the start line just in time to get straight into the 100m dash, down and shoot. With a spectacular effort from all 4, the team went straight through to the final.

Another 100m run back to the start line and a swig of squash later and they were ready to finish the competition - one more amazing show from all of them, particularly against an Infantry Regt, earned them a win for our Regt. I think some of the opposing team were a bit embarrassed to be beaten in the sprint by **LCpl Downs**!

Overall the day (although it felt like longer!) was a success and the team brought back some more silver. In addition to the Falling Plate, we also managed to pick up the best B Class Shot trophy – a special mention to **Sig Herniman** for earning it! Hopefully we will go again next year and be even better with some experience behind us. It was hard work, but fun and I would recommend it to all

Regt Shooting brings home the silverware!

SUPPORT (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CM Dawes TD**
SPSI	**SSgt GW Proctor**

The last month continued to be a very busy month for the Sqn. It has seen the move across the drill hall of **Capt (QM) Phil Smith** from his role as 2IC to take up the post of QM (V). This month has also seen the PSAO, **Capt Terry Morrisey MBE** take on the gargantuan task of organising the officers' cocktail party single handed. This was a very successful event, however in the lead up, it was better not to engage in conversation with the PSAO.

JOHN O'GROATS TO LAND'S END CYCLE RIDE OR NEVER DECIDE SOMETHING OVER A PINT OF BEER
- by SSgt(SPSI) Gaz Proctor

On 4 May, **SSgt(Art Veh) Mark Aston**, I and our support team members, **SSgt Baz Sullivan**, and **Cpl Steve Allen** started the long drive from Bristol to John O'Groats. During the drive various thoughts went on in my head – "What have I got myself into" was the first and most worrying! After making the decision to cycle such a distance you do wonder if you have done enough training and are the bikes up to the job. We started cycling on the Monday morning. We had given ourselves 10 days to complete the ride and on Day 1 we set off to complete 80 miles. This we achieved but there were some problems we were not expecting, a sore rear end being the biggest! Fitness was not too much of an issue after our concerns about pre-training. The other big problem was breaking the 100 miles per day. We achieved that on7 of the 10 days and the rest were very close. A factor that we could not control however was the weather. We longed for an overcast day or a sprinkling off rain but it was the hottest week of the year and we felt every ray burning down on us. When on a bike there are precious few places to be able to get out of the sun!

Our support team **SSgt Baz Sullivan** and **Cpl Steve Allen** obviously made every minute of daylight count but it was not a holiday for them either. Without a sound support team such rides are not possible. We finally finished on the 10th day as planned, very sore but with our pride still intact and we have raised a considerable amount for our charities. To read more about our exploits, follow the link below, where you can also find the 'just giving' website.
http://web.mac.com/mark.aston688/JOGLE/Welcome.html

REGIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND – LONGMOOR TRAINING CAMP, HAMPSHIRE
- by Sgt Pat Pocklington

The Regimental Development Weekend was run at Longmoor training camp over the period of the 7/8 June. The main theme of the weekend was Leadership training and team working divided into Junior Ranks, SNCOs and Officers. Saturday's training was classroom based and covered Values and Standards Leadership training from the CO and Ops Maj and a revision of AGAI 67 procedures – "What to do when these Values and Standards are not met!" from the Adjt.

SSgt Richard Sharp and **LCpl Matt Williamson** gave a lesson in the afternoon on the latest kit within the Regt. **WO2 Jayne Tuck** and I were able to reminisce over the Bowman radio as it reminded us of the Bowman training we did at Donnington some 8 months ago. On Saturday night all the officers went out for a meal while the Junior Ranks and Seniors took part in a really enjoyable games night. A buffet was laid on later in the evening but some Senior Ranks were falling asleep on the comfortable chairs – their names will remain a secret. Sunday's training involved 5 stands of various command tasks, that were performed as teams. To help Bristol to Windsor relations, the teams were not broken down into Sqns. **SSgt Aston** ran a wheel changing stand. The task was to remove a Land Rover wheel and replace it with the spare. However as there was no jack, we had to improvise using the equipment that was available. Using two planks as a lever and a log as the fulcrum our team raised

the Land Rover and successfully replaced the spare wheel. Time was of the essence and the keys to the Land Rover were not available, so with **WO2 Tuck** steering and the other team members assisting we pushed the vehicle into the MT yard to complete the task.

Support Sqn was tasked to provide a driving skills competition. This was organized by **WO2(MTWO) Denis Griffiths** who devised a competition consisting of a number of tasks manoeuvring a vehicle in and out of cone type obstacles. As you can imagine some drivers performed better than others and on more than one occasion **WO2 Griffiths** was heard to say "can we have your license back", perhaps the new FMT600 regulations should have been incorporated earlier? The enthusiasm of the judges at each stand varied and was reflected in the number of minus points each contestant received. At one end of the scale **Sgt Kerrie Hill** was the most stringent, penalizing the most trivial misdemeanour, whilst at the other end of the scale we weren't sure if the OC, **Maj Clive Dawes** actually took part!

That said, 57 Sqn provided the winning team with a fantastic score of minus 350 (imagine what the last team got…). The Officers managed to be the fastest team but also caused most damage to cones and it was generally agreed that **Capt Dave John** caused the most havoc and should only be allowed to drive as a last resort!

NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON
- by Maj Clive Dawes

Eight years ago, 39 Sig Regt Support Sqn took on the North Somerset Yeomanry (NSY) title. The Sqn has adopted both its insignia and its history and its name is now formally incorporated into the Sqn's title. Over the years the NSY has been cavalry and infantry, with the Royal Signals connection being formed during WW2 as 2 AB Sigs, seeing action in Palestine, North Africa, Sicily and the European mainland.

In order to maintain the connection with the Association, a number of current serving soldiers led by **Capt (QM) Phil Smith** attended the annual NSY Association Luncheon in the Masonic Hall at Keynsham on Saturday 17 May 08. The group was minus **WO2(FofS) Chris Klass** who definitely needs to work on his navigation skills. It provided an opportunity for members of the Sqn to meet members of the Association and discuss past experiences and how things have changed over the years. Anecdotes of actions in the Middle East 65 years ago still ring true with operations today, even though the equipment has changed and the goals are different. A great time was had by all and it was agreed to add an additional event to the Sqns calendar for next February.

57 (CITY & COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Iain Sainsbury**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Ben Newby**

TEN TORS 2008 - *by Capt Sarah Trevelion.*

57 Sig Sqn has endured another busy period since our last *Wire* report. Our main effort in the past 2 months has been the annual Ten Tors event. For the uninitiated, Ten Tors is an annual event run by 43 (Wessex) Bde for young people aged between 14 and 20 years of age. Participants conduct a 35, 45 or 55 mile route over the challenging terrain of Dartmoor within a 36 hour period. The event starts at 0700hrs on the Saturday morning from Okehampton Camp and finishes back at the camp at 1700hrs on the Sunday afternoon. As Ten Tors is always conducted on the second weekend of May, the weather can bring about many challenges to both the participants and the support staff – as 2007's wash out was testament to! As the Bde runs Ten Tors and tasks all of their units to support them with this, in true military fashion the event is named Ex WYVERN TOR.

In previous years 57 Sig Sqn, with the assistance of HQ Sqn, have provided CIS support to Ex Wyvern Tor. However in 2008

Cpl Stacey of 94 Sig Sqn briefing a team captain during Ex WYVERN TOR – the Ten Tors exercise

the task was deemed to be sufficiently large to justify the CIS function becoming a Regimental tasking for 39 Sig Regt. Thus we welcomed 25 Soldiers and 1 Officer from 94 Sig Sqn for their first experience of Ten Tors. This year, 43 (Wx) Bde tasked us to provide 2 x Operators for each Tors. Despite the fact that the event is called Ten Tors, 19 Tors are actually used in order to de-conflict all of the teams' routes – this year there were 26 different routes, divided up amongst the 400 teams that participated. In addition to the Tor Operator requirement, we were also tasked to provide 2 shifts to man the Commcen and the data input function in the tracking cell – requiring a further 24 soldiers and 2 shift commanders.

OC 57 Sig Sqn, **Maj Iain Sainsbury**, picked a very good week to have his wisdom teeth out as it meant that 57's new 2IC, Capt Trevelion, had to step up to the task slightly quicker than had been anticipated! The 2IC and the SQMS, **SSgt Marsh**, spent most of Friday afternoon adjusting the manning plan that the SSM, **WO2(SSM) Ben Newby**, had initially put together due to the inevitability of different soldiers turning up to the ones that were expected. Several factors also made the planning more complex. Firstly, there was a shortage of female accommodation in camp so all of the female Tor Operators needed to be deployed as soon as they arrived late on the Friday night (or very early on the Saturday morning!). A second consideration was that the late finish on the Sunday would mean that 94 Sig Sqn would have a considerably late arrival home and so as far as possible they were placed on Tors that would be recovered first on Sunday. Of course, no plan survives contact with the enemy, let alone the Royal Navy, so the Sea King recovery on the Sun slightly hampered that element of the plan!

Eventually by 0030hrs on the Saturday morning, all soldiers were in place in Okehampton. Aware that as TA soldiers, they had worked a full day on Friday in their civilian employment, the aim was to get them out to their locations as quickly as possible in order that they could get some sleep before the radio check at 0630. Fortunately this year it was possible to double man all but 3 of the Tors, which meant that the Tor Operators would be able to work in a shift system, which would allow them to recover from their rather manic Friday.

The Tor Operators deploy onto the Tors in order to support the Tor Parties, who are normally Tri-Service and of varying ranks. Due to the same personnel being used for the Tor Parties year after year, these personnel have become very adept at providing personal comforts for all those 'unlucky' enough to be stuck on the Tor for a weekend. In reality, being on a Tor can be such good fun that the soldiers normally come back and request immediately that they be allowed back onto the same Tor the year following. **Sig Buckle** from 94 has certainly got her bid in for 2009!

Whilst the Tor Operators are out on the Tors in the thick of the action, the Commcen Operators receive all the data from the Tors and feed it into the tracking cell. The tracking cell can account for every single Ten Tors participant at any time and all this information is fed onto a live website, which allows the parents and team leaders to check on their teams' progress. It becomes even more imperative to get the information in immediately when the Bde Comd has a particularly personal reason to check in order to find out how his son's team is progressing!

Ex WYVERN TOR is a very busy weekend, but thoroughly worthwhile to all who take part – both the Ten Tors participants and those military and civilian organisations who support the event. Ten Tors is a unique event and participants come from all over the UK. The need for CIS support from 39 Sig Regt is invaluable and the attendance of every single soldier really makes a difference – without Tor Operators and Commcen staff, the event would be unsafe to conduct. Despite the very late finish on the Sunday, every soldier gained a sense of satisfaction from knowing that their support had enabled thousands of young people to achieve the Ten Tors Challenge. For some soldiers however, the highlight of the weekend will remain the repatriation from the Tors to Okehampton Camp via Sea King. Although special mention should go to **Sig MacDonald** from 57 who spent most of Sunday assisting the Sea King crews in unloading Portaloos off the helicopters. His reward was a ride in a Gazelle and the smile on his face when he returned indicated that it had all been worth it! Many thanks and well done to all the soldiers from across the Regt who volunteered their time for such an important weekend – remember to get your bids in for Tors for 2009 early!

94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Vince Connelly TD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Matt Chapman**

BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY ON TOR - *by Lt Ruth Woodward*

Setting off from Windsor TAC at 2000hrs, we arrived late at Oakhampton Camp courtesy of the minibus speed limiter, for a short brief and kit turn around before leaving for what we thought was to be a night on camp but instead was to deploy straight out on Tor, not by helicopter, but on foot! Thankfully we were all beginners to the 10 Tors weekend and oblivious to the normal routine.

Arriving at the fall-out tents at the base of the Tor at 0230hrs, we settled down to a comfy 3 hrs sleep. The majority of the 24 strong contingent of 94 Sqn were deployed straight out onto the Tors to provide communications support for the entire weekend. The Ten Tors is a competition for 14 – 20 year olds, who participate in teams of 6. It is not for the faint hearted. Distances of up to 55miles, depending on age category, have to be completed over a period of 48hrs – something many of us would consider challenging. We were all to be part of a Tor Party, which manages the teams' safety on the hills, checking them in and responding to any first aid incidents on location. Responsibility for manning the Tors is equally split between the RAF and Navy, supported by the Army.

Arriving at Lynch Tor at 0530hrs, **Sig Hartfield** (57 Sqn) and I, **Lt Woodward** (908 Tp) were greeted by an array of dome tents and full catering facilities. Not the basha and mess tins I was expecting but what can only be described as 5 star accommodation, which even included toilets. The RAF was definitely on Tor!

Thanking our lucky stars for the superb weather, we were welcomed by a cooked breakfast with fresh rations. Excellent! A briefing by the Tor Leader (and his dog) set our expectations – we were to be manning one of the busiest Tors and thus they were grateful for our assistance. During the weekend over 300 teams passed through our location. Due to the heat, water was heli-lifted onto the Tors for the teams, who are normally completely self sufficient. The strength of character and determination of the teams at only 14 years old was astonishing and encouraging to see. **Sig Whitehouse**, who was on Chat Tor, explained "I learnt more about comms, being an ED as I tend not to get involved too much". Despite the late arrival back home, we all had a great time in glorious, unseasonable sunshine. Asked whether **Sig Whitehouse** would go next year? "Yes!" I will certainly be looking forward to returning, with a few more 5 star luxuries next time!

Members of all 3 Services on Ten Tors

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BELFAST

CO	**Lt Col Whichelo**
RSM	**WO2 Coates**

FIFTY TWO ALL PRESENT AND CORRECT - *by Capt Smyth*

On 15 Apr 08, **Brig DA Hargreaves**, Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, paid a visit to 69 Sig Sqn in Limavady and achieved what many thought was an impossibility, by visiting all 52 TA locations within the Bde inside 17 months. Saving the best till last, the Bde Comd chose to visit on a Drill Night and was welcomed to the Sqn by the PSAO, **Capt Rodney Smyth** and the SSM, **WO2 Gamble**, with musical accompaniment provided by the Sqn Piper, **Cpl Wilson**. As he signed the Visitors Book, the Bde Comd noted that it was almost 20 years since the last visit of 2 (NC) Bde Comd, **Brig Alexander OBE** in September 1988. Following his 52nd Regt/Sqn history brief, the Comd visited the troops taking part in the training night. First off he visited the newly installed LAN, of 6 computers, where **Sgt Dugdale**, the PSI Tech was conducting a message handling exercise. This relatively new facility allows the troops to practice their keyboard skills and message handling procedures in a classroom environment. Next, he visited the RRTT where **SSgt Murray**, **SSgt Dennison** and **Sgt Lynch** demonstrated the new pre-course 1A & 1B recruit training.

The development of a specific recruit training programme running in parallel to the normal Tue drill night has proved beneficial in terms of delivery of initial training and retention, resulting in better trained and motivated recruits. Finally the Bde Comd visited the Sqn's preparation for the forth coming EX MEDICAL BRIDGE. **WO2 McCaw** and **SSgt Palmer** showed him around the BRONZE HQ which will be set up and manned by members of the Sqn throughout the exercise. After a tour of the Limavady TAC real-estate with **SSgt Jack** the NRPS SQMS, the Bde Comd joined the Sqn members in a curry supper provided by **Sgt**

Hunter the Sqn RLC Chef. He took the opportunity to speak to all those present and thanked them for their welcome and their continued efforts before he wished the Sqn every success in the future. To mark the occasion of his visit to the Sqn, **SSM Gamble** presented the Bde Comd with a Sqn plaque and hoped that he hadn't already got fifty one other plaques, otherwise he would need a large wall on which to display them. During his short visit the Bde Comd managed to squeeze in a flying visit to the historic walled city of Derry/Londonderry with **Capt Smyth** and the Giants Causeway with the Commanding Officer **Lt Col F E R Whichelo**.

69 (NIH) SIGNAL SQUADRON RETAIN THE McCORKELL CUP
- by Capt Smyth

"Watch and shoot, watch and shoot!" So began 69 Sig Sqn's defence of the McCorkell Cup on Sunday 13 April 08 at Ballykinler Range complex. Now in its second year the McCorkell Cup is an annual operational shooting competition between B Sqn QOY and 69 Sig Sqn. Having won last year, the pressure was on **Sgt Gordon** (our Team Captain) to retain the cup. With a depth of shooting talent within the Sqn and with 4 members fresh from the successful Corp OSC team, **Sgt Gordon**, **Cpl Moore**, **Sig Alexander** and **Sig Gage**, their selection was a foregone conclusion with **Sgt Duncan** and **Sig Moore**, regular shooting team members, making up the final places. In near perfect conditions the Sqn elected to shoot second with B Sqn shooting first. **Lt Col Tougher**, CO QUOTC, acted as adjudicating officer and announced the final scores, with B Sqn scoring a total of 734 and 69 Sig Sqn scoring a total of 962. The highest individual score was achieved by **Sig Moore** from 69 Sig Sqn. The McCorkell Cup was presented to OC 69 (NIH) Sig Sqn on the annual Hitler Line Parade on 25 May 08 at Dunmore Park.

The McCorkell Cup winners

EXERCISE JOINT VENTURE 11 – 13 APRIL 2008
- by LCpl Colhoun

Ex JOINT VENTURE was held at Magilligan Training Area over the period 11 – 13 April 2008. The ex was a Regt Communications Ex consisting of HF/VHF Mil Communications and the Northern Ireland Radio Amateurs Emergency Network – bit of a mouthful, so we will call it RAYNET. The intent was to establish a HF/VHF network and communications from Magilligan Training Centre, Ballykinler Training Centre and other locations within Northern Ireland. Well that was the initial plan.

The exercise began when 69 Sig Sqn deployed from Limavady TAC to Magilligan and proceeded to establish the Command Support Team HQ. In other words, get up an 18x24 tent with 2 small 9x9 tents at each end – tripping hazard was included with the 9x9 free of charge. Some emergency measures were required to highlight the tripping hazard; black and yellow tape springs to mind. We did not want any casualties – this was a communications exercise after all. Once the tents were put up, **Cpl Sims** and his merry band of EDs began the arduous task of putting in the lighting kit. While this was ongoing, **Cpl Colhoun** made sure the Burco Boiler was filled and boiled for the brews. At 2200hrs the Belfast crew arrived! **Majs Finlay**, **Skinner** and **White** were very impressed – tea, coffee etc all readily available and of course, the CST HQ looked good too. The shift system was established so that communications ran throughout the night – after all, it was an exercise and not a jolly to the beach at Magilligan. SSM, **WO2 Gamble** briefed the troops – "Right boys, sort out the shift system until 6am. I'm off to bed. Just make a good impression on these RAYNET guys tomorrow and show them that the TA is the best!"

Saturday morning came only too soon. The House Mates had a hearty Ulster fry provided by **Sgt Hunter** from 69 Sqn Limavady. After breakfast, everyone moved to the exercise location for final briefings from **SSM WO2 Gamble** and **SSgt Venni**. Communications were already well established with 85 Sig Sqn who were located at Ballykinler, so all in all, things were looking good. Communications were established, the Burco Boiler was boiling and the sun was shining. **Cpl Small** from 69 Sqn Belfast was keeping an eye out for a guy eating a Yorkie Bar, driving a big truck and asking "Whats your handle". Sorry **Cpl Small** but that's not how it works. RAYNET rolled up at 0900hrs in 2 cars with a few small aerials on the roof. Introductions over and after a pleasant brew, the RAYNET team began to set up their equipment. No big cumbersome Clarke PU12m masts. Oh no, these guys had fold away aerials etc. No worries there about what antenna to use in order to get communications.

After a presentation on what RAYNET actually does and who they are, the exercise scenario began. It was a very good opportunity for Cl 3 to Cl 2 soldiers to get their workbooks signed off. It was even a better opportunity for **Cpls Small** and **Colhoun** to show their sharp administration skills, especially when the Operations Maj requested a Site Plan. No problem except how do you draw a mast! The exercise ended at 1700hrs and after the de-briefs, the troops retired to the NAAFI where although it was closed, we had use of the room and the T.V. **SSgt Ritchie** provided a bar (any opportunity to make a fast buck).

69 Sig Sqn, Limavady Detachment working with local RAYNET enthusiasts

Sunday morning arrived and so did the CO. The phrase SOLIDC could be heard for miles. Sunday morning was spent covering Values and Standards with the CO, an excellent navigation exercise run by **SSgt McDougall** and a BCDT lesson from **Sgt George**.

All in all, the exercise was a great success. On a more serious note, the expertise of the RAYNET Team was very impressive and it was agreed their assistance would be essential in any disaster and that they would play a very important role. Lots of training was achieved, workbooks signed off, MATTs training accomplished and we got lots of sun and fresh air. 69 Sqn and Belfast detachments showed that even at different ends of the Province, both detachments can come together and work well in any exercise scenario. A good positive note to end on as we look forward to Ex MED BRIDGE in April 2008.

EXERCISE MEDICAL BRIDGE 25 – 27 APRIL 08
- by Maj Rankin

Brig Hargreaves pointing out Maj Wilson's flippers

Ex MEDICAL BRIDGE took place at Ballykinler Training Centre over the weekend 25 – 27 April. The primary aim of this exercise was to bring together the Ambulance Services of both Northern Ireland and their colleagues from the Irish Republic National Ambulance Service, in a challenging and testing environment. The exercise was subtitled CAWT which means Co-operation And Working Together. Our role was to provide the necessary Information Communication Services to enhance the exercise and at the same time, test our own Regimental procedures.

Two major medical incidents took place concurrently. One incident involved 'Hazard chemical waste' washed up on to the shore front. The other was a mass casualty evacuation from a capsized lifeboat involving refugees. Two helicopters also deployed to assist with the exercise; a Puma from the Army Air Corps and the other from the equivalent Irish Army Air Corps. Diplomatic clearance was granted to allow the Puma to fly to Drogheda in the Irish Republic with their exercose medical casualties. The Irish helicopter flew to Craigavon Area Hospital, Co Armagh with their casualties.

40 Sig Regt provided a Silver Control Room. This was fully functional with Reebok, DII (F) with links to GOLD and other higher commands. Two Command Support Teams (CST) 401 from 69 Sig Sqn and 402 from 85 Sig Sqn deployed. In addition, 5 FFRs were also exercised. **Brig Hargreaves**, Comd, 2 (NC) Bde, despite just having had major surgery that day, crossed the waters to visit the unit on exercise. We were also visited by **Brig G Norton,** Comd 38 (Irish) Bde. I am told that both visitors left suitably impressed with the expertise displayed and 'craic' shown by all ranks within 40!

EXERCISE VIGILANT GUARD *- by Capt Burgess*

In April, **Capt Burgess** spent a 2 week attachment with 59th Troop Command HQ of the United States Army National Guard (ARNG) in South Carolina (SC) as part of the US/UK Reserve Forces Exchange Programme 08. During the exchange, he deployed on Op VIGILANT GUARD 08 from14 – 24 April working in the S6 Cell of the Joint Task Force – South Carolina (JTF-SC) under the command of the South Carolina Joint Operation Centre (SC-JOC). The J6 cell had responsibility for all C4 matters (Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems) within the JTF-SC.

Op VIGILANT GUARD centred on an earthquake scenario along the Summerville, SC fault line and involved the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG) being deployed to Beaufort County in a Military Support for Civil Authorities (MSCA) role. Numbers on the exercise exceeded 3000, including elements of the Air National Guard, Government Departments, Law Enforcement community and Emergency Services. Throughout the exercise, ARNG personnel assisted federal, state and local authorities with a wide range of situations that could result as a result of an earthquake. Scenarios included: search and rescue operations, maintenance of law and order and communication restoration to preventing terrorist attacks.

The communications infrastructure rolled out by the SCARNG in an MSCA operation has many similarities to that deployed in a 2 (NC) Sig Bde UK Ops role. Involvement in MSCA exercises, such as Op VIGILANT GUARD, permits UK personnel to gain valuable experience as to how our US counterparts discharge this role. Upon arriving at 59th Troop Command HQ (West Columbia Armoury) on the morning of Saturday 10 April, **Capt Burgess** was welcomed by the Deputy Commander, **Lt Col Edmonds**, and introduced around the HQ Staff – who although busy at work as it was the weekend prior to the exercise, took the time to chat and ask questions about his Irish caubeen headdress!

On Monday 14 April the advance party from 59 Troop Command HQ deployed to their Beaufort SC site to set up their Tactical Operations Centre (TOC); followed the next day by personnel from the respective staff cells. The week was spent establishing the JTF-SC command site in readiness for the main exercise to begin on Friday. During this time **Capt Burgess** assisted the S6 cell commander, **Maj John Ramsey** (who is visiting 40 Sig Regt in September 08 on annual camp), with setting up the communications infrastructure for the field based HQ staff. Over the week **Capt Burgess** was able to get first hand experience in the planning, deployment and management of the wide range of communications assets utilised by the JTF-SC. In an MSCA role the NG can deploy communication systems spanning: HF/VHF aviation and land, UHF radio nets, cell phone (voice and broadband internet access) and Satellite (data up-links and phones).

The main exercise was launched on 21 April with the simulated earthquake and the TOC cell jumped into life, handling all mission requests associated with the aftermath. These requests were quite diverse, covering the many aspects one can imagine resulting from a natural disaster striking a large area – for example, deploying infantry for search and rescue operations, booking aviation flights to gather intelligence, despatching engineer assets for route clearance and organising the moving of logistics to name but a few – everything came through the busy TOC cell. During the exercise, **Maj Ramsey** and **Capt Burgess** kept the S6 running so that all staff cells had communications within the HQ and the outside world. Part of the work within the S6 cell involved moving around the various troop holding and dispatch sites managing the communication assets. **Capt Burgess** accompanied **Maj Ramsey** around the Beaufort area and was able to gain first hand knowledge as to how the SCARNG set up FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) for troop holding before passing them through a Joint Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (JRSOI) site into their missions. With such a wide scale exercise, involving so many people, it was apparent how the overall command and control required robust

communications! In all, it was a very worthwhile experience which will serve him well in 40 Sig Regt. On 24 April the exercise finished up with a final Battle Update Brief (BUB) presided over by **Brig Eisner**. From a US perspective the exercise was a success with valuable training delivered to everyone involved, from NG soldiers through to attached Government officials. Many significant lessons were learned about how to cope with the aftermath of a wide scale earthquake and guidelines established for dealing with the real thing.

CPX TIME AGAIN - *by Capt Ian Wolfe*

Despite the efforts of the CO's Regimental command teams' attempts to avoid it, we all "volunteered" once again for the Bde CPX. The past 2 CPXs have been held on the mainland so, thanks to DII, it was a refreshing change to exercise at 38 (Irish) Bde in Lisburn. As the DComd said "on home soil". On Friday 9 May the advance party departed at 1207hrs. On the advance was myself the Ops Maj, **Maj Skinner**, **RSM Coates**, **SSgt Stansfield**, **YofS Rudd**, **Sgt McConnell**, **Sgt Wolfe** and **Sig McCully**. Some team I can tell you. At this point it pains me to say but I must highlight the efforts of **Sgt McConnell** for his sterling work in building the CPX room. Without his input then we wouldn't have been ready for the start of the exercise.

At approx 1700hrs, an ammunition train derailed at Shap Summit and that was the start of it and it became fast and furious from there. The CO and Operations Maj delegated appointments and everyone got to work straight away. By this time, the main party had started to arrive and by around 1900hrs we had a full compliment of 21 RHQ staff. Shortly after the Shap incident a bomb exploded in Leeds city centre. These 2 incidents formed the nucleus of our planning and estimate process. It was enough to keep us extremely busy. Time flew by and before we realised it was 0300hrs and **Maj Montgomery** was imposing a sleep pattern. Good old **Monty**. Although I don't think the CO, 2IC, Operations Maj or Operations Officer were listening. The CO kept us well briefed round the bird table on a regular basis. The author provided a 1m whip for pointing purposes however before the first brief the QM, **Capt Bob Pye** filtered it away. Saturday arrived and everyone was into a reasonable work routine except the aforementioned insomniacs. The day progressed at a steady pace and we received visits from DComd **Col Willmott** and our current Hon Col, **Col Henderson**. **LCpl Gribben** was duly dispatched to the NAAFI for the buffet. The DComd and Hon Col were extremely grateful for this sumptuous spread of sandwiches cut into 'Officer Triangles'. When they had had their fill, the tray was taken to the RDC where it was ripped apart by a bunch of hungry squaddies and in particular **Sgt Symons**.

Endex came at approx 2045hrs and then it was quick debrief, pack kit and off for a well earned (cold) beer at the 85 Sqn bar compliments of **Maj Dave Wilson**. By the way **Maj Wilson** the wine was warm. Roll on next year, we all can't wait!

EXERCISE EDINBURGH EDUCATION 16 – 18 MAY 2008
- by 2Lt Lindsay Fulton

The 85 Signal Squadron Clan

On the weekend of 16 – 18 May members of 85 Sqn were given an education ..... the Scottish way! **Sgt Robertson** unleashed his inner Scotsman! In the wee hours of Saturday morning, the 'multi ranked' teams of 4 were handed their mission – a brown envelope containing map, clues and string(?!?) and were deployed to Scotland's fine capital to fulfil a multitude of physical and mental tasks.

Pitting their wits and fitness against all that Edinburgh had to offer, the teams set about navigating their way around the city, solving clues and completing tasks. The tasks had teams investigating all the nooks and crannies of the city from the history of Edinburgh Castle to the art of the National Gallery and the books of the National Library (think Challenge Anneka, sans lycra). Other tasks were as varied as their locations ranging from reciting Robbie Burns in the open air theatre to measuring the height of Greyfriars Bobby to having a team picture taken with a tartan clad Scotsman.

Not only was the exercise a fantastic team working, planning and morale boosting experience, it was also a great opportunity for the Sqn to explore the culture, history and landmarks of one of the finest cities in the UK. The Regt are planning to conduct a similar exercise in the next training year in Dublin. Who knows what **SSM Tommy Johnston** and **SSgt Glenn Campbell** will have in store for us there!

COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF THE HITLER LINE
- by Maj Montgomery

Members of 69 Sig Sqn commemorated the 64th anniversary of the Battle of the Hitler Line on the weekend 21 - 23 May 08. The weekend began on the Friday evening with a formal dinner at the Royal British Legion in Londonderry which was very well attended by both Association and Sqn members. It was then off early the next morning (complete with hang-overs) to B (NIH) Sqn QOY at Dunmore Park in Belfast for an initial rehearsal for the main Parade and act of commemoration which took place on the Sunday. After much consultation with the SSM and the old hands in the squadron, OC B Sqn was happy with what was to be done on Sunday, (well he assured everyone that it would all fall into place on the day). After a number of rehearsals on the Saturday it was much appreciated by the 69 Sqn members when our hosts in B Sqn generously extended their hospitality and took us on a guided tour of some of the hostelries in Belfast.

After an early rise on Sunday with everyone raring to go, it was back on the square for a final dress rehearsal. The guests had then started to arrive and when the OC was happy, it was into the converted vehicle garage for the church service, which was excellently conducted by the padre **Prof Patton Taylor**. Six female members of both Sqns carried out the collection on behalf of the Regimental Association and after the service it was back outside to the Churchill Tank, Gate Guardian for the act of Commemoration. A wreath was laid by **Capt Donald Hunt** who was a tank commander at the Battle itself. OC 69 Sig Sqn, **Maj Monty Montgomery** took his position on the square and bellowed the words of command: "North Irish Horse, Get on Parade" followed by the command: "Parade by the front Quick March" by **WO2(SSM) Gamble** and we were off and running. Once in position on the square and after falling in the officers and the Regimental Association, **Maj Montgomery** handed the parade over to OC B (NIH) Sqn, **Maj Steven (Monty) Montgomery**. The inspecting officer was the outgoing Hon Col of the NIH **Col Richard Gordon**. Following the inspection **Lady Mc Corkell** was invited to present the McCorkell Cup to OC 69 Sig Sqn. This cup was donated in memory of **Sir Michael McCorkell**. As the officers and the SSMs took their places at the front of the respective Sqns, it was time for the parade to march off with an eyes right to the inspecting officer. Once at the rear of the HQ, the OC fell out the Guidon Party and parade.

There was one final presentation to make and that was a 40 Sig Regt Tie from the CO, **Lt Col Whichelo** to **Capt Donald Hunt**, the War Tank Commander as a token of our appreciation for the work he did on the battlefield tour to Italy last year.

The Sqn was then dismissed and again our hosts looked after us with a BBQ and a few refreshments. So after a long but very successful weekend it was on the coach and back to Limavady and a long look forward to next year's Commemoration down in Limavady.

TA100 UNIT EVENT – BEATING RETREAT AND ALL RANKS DINNER

On 3 May 2008 we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the TA. During the day we supported the annual CCF open day at Campbell College along with other TA units in the Province. In the evening, we were fortunate to be able to use the fantastic location of Campbell College in order to host our Beating Retreat and All Ranks Supper. If you imagine Hogwarts School from Harry Potter, you wouldn't be far wrong.

Maj Montgomery with the Colour Party from 69 Sig Sqn, Limavady Detachment

Even the Northern Irish weather was incredibly kind to us and the sun stayed out all day. For the Beating Retreat we invited local dignitaries and local military commanders.

Lady Carswell very kindly agreed to take the salute for us. The band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland was fantastic and many toes were seen to be tapping. Later on they played for us at the dinner and managed to fill the dance floor. A fantastic evening was had by all. Special thanks must go to **Maj Skinner** for yet again organising a memorable function.

SERGEANTS MESS DINING OUT - *by Sgt Agass*

On Friday 6June 2008, the Anniversary of D Day, came the end of an era. It came to pass that the last of Boudicca's Bodyguard left the British Army. **WO2(MTWO) 'Dirty Den' Watts** and **SSgt Phil Atherton** both hung up their Red Jackets and Crossed White Belts and left after a combined service of 90 years.

Both remember when being a "Gay Soldier" meant being happy, "Aids" were people Generals had to sort out their diaries and having a "3½ inch floppy" was something to be ashamed about! So that night the Sgts Mess dined them out in style with the biggest dinner the Mess had held in years.

Also probably the longest as we didn't leave the table until 0230hrs. In attendance were the old and bold, the young and glamorous from throughout the province and guests from England and Scotland, The wine flowed freely and the Craic was good.

Stories of their service since 1964 were abundant as were tales of times when they had a full head of hair and waist lines. So as the saying goes "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away" we say farewell and wish them well in their retirement knowing that they will return for the reunions and utter the words.... "It wasn't like that in my day!"

71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT BEXLEYHEATH

CO **Lt Col CS Tallents TD**
RSM **WO1 NJ Pollitt**

VISIT OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL TO 71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT - *by Capt H Richardson*

On 23 April 2008 the Regt was honoured to receive a visit from the Colonel in Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal** at a Regimental Dinner.

The Dinner was held at the Worshipful Company of Drapers magnificent hall in the heart of the City of London. The Dinner was a splendid occasion with nearly 200 guests present to celebrate the Regt in the year of the Centenary of the TA.

The Regt was very pleased to receive support from our close associations and old friends. The Master and Clerk of the Drapers Company, the Master of the Armourers and Braziers, the Commandant of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and previous COs were amongst the many to turn out in support of the Regt on this glittering occasion.

The Colonel-in-Chief was met by the Master of Signals, the Regimental Hon Col **Brig Charles Le Gallais CB** and the CO, **Lt Col Craig Tallents TD**. **HRH** was attended by her Lady in Waiting, **Mrs Legge-Bourke** and her ADC for the evening **Capt Holly Richardson**.

The Colonel-in-Chief met with a number of both TA and Regular members of the Regt before moving into the Great Hall. The Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry) Band led by **Maj Roy Falshaw** entertained the assembly with uplifting music.

After the Dinner the CO gave a short witty speech about the Regt which was extremely well received and the evening ended on a high.

The Dinner was organised by **Maj Kathy Howard** who deserves credit for making the event such an occasion. The Regt would like to thank the Worshipful Company of Drapers for the generous use of their Hall and ante rooms and the support of their excellent staff.

Capt Holly Richardson meets HRH The Princess Royal with the CO and the Master looking on

JUNIOR RANKS CADRE COURSE 2008 – EX PHOENIX BUZZARD - *by LCpl Sutton*

On 16 May all able Sigs of 71 Sig Regt deployed to Longmoor Training area for this Year's Regimental Cadre course. After a quick shake out of kit at Uxbridge TA Centre, the 18 participants moved down to Longmoor to receive a briefing from the SVWO, **WO1 Lapidge**, and 265 SPSI, **SSgt Evans**, on the weekend's activities. After a good night's sleep with a roof over their heads, training commenced and the 3 sects of 6 headed out with their DS to the first tasks of the day. 2 Sect under **Sgt McGuiness** started with a river crossing with various sunken items to be retrieved. **Sig Horton** took charge and the sect was soon waist deep in muddy water quickly locating and recovering 4 of the 5 articles but were left slightly bamboozled as to the whereabouts of the 5th item, much to the amusement of the instructors watching it casually floating away! Other stands included a ration retrieval, observation, command tasks, recovery and casualty simulation.

With the first day seeming to be coming to an end, all 3 sects were collected together and set the task of a burden retrieval. After the conducting PTI, **LCpl Sutton**, destroyed their morale with a description of the task ahead, all set out onto the 6 mile course picking up a log, Land Rover tyres and water jerry cans. The leadership qualities soon stood out in various individuals, who over the duration of this testing trial kept their sects going to the end with 1 Sect and 2 Sect finishing neck and neck but 1 Sect won by a matter of seconds! After a cool down and a chance to rest feet and square away admin issues, all 3 sects went off to their designated locations to carry out a close target recce of an enemy communications site, which was run it would appear from the numerous shouts of "General", "Brigadier" etc, by many high ranking officers and no Sigs!

Training ceased at about 0100hrs and the harbour area was quickly populated by the many snoring soldiers exhausted from the day's events. Reveille was set for 0700hrs Sunday morning and after an hour's admin time to eat their sausage and beans for breakfast and prepare aching feet; all were once again handed over to **LCpl Sutton** for the final team challenges. Setting off for a warm up around camp, the sects then received a ¾ ton trailer each and were instructed to make their way round camp in the fastest time possible. This was 3 Sect's chance to claw back some points after their trouncing by the other 2 sects the day before. With **Sig Johnson** leading her guys, 3 Sect stormed into the lead and crossed the finish line first with an excellent effort. Soon followed the final task; Longmoor Obstacle Course. After a detailed walk through, talk through with demonstration and a practice, nearly leading to the PTI banging his head in dismay against the dreaded 12ft wall after many failed attempts by the sects, the time attack challenge commenced with all having to do 2 laps of the course as quickly as possible.

End of the Cadre Course!"

Endex was called at 1200, much to the relief of many, and the CO, **Lt Col Tallents**, debriefed everyone giving them a verbal pat on the back and presented **Sig Peters** from 68 Sqn with the much deserved top soldier award. Speaking with some of the participants afterwards, this course proved to be a difficult and testing challenge but greatly enjoyed by all, giving many a first look into what is expected of them when they gain their first stripe.

70 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Julian Mark Picton**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) David 'Sam' Liddle**

The Essex have had a busy quarter which has included preparation and participating in a Freedom Parade in Chelmsford, Bde CPX, recruiting display at Southend on Sea Airshow and not forgetting the Regimental PHOENIX TRAINER weekend. After much persuasion both within the Sqn and with Chelmsford Borough Council, **Maj Julian Picton** successfully led the Essex Yeomanry on a parade exercising its right, carrying weapons, through Chelmsford Town Centre. The parade was very successful with 40 serving members of the Sqn and a contingent from the Essex Yeomanry Association marching.

Prior to the commencement of the parade, **Cpl Ian Brazier** and **Sig Venessa Way** took part in radio interviews at Radio Essex, publicising the role of the Sqn and the benefits and skills the TA can bring to an individual.

Following several dress rehearsals lead by **WO2(SSM) Sam Liddle** and assisted by **SSgt (SQMS) Steve Shuttleworth** and **WO1 Jim Swain**, the Sqn formed up at Chelmsford TAC on the morning of Saturday 19 April, where **Sgt Richard 'Tim' Marsh** was presented with his Volunteer Reserve Service Medal by **Col S Foakes TD DL**, for completion of 10 years service in the TA.

Col S Foakes TD DL presenting Sgt Marsh with his VRSM

70 (Essex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron prior to the Freedom Parade

Spectators in Chelmsford Town Centre were amazed to observe the fine figure of the Sqn PSAO, **Capt Barry James**, standing to rapt attention astride an FFR at the head of the mounted detachment. Said **Capt James** was overheard to say that this brings back memories of my little tank. For those watching from the sidelines, the image brought back memories of more invasive manoeuvres.

The parade through Chelmsford town centre was well received by the residents of Chelmsford, and ended with an inspection by the then Mayor of Chelmsford, Nicolette Chambers at Oaklands Park, Chelmsford. On completion of the Freedom Parade, the Borough Council provided a right royal buffet for all attendee's, culminating in speeches by the Mayor and Squadron Honorary Colonel, Col D Casstles TD DL. Bouquets suitably arranged in flowers of the Squadron colours were presented to the Mayor and Head of Mayor's office, topped off the excellent event.

PSAO, Capt Barry James astride his 'tank'

Ex PHOENIX TRAINER was the Regimental Concentration weekend concentrating on our role, communications and military training. This culminated in the CO's potted sports competition which kept us on the edge of our seats while **SSgt Billy Matthews** (Sqn Secret Weapon) head butted and tripped over the opposition to achieve a creditable position in the basketball. Sadly this was let down by the OC, **Maj Picton** (44 and ageing) coming last in the cross country but he blamed the Adjt, **Capt Holly Richardson**, for bringing him the conveyancing documents of her new house to approve during the event. Lead by **Sig Venessa Way**, the Sqn manned a recruiting display at the Southend-on-Sea Airshow during the May Bank Holiday weekend. Despite the poor weather, **Sig Way** and her team managed to secure 4 potential recruits for the following Tuesday night.

Sadly this brings the Sqn to the end of another quarter and more importantly to wish **LCpl Simon Willis** all the best as he leaves the Sqn to undertake full time education in Scotland. **LCpl Willis** has served with the Essex Yeomanry for over 6 years and should be congratulated for recently completing his Detachment Commanders Course. The Essex Yeomanry wish him and his wife all the best for the future and hope that he will return on completing his Mathematics degree in Edinburgh. Let's hope that **Margaret Mountford's** appraisal of Edinburgh University is not correct.

68 SIGNAL UNIT (INNS OF COURT AND CITY YEOMANRY)

OC	**Maj J Evans**
SSM	**WO2 S Healey**

EXERCISE PHOENIX BUZZARDS 08

To name this exercise 'Buzzards' is rather fitting because it has two very different meanings. According to Goldsmith: "It is common, to a proverb, to call one who cannot be taught or who continues obstinately ignorant, a buzzard." Well, that may have been how we started on our Cadre course. However, I do hope that by the end of the course, our Instructors felt that we turned ourselves into the second meaning: "broad-winged, soaring hawks" better known to the world as buzzards.

Our Cadre course was to make leaders of us in order for us to be considered for promotion to LCpl. The aim was to develop our leadership skills and to access our abilities to become future detachment commanders.

We departed from Whipps Cross TA Centre and headed for Uxbrigde where we were met by **SSgt Cheshire** and the other people attending the course. We promptly had our kit inspected and the one thing that was on the kit list that nearly everybody didn't carry was their sewing kit. Obviously nobody was intending to stitch up any wounds. Jokes aside, after loading our kit onto the buses, we headed for Longmoor Training Area where the fun was all about to begin. We were divided into our sects, introduced to our DS and given our instructions for the evening. The instructions were easy to follow – sleep you'll need it!. Could someone please tell me how hard that is to follow… Section 1 woke 1 hr 20 mins before time.

Rising with the sun, we ate our scoff and cleaned up ready for the day ahead. We had 5 different stands to complete during the day session. The first stand was an observation stand, where we had to watch the local gangsters take part in a drug exchange. Unsuspecting **LCpl Maalouf**, clearly an innocent passer by was murdered by the drug dealers, **SSgt Boswell** and **LCpl Kane**. This act and the ear wrenching scream from **LCpl Maalouf** had to be repeated for each sect, while we observed. The second stand was a casualty evacuations stand; our friendly forces had run into a mine field and their Land Rover was about to blow. Blood was everywhere, the driver's body was still in the vehicle and the other passenger had sustained a serious leg injury. She was also suffering with shock, she was shouting and moaning; it was so true to life. This was when we felt tested by the pressure of acting with speed while under stress.

As a team, Sect 3 worked well to keep the situation under control, not endangering ourselves with the risk of being blown up by mines. **Sig Irwin** had to carry the injured woman to safety, while 4 of us used a stretcher to carry the injured man to the safe area. We were told during the de-brief that we worked well as a team and we had achieved our objective. Stand 3 was really challenging. We had to think about how to retrieve our rations from within an electric fence. We planned 3 different ways to retrieve our food; we never lost our enthusiasm because the idea of eating filled us with joy. Shouts of 'try again' were heard from all the boys in Sect 3 but they were not the one hanging upside down on a rope. I felt the blood rushing to my head and I had to trust these guys to keep me from falling.

Stand 4 was a REME stand. They had organised a drop vehicle for us to operate which isn't easy to operate at the best of times, but the DS added to the complexity. We worked in pairs only one could see the task while the other couldn't; the person who couldn't see was the controller who had to operate the vehicle by listening to instructions. Our task was to move a full bucket of water, around 2 posts and then place it on 2 stands, finally placing the bucket in the centre of the obstacle without spilling a drop of water. Our team had 3 pairs and between us all, we lost at least 15 litres of water, we even managed an impressive bucket spin. Luckily we were not dependent on that for our survival; we figured out the drop vehicle in the end by trial and error.

The last stand was the river crossing. We had to collect hidden items in a lake. Yes we are going to get wet; Sect 3 spent a lot of time looking at the task. Finally someone had to bite the bullet and get in first... that would be me. I climbed into the water, we were looking for 2 jerry can and 3 ammo boxes and half an hour later we were still looking for a jerry can. At that point I believed we had been duped because our lack of action at the start of the task. Our DS really know how to get their own back. It doesn't stop there; we had to do a rather punishing log run, 7 miles collecting the log, 2 tyres and a jerry can. I watched our whole sect feel the pain, just the looks in their eyes at the thought of taking another step. We made it to the end but we came 3rd. But Sect 3 were not happy with their place. So the following day 110% effort to regain the title, we came 1st in the trailer race and we were pushing ourselves to the limit.

It was an amazing exercise and as I said in the beginning we turned ourselves around, from the buzzards known as ignorant and unable to learn to the soaring hawks that fly high. We are closer now than ever before and the trust that has grown between us is unbreakable.

265 (KCLY) SUPPORT SQADRON

OC	**Maj Simon Palmer**
SSM	**WO2 Adrian Keeble**

265 Support Sqn continues to grow in numbers and strength as the last couple of months have shown. At the beginning of April, **LCpls Brett Harries** and **Jim Sutton** returned from their Cpls course with plenty of new found skills and stories to tell. **Pte Wayne Ede** returned from his trade course as a class radio systems operator and became one of the few dual traded soldiers in the Sqn having previously trained as a chef. He now finds himself being the only one on exercise who can competently send a flash message and make the OC a brew.

The middle of April saw the Sqn deploy with the rest of the Regt on Ex PHOENIX TRAINER 2 down at Napier Barracks. A weekend of trade training under the guidance of **Sgt Dave McGuinness** and physical training under the guidance of **WO2(SSM) Adrian Keeble** which eventually saw the Sqn trounce the other Sqns in the potted sports competition on the Sunday morning. Lead by the ever reliable **Cpls Pete Alsop** and **Mark Butler** on Captain's Ball who tore through the opposition as if they weren't there and **SSgt Trev Evans** who kicked a rugby ball so far the DS are still looking for it. At the same time as Ex PHOENIX TRAINER 2, **Sig Carl Crane** was weathering the storm in the Flora London Marathon and put in a very impressive time of 3 hrs 22 mins and raised an even more impressive total of £1600 for charity. Among his many memories of the day were meeting **Buster Martin**, the alleged 101 year old marathon runner at the start, running part of the way with **James Cracknell**, the double Olympic gold medal rower, hearing the Chariots of Fire theme tune played on church bells in Charlton and the great atmosphere from thousands of cheering crowds who lined the whole route.

With the TA100 celebrations in full swing across the country the Sqn partook in a couple of events to mark the occasion. On 23 April, the Regt hosted a dinner in the presence of **The Princess Royal** at the fabulous Drapers Hall in London. While 15 May saw the TA100 march and a Service of Thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral. Members of the Sqn met with members from 47, 68 and 70 Sqns to form a large contingent at St. Paul's Cathedral.

LCpl Sutton, LCpl Harries, Sig Crane, Maj Palmer, WO2 Feather, Sgt Morse, Sig Dellaway, Sig Hill and Sig Mahomed prepare for the march to St Paul's for the Service of Thanksgiving

They were played to by the Band of the Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry). After the service there was a march through the City of London to the Guildhall. Office windows were

teeming with onlookers and the marchers were met with cheers of encouragement from people lining the streets. Led by the OC **Maj Simon Palmer** with able support from **WO2 Martyn Feather** and **Sgts Jacky Morse** and **Steve Wise** together with **LCpls Sutton** and **Harries, Sig Crane** and new arrivals **Sig Lloyd Dellaway** and **Sig Stuart 'Muswell' Hill**. After the march a reception was held at the Honourable Artillery Company with some very welcome refreshments. Speeches were made in recognition of 100 years of TA service and the dedication of its members. Special mention was made of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in recent conflicts including **Tpr Jack Sadler** who was killed in action in Afghanistan in December 2007. Thoughts went to the loss of our own former colleague in particular, **2Lt Jonathan Bracho-Cooke**, who was killed in Iraq last year whilst serving with the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. Sqn members will be looking forward to watching the London Pageant on 21 June 2008.

Mid May brought yet more training with over 40 members of the Sqn deploying on Ex SHARP BOUNTY as they were put through their paces on their military annual training tests. **Capt James Greenrod** delivered a highly entertaining 'values and standards' lecture which lasted well into the bar while **WO1 Mick Jervis** ensured the battlefield casualty drills were kept up to speed. The Sqn was also heavily involved in running the Regimental cadre course. **WO2s Adam Twose**, **Mark Gittins** and **Cliff Springer** amongst others, testing potential LCpls on their leadership, organisational and physical abilities.

The end of May also saw a new SQMS arrive in the shape of **SSgt Paul Thwaite** while the Sqn enjoyed a long weekend off as it prepares to enter a Summer period of further field exercises and pre-camp training. Finally Sqn 2IC, **Capt Alex Downing**, became a father for the second time to ensure that the Sqn has a healthy supply of new recruits.

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215) TIDWORTH

OC	**Maj RD W Rumsey**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) S Watts**

EXERCISE BRUNEI MERCURY - *by LCpl Hamilton*

Members of Bengal Tp travelled to Bristol to help out and offer some Bowman training over the weekend to HQ 39 (Skinners) Regiment (V). Some had an eventful journey taking a more scenic route through the city but after deciding to explore the surrounding area, **Cpl Craig Virtue** and **LCpl Al Prest** ended up only 100m from the TA centre.

The Saturday started with us setting up the 2 vehicles so that the soldiers could see how the new Bowman system compares to Clansman and they were familiarised with the equipment and the Sqn's role. Then on to the evening and in true TA style we were well looked after. Once the games started it soon became quite competitive between the TA and the Regulars with the Jenga rules being bent 'slightly' by the 'Skinners' by having somebody hold the tower up! Not to be outdone, we decided to take the initiative and prop it up with a chair. By this stage the bar had shut and re-opened twice and we decided to call it a night before the sun came up. We said our goodbyes the next day after the Operations Officer, **Capt Chris Parkes** had given an overview of our role on Op TELIC 10. We all decided to take a more direct journey back to sunny Tidworth.

1 MECH v 12 MECH BDE HQ & SIG SQNS SPORTS DAY
- by LCpl Biermann

It was the clash of the titans as the 2 units came head to head for a well contested sports afternoon. The games consisted of Rugby and Football for the lads and Netball for the ladies. A highly competitive football game saw 12 Mech beating 1 Mech 2 – 0, leaving it to the girls to recover the situation for 1 Mech to level the scores.

The girls from 1 Mech won the Netball 41 – 7 leaving all to play for in the final competition of the day, Rugby. In a very hard fought game 1 Mech came out the victors 18 – 5 but with more than a few bruises. That said, these were quickly forgotten as we won the day overall. The competition was a most enjoyable Wednesday afternoon away from work for everybody. All 3 sports were contested in good spirit and 1 Mech will be keen to hang onto the trophy in future competitions!

MOUNTAINBIKE MOUNT SNOWDON CHALLENGE
- by Cpl Wallace

On 26 April 2008, **Cpl 'Gromit' Wallace** along with around 30 other mad volunteers, undertook a sponsorship event for 'Help for Heroes'. The event was to mountain bike up and down Mount Snowdon on the Llanberis path. It seemed like a good idea at the time! However, with the winds doing around 85mph and the fog so close that you could not see 5m in front of your face, all was not so good. We all met in the car park in Llanberis and began our adventure from there. After only 500m up the path we had our first biker down. At the half way cafe we all had a little rest and some of us had a nice warm cup of tea to try and heat our bodies up from the freezing winds that were blowing us around on the path and making it very difficult to stay on the bike, let alone cycle up the mountain.

After finally making it to the top and having a few quick photographs we all decided that it was far too cold to hang around and since the path was also used by walkers it would be a good idea to get down before it was too busy. With only a few stops to avoid hitting walkers, who thought we were all mad, we made it down with only one person having any proper injuries. The event raised over £2000 for 'Help for Heroes' and there is talk of doing it all over again or maybe Ben Nevis next time!

MERCURY FOOTBALL COMPETITION - *by Sig Marshall*

The Mercury Cup Football, an Inter-Tp competition was held on 16 April and due to the short numbers in the Sqn, it was restricted to a 7-a-side competition, Nevertheless the competitive spirit was high.

All the Tps had strong teams which resulted in some close matches. Bengal had **Cpl Mo Morris** pulling off some silky skills but it did not stop them getting pummelled by everyone and unfortunately coming last. The last match of the day was between Bengal and Support who needed to win this match by 3 goals to win the competition overall. They lived up to the pressure and managed to pull it off beating Bengal 4 – 0 with some good work from **Sig Smudge Smith.**

The final results were Support, SHQ, Sabre then Bengal Tp. All Tps are looking forward to gaining more points at the Inter-Tp hockey next month.

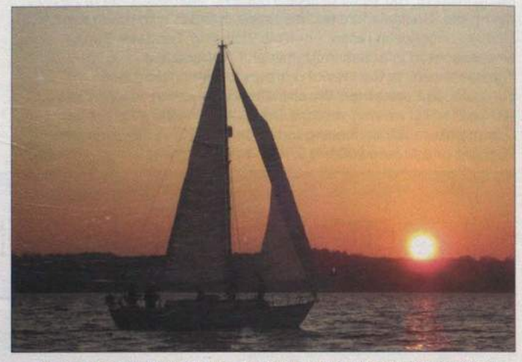
ADVENTURE TRAINING – JSPC(L) BASIC FREEFALL
- by Sig Green

Fifteen personnel from the Sqn had the pleasure of going to Germany for a 2 week parachute course. Unfortunately we had to drive there in a minibus restricted to a painful 60mph which was not the best start. The first day of training ranged from safety procedures to canopy control and we got our awesome orange jump suits. **Sgt 'PJ' Johns** got his 'man of war' parachute designed for heavier jumpers and named such because it looks like a giant jelly fish! Day 2 came round but unfortunately in the morning the weather was not on our side and we could not jump and there were a few sighs of relief from the MT lads. Then all of a sudden when all hope was almost lost, a break in the clouds appeared and before we knew it we were traveling up to 3200ft with a lot of panicking going through the aircraft. As it should be, **Capt Marie Hunston** led the way with a grin covering the fear as she left the aircraft door and everyone else followed.

As the course continued people were progressing at different levels and the first to freefall were **Sig Rob Trotter** and then **LCpl Tim Tyler**, who both gave the instructors a scare by deciding to freefall three times longer than expected! After this they were both put back to Jump 1. By the end of the course 7 people had advanced to freefall but the true freefall kings were **Cfn Gaz Haige**, **LCpl Tim Jones**, **LCpl Trips Triplett** and **Cpl Jay Campbell** who all got onto 10 secs. At the end of the 2 weeks, **Cpl Grommet Wallace** exceeded his 100th jump and got tossed

into the swoop pond as a celebration. Also congratulations to **Sig Scotty Graham** who received the trophy for most committed, because despite being truly petrified he continued to do good jumps all week and provided us with entertainment with his facial expressions on the slow motion video replay.

ADVENTURE TRAINING – ROYAL SIGNALS SAIL TRAINING WEEK *- by Cpl Greenwood*



It was an early start as we prepared for the short but congested trip to Gosport. There were only 4 of us from the Sqn taking part: **Cpl Billy Bedford**, **LCpl Robbo Robertson**, **Sig 'Moon-head' Ewen** and **Cpl Johnny Greenwood**. We were split into groups to crew the yachts and things worked out well for **Cpl Greenwood** and **LCpl Robertson** when they ended up with 2 out of the 3 females on the course. Unlucky **Sig Ewen** found himself on the yacht with all the experience and the age – so he fitted in well! During the week we visited Cowes, Lymington, Yarmouth, Beaulieu River and Newtown Creek. On the way to these places, the skipper, **Windy Gale** as he was known, tested us on the things we had learnt and kept us in the right direction as well as teaching us new skills, such as man over-board, manners and customs and the best place to get a pint! The weather was superb all week apart from one of the days where we found ourselves in gale force winds – there were a few mayday calls that day to say the least. Everyone did really well with some qualifications and valuable experience gained and last but not least, **Cpl Billy Bedford**, already a day skipper, crashed the boat!

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261) ALDERSHOT

OC **Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 A Morris**

EX MERCURY LEADER *- by LCpl 'Leroy' Sustins*

Ex MERCURY LEADER was a leadership development course for LCpls and Sigs held at Crowborough Camp and Pippingford Park over 2 weeks in April. The ex was split into 2 parts – a trg phase and a field phase. The first was based at Crowborough Camp and consisted of classroom based Practical Leadership Developments (PLDs). To our great pleasure, these PLDs included an assit course with a casualty extraction! There were a number of battle casualties, including **LCpl Globe** ripping most of the skin from his tender hands on the rope swing and the Sqn PTI, **LCpl Morris** managing to injure himself without even attempting an obstacle! The were a few funny moments especially when **LCpl 'Mac' McCarthy** couldn't get over the obstacles even with help and also when **Cpl Ara** was left to get over the 8ft wall on his own with his 15kg CEFO. During that week we also had a day of navigation and comd tasks which started out fine until 4 Bn REME decided to burn down the trg area. We were later assured that they had not used pyro on the area despite the ban but either way a large fire was started exactly where they were located! We would have thanked them

LCpl Andrews scaring the fire away

but the Sqn was fighting the fire whilst most of the REME decided to sit and watch the Signals show them how it is done. **LCpl Richie Andrews** and **Cpl Wayne Crosfield** had a close shave with the flames engulfing them and also **LCpl 'Deano' Stallard** lost what hair he had remaining!

After we had saved the day, we returned to our comd tasks, where **Sig Pechey** cooled down by nearly drowning himself in a foot of water hanging upside down. When we had stopped laughing, we then took another injury when **Sig Heron** somehow lost the tip of his finger on a rope!

Sig Pechey trying not to panic

When we finally got out into the Field phase, it was emotional as we were either digging in shell scrapes or sand bagging for the sangars of our defensive location. Unfortunately **LCpl McCarthy** and I made a schoolboy error by getting the dimensions for our shell scrape wrong and we paid the consequences as we woke up in a nice muddy swimming pool! We had a night navex next and out of the 3 teams competing, only **Sig 'GeePee' Stell's** team got navigationally challenged. The tactical phase involved standing and recce patrols and included sect attacks when we encountered our evasive but yet strangely familiar enemy. After a demanding set of consecutive enemy positions were destroyed on a clearance patrol, we had a 2 mile 'best effort' run back to our base with full CEFO – which wasn't enjoyable.

After repulsing various attacks on our location, we started the emotional tear down of defences in the rain, ready to move into a new location. We then had a quick 15 mins to do our battle prep before stepping off. On reaching our FRV, a recce party was sent to observe the area for any enemy and funnily enough – there were enemy swarming over our objective! Following the plan, **LCpl McCarthy** led **Sig Pechy** valiantly towards the enemy but for some reason decided to stop 10 yds short for a couple of minutes in case the enemy didn't know where they were! After finally taking the objective, 'end-ex' was called to our great relief.

The OC then announced the Top Signaller Award which went to **Sig Priestly** and the Top Student went to **LCpl McCarthy** with myself a close second! A great ex for all involved with good lessons learned by all – especially in poncho erection.

MORRISON CUP 2008 *- by LCpl Jacques*

The Morrison Cup Athletics Championships was hosted by 11 Sig Regt at Blandford Camp on 21/22 May 08. It is an annual event, open to all Royal Signals units throughout the British Army.

Summer time had come around once again and as it approached, Alpha, Bravo and Sp Tps were put through their paces by the Sqn PTIs **LCpl Dale Jacques** and **LCpl Josie Tuppen**. They conducted a mini athletics competition during Sqn PT sessions to identify soldiers who had natural ability and also gave people the opportunity to try the different events. After the results from the competition were collated the team was formed. The male team was headed up by **LCpl Jacques** and the female team headed up by **2Lt Morris**. After only a week of trg due to work commitments, the competition was almost upon us. The opening race for the Minor Units was the female 800m in which **2Lt Morris** came 1st.

Star athlete, **LCpl 'Mo' Morris**, left the other Minor Unit competitors for dust after winning the Male 100m, 200m and jumping farther than any other Minor or Major Unit competitor in the Long Jump event. This put the male team neck and neck at the end of the first day as they were joint 1st place with 216 Sig Sqn.

After the scenic minibus journey to Blandford, 261 Sig Sqn prepared themselves for the gruelling day ahead. 261 Sig Sqn pulled away with an early lead as **LCpl Whitmore** came 1st in the Minor Units 400m. The female team were also off to a good start after **LCpl Tuppen's** excellent 100m result. Male team captain, **LCpl Dale Jacques**, was up next in the 3000m Steeple Chase and he came 2nd in the Minor Units; being beaten by the 216 Sig Sqn runner. It was now up to the relay teams to guarantee victory for the new 11 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

The Male 4 x 100 m Relay race was won by **Cpl Smith**, **LCpl Morris**, **Cfn Coates** and **Sig Stratton**, which put the 261 Sig Sqn Male team just ahead with the final 4 x 400m relay race to decide who was going to take the Minor Units Trophy home. The gun went off and 261 were off to a flying start as **Cfn Coates** put the team in the lead at the first change over. **LCpl 'Jase' Whitmore** kept the lead and then passed the baton to **Cpl 'butter fingers' Tibbetts** who dropped the baton in the exchange zone. Luckily the baton stayed in the exchange zone, so we were still in the race as **LCpl Unwin** whizzed around the last lap and somehow managed to maintain the lead! Both 261 Sig Sqn male and female teams did exceptionally well and the male team did the Sqn proud by bringing home the Minor Units Trophy – what an amazing victory.

102 LOGISTIC BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (262) GÜTERSLOH

OC **Maj AJ Parfitt**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DB Holroyd**

INTER TROOP COMPETITION – IT'S A KNOCKOUT
- by Cpl 'Baz' Mears and LCpl 'Swanny' Swanick

The final episode of the Inter-Tp Competition culminated in a 'It's a Knockout' style event. This allowed each Tp a chance of winning, as this particular event would be worth double points, which would be added to the overall leader board. The scores on the doors before 'It's a Knockout' began showed that Charlie (Tech) Tp had a slender lead of 2 points. Even Bravo Tp, who were in last place, had a chance of the overall crown if results went in their favour – that's how close it had been all year. The day consisted of 8 different events each worth 4 points to the winning team. There were also bonus points given for the team and individual who had the best fancy dress of the day. The turn out for the fancy dress was excellent from all and even some of the Sqn hierarchy made an effort. The best dressed individual effort had to go to **SSgt Tye** for his homemade Cyberman outfit from the very popular Dr Who series. I am sure the Welfare Office will have something to say about the missing attic underlay at **SSgt Tye's** house on his march out! It was clear that as Charlie Tp's leader he fought hard for these extra points! The events included; a 5-legged race, which covered a little obstacle over bouncy castles, benches, and tyres, the World Map Darts, Sumo

SSgt Tye in the winning costume for the fancy dress competition

Wrestling, Catchphrase, Flick Pix, Penalty Shootouts, Gladiators and a Gun Run as the finale; a hard act when most of the lads were dressed in tight dresses and high heeled shoes! To spice up the Gun Run event, there were a few water and flour bombs being launched at the teams by the opposition. The biggest target was **Sig Stevie Sandle** as a celebration for his 19th birthday. That and ringing the Bar Bell was enough for anybody to take for one day. Overall winners of the day were Alpha Tp. The best dressed team went to Bravo Tp. This meant that Alpha Troop were the Inter-Tp winners for the year with Charlie Tp a close second. Unlucky Charlie Tp, you put up a good fight. Special

Alpha Tp attempt the 5-legged race over the bouncy castle

thanks go to **Cpl Cox** REME for making a huge brass Halberd as a trophy for the winning team.

MY FIRST TASTE OF LIFE IN THE "REAL ARMY"
- by 2Lt Dave Malortie

While at Sandhurst, the DS had often told us that on arrival at our unit, we would rarely get all of our soldiers in one place at the same time and I am now starting to appreciate exactly what they meant. For the 4 weeks I was in Gutersloh, there was always someone on a course, as well as a standing commitment to the Falklands and regular trawls to fill various vacant posts both on and off ops, but all the day to day jobs still had to be done. Having said that, with half the Sqn about to deploy on Op TELIC and the other half stood to for Op HERRICK, it was usually relatively quiet in the Sqn compound. Not least because **Yeoman Tharby** was putting those left through their biannual trade tests and the rest were preparing for first line inspections and a Board of Officers.

2Lt Malorie getting to grips with the equipment

Unfortunately I was not able to deploy on exercise, though I did sit in on some of the bi-annuals and learned quite a lot about the difficulties of working with the kit.Not being particularly busy myself, as I had no specified role, I had a good opportunity to sample the finer side of life in Germany. On my second day with the Sqn, **Capt Ian Kirk** managed to drag himself away from his work as both 2IC and Operations Officer long enough to go down to the lake at Paderborn for some wake boarding with the Army team. Much fun was had by all, especially **Capt Jo Barr**, the incoming Operations Officer, who paid for what became effectively 2 hrs of swimming. I was also able to work on my swing down on the driving range and push myself physically with both strength and endurance exercises in the mess bar. Over the first weekend I took a road trip around Belgium with a few others and met up with **2Lts Dobson** and **Wilson-Ramsey** in Amsterdam following their football competition playing for 16 Regt, where I am posted in November. Though I did not have any specific responsibilities for my time with the Sqn, it has been fantastic to be able to relax in a military environment after Sandhurst and learn a little bit about the Corps I will shortly be serving in and the soldiers I will be commanding.

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

OC **Maj RJ Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1(RSM) MA Brown**

SOINC(A)'s VISIT TO 216 (PARACHUTE) SIGNAL SQUADRON, OP HERRICK 8 - *by Capt CK Whittley*

On 7 April 08 , the SOinC(A), **Brig Flint ADC**, visited 216 (Para) Sig Sqn on Op HERRICK 8.

The purpose of the visit was for the SOinC to experience first hand the wide and varied roles which the Sqn is undertaking as part of 16 Air Assault Bde's deployment to Afghanistan. After a briefing from **SSgt Setchfield** on the roles of the Sqn, the visit began in earnest. The SOinC, accompanied by 2 PARA Rear Link Detachment (RLD) Commander, **Sgt Giroux**, was shown the 2 PARA Joint Operational Centre. It is from here that the command elements of 2 PARA command and control their manoeuvre units.

After seeing the RLD in action, the Brig then moved to the Tp Compound, where he was briefed on the Pathfinder Pl by **Cpl Nancollas** and **LCpl Chatterton**.

The Brig showed a keen interest in the Army's new mobility vehicle "JACKAL" which is currently under trial by the Pathfinder Group. Following a quick Sqn photograph, the Brig was treated to well earn brew.

SOinC(A) with members of the Sqn and the new "Jackal" vehicle

During this time he was able to meet a selection of the RLD commanders and their operators and to hear their experiences of the tour so far. Despite only being on tour for 2 months, the Brig was impressed by the situations that the RLD have been experiencing and the way in which the RLD crews are conducting themselves. As always with visits to operational theatres, the Brig's visit was cut short due to a last minute change to the flight programme. Although a much shorter visit that expected, the SOinC was able to experience first hand the roles that the Sqn is undertaking and to hear the experiences of the soldiers.

DANBAT RLD - *by LCpl Peach*

Arriving for HERRICK 8 the lads of FOB Price were preparing themselves for an arduous 6 months of OP 'BRONZE' and OP 'MASSIVE'. In reality, the start of the tour was marred by an attack by Suicide Improvised Explosive Device in downtown Gereshk, in which **Sig 'Macca' McKernan** became a casualty. He was lucky enough to escape permanent injury, thanks to the quick action and professionalism of himself and his comrades and after an emotional time with many of the 216 Sig Sqn lads around his bedside in Bastion, **McKernan** went home a hero breaking all the nurses' hearts (or so he tells us with his war stories!). His replacement arrived in **Cpl Shaun Hanes** who then teamed up with **Cpl John Smith** to work with the Czech Special Operations Group (CZ SOG). The real grafters however lay within DANBAT, including **Sgt Carlos Walker**, **LCpl Jamie Peach**, **LCpl Devlin**, **Sig Stu Hingley**, and **Sig Charlie Rokotuibau.**

One of the hardest times on tour so far has been the regular volleyball matches on a Friday afternoon. After his first showing (and his last), **LCpl Peach** was soon relegated to the bench and often left in the changing room under the watchful management of **Sgt Walker**, who never ever took it too seriously, honest!!! Never once did he take talents from other nations to form his own team. We've also been on the ranges most Fridays with the Danish to keep our weapon handling drills up to date whilst cross training on the Danish weapons. On one pistol shoot we got the chance to see which nation was the quickest and most accurate at getting 2 mags onto a target. **Cpl Hanes** kept the Brit end up with 10 secs flat, however his moment of glory was short lived when 2 mins later he did cross training on the M16, burning his hand on the guardrail and shouting a pathetic 'Aaaarrrrggghhh' in front of our Danish comrades. FOB Price, unfortunately, is the most basic in Helmand, with lobster only once a week, a 6 hr turn around on laundry and a 60 foot gym. Still, according to the Danish press, this wasn't a good enough facility as the lads have to pay for their own coffee. They do however have the best sweets on tour (liquorice, or should I say black salt tablets). Who needs Haribo?

We soon worked through the language barrier by being old-fashioned British and shouting louder, as this seemed easier than learning Danish. With the camaraderie high between the British, Danish, and Czech forces, the skills and the confidence of 216 Sig Sqn have all been on show, enabling smooth interoperability for everyone to see.

LCpl Peach, Sig Hingley, Sgt Walker, LCpl Devlin, Cpl Hanes and Sig Rokotuibau

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TEAM - *by Cpl Mitchell*

The Task Force Helmand Immediate Response Team (IRT) is made up of fi5ve different agencies, a CH-47 and crew, a Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT), Sappers from JFEOD, a Radio Operator from 216 and a Force Protection Team. Working with the IRT is very different to the normal duties that you can expect to carry out as a Radio Operator in an operational theatre, and requires a number of specialist skills including advanced medical training. Since joining the IRT we have been on 100 plus callouts within the first 3 months of Op HERRICK 8. Our primary task is to provide comms if we are left on the ground, be it due to a mass casualty situation or in the worse case scenario if the aircraft is taken out of action. In which case we would talk to higher formations and would call in any additional support assets as required. Our day-to-day job sees us on constant immediate notice to move, waiting for any incident to happen in Helmand province.

The most common incidents have been casualty evacuations. Our task on these is to assist the recovery of casualties and to work closely with the doctors and medics on the MERT and this includes applying first field dressings and tourniquets and inserting drips. Sometimes our 2 man detachment, comprising **Cpl Mitch Mitchell**, **Cpl Jock McRae** and **Sig Shaun O'Mahoney** has had to deal unassisted with treatment of casualties, due to the numbers involved and the high demand for medical staff. We are all team medic trained and have found our pre-deployment medical training very useful. On the whole this is a very demanding and worthwhile job, as you feel you are really making a difference by helping wounded soldiers to get to safety and receive treatment. After witnessing the medical team in action it gives us immense confidence that if the worst was to happen, the professionalism of the team and the treatment received would be excellent.

The IRT with Cpl Mitchell 3rd from left

2 PARA REAR LINK DETACHMENT (RLD) - *by Sgt Giroux*

Over the past months the Sqn have had an RLD embedded with the 2 PARA BG, preparing for our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 8. The RLD have been involved in all of 2 PARA's pre-deployment training, including a 2-week range package on Otterburn training area, several parachute insertions onto Salisbury Plain and many other low level military skills and comms exercises. After a well deserved 2 weeks of pre-deployment leave, the RLD deployed to Afghanistan with the BG.

FOB GIBRALTAR

I arrived at FOB Gibraltar on 15 April, having enjoyed the luxuries of Camp Bastion for 15 hrs, having just spent a month in FOB Robinson. At FOB Gibraltar we go out on patrol every day around the Green Zone for a minimum of 3 hrs, interacting with the locals and trying to get as much information on the Taliban presence in the area as possible. No patrol goes out without one of the patrol commanders deciding to go through a stream or two along the way, to give everyone a chance to cool down slightly. This always goes down well with everyone apart from the interpreter who seems to have a fear of getting wet. All the lads out here have come to realise that a 1 hr 40 min tab on a Friday morning doesn't really prepare you for patrolling out here, as you always carry a minimum of 75lb when out on the ground. The local kids try and nick absolutely everything you wear if they get the chance and it keeps the patrols amused passing the kids down the line, unless you're the last man!

FOB ROBINSON

We are at the 2 month point now in FOB Robinson and life is proving a challenge. We are a 3 man RLD consisting of **Cpl Stu Clark, Cpl Bartholomew Dunseith** and **Sig Douglas**, working around the clock to keep on top of the gruelling tasks sent down from above and also the Taliban threat. Our daily jobs consist of keeping the Ops rooms running smoothly, Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) duties, patrols (which happen daily) and routine tasks in and around the FOB.

Food in the FOB is as good as it gets supplemented with 10 man ration packs and we have a very enthusiastic (crazy) chef! However, after having beef noodles for lunch every day we all look forward to the welfare packages sent from our thoughtful friends and families, but then 9 times out of 10 we receive shoe boxes packed with more beef noodles. Morale is gradually getting higher as we approach the R&R period with our minds set on a decent shower and a nice cold beer.

KAJAKI

Sigs Mark Glancey and **Daz Swithenbank** of Charlie Tp are currently attached as an RLD to D Coy of 2 PARA in Kajaki. The Coy's mission is to provide security around the Kajaki dam both north and south of the Helmand River, as well as promoting ISAF to the local communities. The RLD provides a high level of communications expertise and knowledge to the Coy, by operating in patrols as OC's signallers and by operating in the field ambulance to support medical call signs. So far the time has flown by, with various communications queries arising every day to keep us busy, while still finding time to do some physical stuff, running around the FOB and having the occasional swim in the dam.

OPERATION MENTOR LIAISON TEAM (OMLT) - by Lt Cole

During Op HERRICK 8, the Sqn have provided a detachment to the 1 R IRISH BG OMLT who have the challenging task of training and developing the Afghan National Army (ANA). The detachment has 2 roles: to mentor the ANA in communications and to provide the BG with RLD support at Coy and BG level.

The mentoring team consists of **Lt Nick Cole** and **SSgt Loddy Jones** who provide support and training to the ANA Bde Signals Officers and an ANA Kandak (Bn) Communications Company. 3 Bde of 205 Corps are based out of Camp Shorabak, just outside Camp Bastion and are the most operationally experienced ANA Bde in Afghanistan. The Op has a been a unique and interesting one to date and despite the cultural differences, the team has managed to form some strong relationships and friendships with our ANA counterparts through the drinking of large quantities of chai (Afghan tea) at every possible opportunity.

The ANA have proved themselves to be very proficient communicators but it is difficult to expect them to perform as UK troops do but their habit of interrupting the day with their 3 hr midday lunch/nap can prove challenging. Our main responsibilities have been running Bde Training Wing Signals courses and mentoring them during re-supply convoys to the FOBs. One of their favourite tricks has been to pretend that their vehicle has broken down when they get tired so that they can have a nap while a mentor recovery vehicle tows them!

1 R IRISH RLD - *by Cpl Mackie*

The RLD team has been headed up by **Cpl Jim Mackie** and has been responsible for maintaining specialist communications for the Coys and HQ within the Bn. Each BG Coy or OMLT mentors an ANA Kandak and **LCpl Rick Jack, LCpl Kris Campbell, Sig Danny Briscoe** and **Sig Faz Farrell** have been attached to the 4 Infantry OMLTs providing communications for the Royal Irish so that they can coordinate their training and mentoring of the ANA. They have found themselves heavily relied upon as subject matter experts, whether in static HQ locations or as signallers within closely knit sects on patrol. **Cpl Mackie, Sig Dan Andrews** and **Sig Lee Townson** have been working alongside the Royal Irish Signals Platoon within the OMLT HQ and have provided key support to the Bn Ops Team, whether maintaining communications within the Ops Room or conducting communication training for the BG or the ANA.

Cpl Mackie recently deployed as the CO's Operator as part of CO's TAC for an Op in the Upper Gereshk Valley. This was conducted to secure a large area of Green Zone and establish a patrol base in order to maintain security for the local populace. This was the first major Bde Op on Op HERRICK 8 and to date enemy activity in the area has reduced dramatically. Being out on the ground has given the team first hand experience of the harsh living conditions and the dangers faced by being an exposed and much desired target of the enemy. They have also had the opportunity to interact with the local Afghan population and have received a more positive response from them than regular ISAF troops due to the presence of Afghan soldiers alongside them.

The various tactics the Taliban have employed in theatre have meant that every member of the RLD has found themselves at risk from IEDs or contact with enemy forces. **LCpl Campbell** has been kept on his toes based in a location that receives regular Incoming Direct Fire and **Sig Farrell** narrowly escaped with minor injuries after being involved in an IED strike on a WMIK while providing top cover. The OMLT has proven to be an unconventional but enjoyable tour to date. Those fortunate to have the opportunity to deploy in this role on future HERRICKs can look forward to a highly challenging yet rewarding 6 months.

ARMOURED SUPPORT COMPANY RLD - *by Cpl Gurung*

On 13 March we flew to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 8. Our RLD consisted of **Cpl Ajay Gurung, LCpl Martyn Haworth** and **LCpl Thomas Bradley**. We were to provide the communications for the Armoured Support Company, Royal Marines, in their Vikings out and about in southern Afghanistan.

Primarily our job was to provide the Commander on the ground with TacSat comms when and wherever was needed. Also being from the Corps and working with the "Bootnecks", they generally expected us to fix and operate anything to do with communications! We were all shown around the vehicles and the Bowman comms systems in them and after a few days it was time to say goodbye to each other as we were separated into different Tps. Representing 1 Tp, I was working from Kandahar,

LCpl Haworth representing 2 Tp, was operating from Camp Bastion and **LCpl Bradley**, with much delight, representing the stores and accounts for the whole Coy, was in Camp Bastion!

1 TROOP - *by Cpl Gurung*

After all the goodbyes, we went our separate ways and started getting used to the way of life operating in the Vikings with the RM. Getting used to the 'bootneck' slang took some time but we are slowly getting used to it.

We had a really busy period up at Kandahar, battle prepping the vehicles and sorting out all the comms systems before heading off to the ranges prior to deployment out in Maywand Province. We were alongside the 3 PARA BG and we left Kandahar in the early hours of the morning. The first week of OP SOHIL LARAM was quite an anti-climax for myself and the lads, as we was expecting a lot of "contacts", but in the end we spent the whole Op in the middle of the desert in our "desert laager".

Most days we were taking 3 PARA on deliberate Ops but to their and our disappointment, the Taliban did not want to come out and play! However on one of our ops we had our first contact, where **Sig Rob Harper** treated a local casualty who had been shot in the incident – the perks of being a Team Medic! Apart from taxiing dismounts and driving over poppy fields, that op was quiet.

On Op OQAB STERGA in and around Qal-e-Gaz, southern Helmand, we came across a lot of mines. The first day we got to our laager, after several grueling long hours of driving and manning the communications, everyone was relaxing and chilling out in the sun when all of a sudden a big thump was heard, shortly followed by a lot of whistling sounds past our location. To my dismay, as I was just about to have some "scran" and a can of "goffer", I had to quickly get into cover and send a contact report. Between me and **Sig Harper**, we managed to send it all back to the HQ. After 14 mortars, 5 rockets and one "shrapnel on the buttocks" casualty, it was all quiet again.

2 TROOP - *by LCpl Haworth*

I have been stationed in FOB Inkerman. Most of my days have consisted of Op 'BRONZING' and desperately trying to avoid the D and V plague that took over the FOB for a while! My first 2 ops with 2 Tp in the Inkerman area consisted of contact after contact, with the boss furiously firing off around 1000 rounds in one 20 min contact with the Taliban, while I sat sending contact reports and getting covered in hot brass. After the first few days the poppy season came around, and no matter how much abuse the interpreter would shout over the loud speaker, the Taliban just refused to engage us.

2 PARA soon showed up at Inkerman with the 'Galley of Death', which would see half the FOB in the D and V tent. I thought I'd managed to avoid it but it caught up with me at the worst possible time, in the middle of the desert on an op, resulting in me going down with dehydration. Needless to say I was very happy to get back to Camp Bastion and annoy everyone with my new Marine lingo and get myself toppers with goffers and enjoy my lovely new grot with a nice cup of hot wet!

Finally...

So far working with the Viking crews has been a real experience. **LCpl Haworth** has seen plenty of action, **Cpl Gurung** has also seen some and **LCpl Bradley** is loving his ISO stores in Bastion! Sadly **LCpl Howarth** has had enough of FOB Inkerman, and now his replacement **LCpl Ross Gormley** has to suffer the consequences. It's also sad to see **LCpl Bradley** leave the Coy, he was the best store man ever, apparently...

Now the Queens Royal Lancers have taken over, no more talk of "scran" or "galley", its back to "scoff" in the "cookhouse". Let's wait and find out, as their motto suggests, if they take us to "Death or Glory".

OP OQAB STERGA - *by Cpl Steel*

With 2 months of the tour completed and the much published Op AZADA WOZA, under our belts, it was now time for the Bde Tac to re-deploy in support of Op OQAB STERGA. Bde Tac consisted of the **RSM Mick Brown, Capt Tom Potts**, J3 Ops, **Cpl Steely Steel** and **LCpl Goodwill** .

OP OQAB STERGA – Cpl Steel, WO1(RSM) Brown, LCpl Goodwill, Cpl Haines on the .50 cal and Cpl Mackie

Having spent the previous 2 weeks at FOB Delhi, near Gamsir, in support of Op AZADA WOZA, it was a short lived return to civilisation. Within 3 days of returning to the HQ at Lashkar Gah, Bde Tac we were re-deployed by helicopter and our main effort was to provide a rear link back to Bde HQ in Laskhar Gah.

In addition we were also tasked to provide Situation Awareness back to Bde J3 Ops in preparation for Comd BRITFOR's arrival. This was by provided via TacSat Secure Voice and HPW. As with any op, the tactical picture changed and Bde Tac were moved with the OMLT and CO 1 R IRISH Tac group up to the new Patrol Base about 5km North of FOB Armadillo, this FOB was named PB Attall (meaning 'Hero'). The op was a deliberate move to clear the area before establishing a new PB. As with the majority of ops conducted in Helmand, there were a great number of call signs on the ground, including Danish, ANA as well as 2 PARA, 3 PARA, PF and an OMLT C/S mentoring the 1st Kandak. Once a suitable PB location was identified and the Afghan family compensated for their land, the job of turning the compound into a PB began in earnest.

As well as the provision of communications back to the Bde HQ, Bde Tac found themselves helping with the establishment of PB Attall by helping with general duties and works building toilets, HESCO and the all important sangar duty of which everyone mucked in and yes, even the RSM helped.

These tasks were made harder by a water shortage which meant each man could only have 6 litres of water a day and there was a no wash policy. After filling sandbags for a few hours you needed a wash!. In order to ease the water situation Bde Tac helped out with the resupply Patrol into the Green Zone carrying ration packs and as much water as you could carry for approx 800 – 1000m, which doesn't sound that much but in 45 degrees heat with full kit on walking along irrigation ditches it was a bit of a blow out. All those Bergen runs back at Colchester proved useful after all!

After approx 14 days on the ground Bde Tac's time at PB Attall was up and we managed to extract by helicopter back to Laskhar Gah for a well earned wash. A special mention should also go to the other Sqn members on the ground at the time as they all worked very hard and some are still out there now. So keep it up lads – Airborne!

52 INFANTRY BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (258) BRAMCOTE

OC **Maj TN Crapper**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DP Collins**

The Sqn are now back in UK and working following our return from Op HERRICK 7 and having taken some much deserved leave. On return to Gamecock Barracks, the Sqn had a 2 week normalisation period and MATTs training provided the foundation for this. This not only gave the Sqn a familiar training package but also the chance to capture all personnel in one place for the first time in over a year. Of course, the main objective was to get all personnel back into normal life, so the training provided the ideal opportunity to have short days in work and lots of social functions. The forthcoming months continue to see a return to normality, with leave, adventurous training and courses being the focus.

The separation from 30 Sig Regt is now complete, with our official independence being recently ordered by HQLF. Lots of changes are underway, no more so than in the way we work as a Sqn. Although working areas and hangars are no more, we continue to convert to a Bde Sig Sqn and will undertake BCIP 5 later in the year, which will take a lot of effort but is something we look forward to. We take this opportunity to say farewell to many members of the Sqn.

Our reorganisation with 30 Sig Regt has seen a huge churn of manpower and it is impossible to detail all comings and goings. The RSM, **WO1 Wilf Wilford** leaves us on commissioning, bound for 4 Sqn in Blandford. Our QM, **Capt Taff Burdge** leaves on posting to 16 Sig Regt and our RQMS, **WO2 DeDe Watts** has now arrived in 1 Mech Bde as the RSM. **SSgt Griffiths** has moved back from whence he came, and **SSgt Parry** is off to Northwood. Another departure is the Sqn Operations Officer, **Capt Andy Limb**, who is having a protracted departure on resettlement, but we have not yet let go our grasp on him entirely.

- by Lt Andy Bunting

Our return home and back to normality has seen a flurry of activity and a large number of social events. One such function was provided by the local veterans of Bulkington, who invited the Sqn down to their social club in order to welcome us home. The veterans were very welcoming and an excellent night was had by all. The free beer may have oiled the wheels somewhat but there was a great sense of pride and achievement on our part and which was reiterated by the hosts, many having had similar experiences themselves. On return from post tour leave, the immediate concern was the medals parade in Edinburgh for the combined Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. Organised from our end by the RSM, **WO1 Mark Wilford**, this was a highly successful event which enabled the soldiers of 258 to celebrate their return as well as receiving praise from a number of senior officers. The Sqn were very privileged to have GOC 2nd Div, **Maj Gen McDowell CBE**, the SOinC(A), **Brig Flint ADC** and CO 30 Sig Regt, **Lt Col Ford** presenting the Sqn with their Afghanistan medals.

Although taking place on the esplanade in front of Edinburgh Castle, the ceremony was an intimate affair with families and close friends in attendance which made the parade very special to us all and made it feel even more like our moment. Despite this, large numbers of people still gathered at the end of the Royal Mile close to the castle in order to show their appreciation. Following the parade all participants went to the Officers Mess in the Castle or to the Grand Hall to celebrate.

Another special moment for everyone was watching **Cpl Dave Wallace** receive the Long Service and Good Conduct medal from the GOC, for whom **Cpl Wallace** had been driver whilst he was CO 7 Sig Regt. This was a double privilege for **Cpl Wallace**, not only having **Maj Gen McDowell** present his medal but also having such a grand venue and even more significantly because both are Scots. Having been hosted very well in the Castle, the Sqn eventually ended up spread around the numerous bars of Edinburgh…there were some sore heads in the morning!

The SOinC(A), Brig Flint, presenting medals to the middle rank

Cpl Oates receives his medal from GOC 2nd Division, Maj Gen McDowell CBE

The Sqn is currently working hard and trying to adjust to life away from operations. With so many people being posted in and out, the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Gavin Darke** has really had to earn his money in the last couple of weeks and has been liaising closely with the Adjt 30 Sig Regt to decide who will stay with us and who will return. We have also been busy signing for a variety of Bowman equipment which we have been busily working on in order to make it deployable for our Sqn level exercise.

Sqn Operations and the Tp Comds have also been kept on their toes with constant changes to the exercise caused by equipment and manning limitations as well as the need to supply manpower to a memorial service in Edinburgh for our fallen comrades on Op HERRICK 7. Flexibility seems to be a constant theme at present!

In the future we are looking forward to conducting several adventure training expeditions which the Tp Comds are frantically trying to pull out of the bag and there is also a maximum leave period pencilled in from mid July to the end of August…Ibiza here we come! Or so I thought before I was volunteered for Lanyard Trophy in September. Who needs Ibiza when you have Wales!

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) CORSHAM

OC **Maj Steve Clout**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Collins**

GENERAL NEWS

The Sqn has now completed its annual Out-of-Camp Training (OOCT) event and the Tps are getting ready for the upcoming deployments. In June, 855 Tp will deploy to Cyprus and 857 Tp to Gibraltar. In November, 786 Tp will deploy to the South Atlantic Islands and 856 Tp will go to Brunei.

OOCT also saw a number of promotions. Congratulations to the following:
Cpl Gray to Sgt
LCpl Tomblin to Cpl
Sig Leighton to LCpl
Sig Cane to LCpl
Sig Allen to Lcpl
Sig Christie to LCpl

OUT-OF-CAMP TRAINING

81 Sig Sqn start their first 8 mile CFT

The Sqn spent 4 days at Swynnerton Training Camp in the West Midlands completing their annual MATTS training requirements. Nearly 100 soldiers attended and the pass rates for the various tests remained as high as in previous years.

The Sqn also had the opportunity to conduct one of the first 8-mile TA Combat Fitness Tests – with boredom, rather than tiredness, being the main issue!

The Sqn was visited by Comd 2 Sig Bde, **Brig David Hargreaves**, who presented a number of medals to members of the Sqn including for service on Op TELIC and for long service. The annual Sqn Awards Ceremony was also conducted.

As usual, the Selector Trophy was heavily contested and evoked much emotion – but eventually 857 Tp under **Lt Simon Durtnal** were successful. Other awards went to new 856 Tp member **Sgt Jason Tomkinson** (Best Shot), **Cpl Richard Ayre** (Best Junior NCO) and **Sig Ian Marshall** (Fastest Soldier).

OP HERRICK DEPLOYMENT

The Sqn's first surge team deployment to Op HERRICK is now underway. The team under **SSgt Andy Green** includes **Sgt Mat Bevan**, **Sig Alick McNaught**, **LCpl Matt Harris** and **Sig Dave Almond**. After completing the mobilisation process and OPTAG training, the team deployed to theatre in mid-May. A full report will be in the next issue.

EX FIRST LOOK

The Sqn has been one of the key contributors to an initiative known as Defence Career Partnering (DCP) by offering Modern Apprentices within BT the opportunity to attend a military 'experience' weekend, gain an insight into the modern TA and have their leadership and team working skills assessed. The concept has now been extended to other companies and in mid-May we saw members of the Sqn return again to Swynnerton to conduct 2 'First Look' events. The number of participant companies has now widened to include Royal Mail, BAe Systems, EADS and Sodexho as well as the continued involvement of BT. This was also the first event to be run by another unit – in this case, 37 Sig Regt. Participants were split into groups of 8 – 10 individuals, then led round a set of command tasks by an experienced TA mentor. The tasks ranged from the traditional 'oil drum and rope' type up to building a raft and crossing a small lake. The teams also had an opportunity to shoot on the DCCT and run through an Assault Course.

This was a very successful event with many positive comments from the participants.

Capt Paul Masheter and his team of BT Apprentices on Ex FIRST LOOK

OTHER UNITS

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

OC **Maj M McCorry**
USM **WO2(SSM) Tresidder**

The biennial change period is well under way with many comings and goings set to occur over the period May to Sep this year. This is indeed true from the top down and as of May, the Sqn was formally handed over to the new OC, **Maj Mel McCorry** who arrives from Blandford and now assumes command. A huge welcome to him, his wife **Janet** and daughter **Alexandra.**

By the time of printing, **Maj Aidrian Johnson** will have deployed on Op HERRICK as COS JFCIS before returning to Elmpt Station as Operations Officer, 16 Sig Regt. A position which will no doubt be very different from the one he has held here for the last 2 years. We all wish him every success and thank him for his contribution during his command during which he has steered the unit through a lot of change. We also wish **Debra**, **Imogen** and **Samuel** best wishes for the move to Germany.

CYPRUS SKILL AT ARMS MEETING (CypSAAM)
- by Cpl Simpson

Battle Camp was over for Infra & HQ Sqn and the time had come to begin training for the all island shooting competition, CypSAAM. All units on island are encouraged to take part in the competition which is managed by HQ British Forces Cyprus, in particular the SASC representatives in J3. Over a 3 day period the competitors would attempt various matches firing the rifle and pistol with an opportunity to win a variety of prizes.

A training programme was created by **Cpl 'Dino' Simpson** that would encourage maximum attendance from all departments within CCU, not only to select a team for the competition but also to improve marksmanship for those who were not going to make the team. Marksmanship principles were explained in full with demonstrations of how to build up various firing positions. The theory of a group was explained and hopefuls would then progress onto zeroing their personal weapons and firing in other positions, culminating in the APWT (TS). The team was selected from their ability to group at 100m from all firing positions and scores achieved on APWT (TS).

Selections made, **Cpl Simpson** would coach and manage the group of 10 personnel from CCU. Nine were R Signals and the final member was RAF. The group was then split to create 2 teams of 5; they would become CCU 'A' and CCU 'B' teams. Now that the teams were identified, the firers could have SUSAT fitted to their rifles and training could begin.

A full package was created to give the teams the best opportunity to practise the various competition matches they would fire during CypSAAM using the actual ranges the matches are fired on. Matches 2 and 7 are fired on the ETR and are potentially the most complex requiring practice from an early stage. A total of 8 days were allocated to CCU on the 2 range complexes used in Cyprus. This would give the teams an incredible opportunity to prepare and also to attempt matches that are a natural progression in marksmanship training beyond APWT.

The package would have worked incredibly well, but the Theatre Reserve Bn based in Dhekelia had priority on all range complexes in Cyprus for operational purposes if required and those 8 days allocated to CCU would soon become a 2 day package: one day for zeroing using the converted gallery range (CGR) and a 25m range to practise with the pistol. Things were not going according to plan. On 21 April the competition permanent range staff had the opportunity to rehearse the competition. This also gave the firers a further valuable opportunity to fire as a team for the first time.

The competition started the following day at Akrotiri range complex with a welcome to all firers from **Capt Joe O'Connor** SASC, the mastermind of CypSAAM. CCU 'A' and 'B' teams were preparing weapons and rehearsing the shoots mentally with crib sheets previously prepared. On an individual basis **Maj Adrian Johnson**, OC Infra & HQ Sqn, and **Cpl Simpson** entered the pistol competition on the hope that CCU could lift the winner's trophy for the third consecutive year – it did not turn out that way. The first detail of the pistol match had to re-shoot due to scoring errors made by the range staff and the glorious Red Arrows made their mark by halting proceedings every time they took to the skies. All firers at some stage were victim to the glorious boys in blue's (Or is it red?) strict timetable.

The teams fired matches 2 and 7 on the ETR, match 6 on the MMTR and the pistol match, 11, on the zero range. **LCpl Sturdy** proved to be outstanding on the MMTR by achieving the highest score for that match, but during the penultimate detail of the day the mechanism failed for the targets. As a result the scores achieved on the previous details were cancelled and **LCpl Sturdy** missed out on the opportunity of a prize.

Lt Miller did achieve the highest score for the Unit on the pistol match and this proved to be a sample of what he would achieve not only in the 'B' Team but also as an individual. By the end of the first day's firing, CCU 'B' was sitting top. A great achievement considering none of the team had practised any rifle matches prior to the competition.

Day 2 took the teams to the other end of the island, Dhekelia. CCU 'A' would start proceedings by firing the CBF Battle March, a 2 mile tab in less than 20 mins followed very shortly by a run down the range engaging targets at 500m down to 100m on a CGR. This was a fire team assessment and in order for the whole team to fire, they all had to complete the 2 mile march on time. Only 3 came in, **Cpl Barinisavu** lost his bearings on the march and was told to about turn and finish the correct course. He lost several minutes and was unable to shoot. The other members, **Sgt Sankey**, **Sgt Stewart** and **LCpl Sturdy** all came in with minutes to spare giving them a good opportunity to rest prior to the run down the range. If all team members came in, the team would not have suffered penalty points and would at this point be leading on the leader board for the Battle March.

Matches 3 and 4 were also fired on Day 2. Both are matches that require the firer to engage targets up to 500m under some physical duress, testing both physical and mental ability. **Flt Lt Steff Pearce**, **Lt Miller**, **LCpl Slowey** and **LCpl Grieves** all proved to be outstanding at the long range engagements and achieved some great scores. The team also fired the Urban Contact Match, a shoot thoroughly enjoyed by the baby of the team **Sig Rogers**.

In the afternoon of Day 2, 4 members of CCU 'B' fired the Team Combat Snapshooting Match which consisted of a 100m dash while negotiating obstacles on route, culminating in engaging targets once on the firing point. The team did well to achieve a good score considering the heat of that day, (somewhere in the region of 35 degrees C). By early evening the temperature had dropped a little making the Night Engagement Match a little more comfortable. After a small error by the range staff and a re-shoot of detail one, all firers finally managed to try their best at engaging targets at 300, 200 and 100m. **Cpl Simpson** was fortunate enough to qualify in third place.

Thursday 24 April was the final day of firing. CCU 'A' would start proceedings by attempting the Team Combat Match. With the high standard of physical fitness and marksmanship ability in the team, this match would prove to be a simple task. By mid morning the heat was becoming unbearable and unfortunately CCU 'B' had to compete in the Battle March. Three of the team arrived within the 20 minute limit and the fourth member was slightly out with the time although he did fire. **LCpl Larkins** did give the other team members a giggle when he tried a little 'Bruce Forsyth boogie' just short of the finish line. If the team had not suffered a penalty, CCU 'B' would have lifted the top prize for this match.

Once the Battle Match and Team Combat Match had finished came time for the BFC 12 to take to the range to fire Match 8 – the Army 100 Cup. Four members from CCU qualified within the top 12 places from their individual scores achieved throughout the whole competition. The members were, in order of scores achieved; **Lt Miller**, 6th, **LCpl Sturdy**, 7th, **LCpl Slowey**, 8th and **Flt Lt Pearce**, 12th. These firers had the opportunity to better their standing in the top 12 by achieving very good scores for Match 8.

Wg Cdr Featherstone, CO ISS CCU, and **Maj Johnson** were also in attendance due to the outstanding achievements of all of CCU personnel on the team. CCU 'B' had by this point secured second place overall as a team, ahead of all infantry and RAF Regt teams, second only to the Royal Engineers from 62 Cyp Sp Sqn. CCU 'B' was a massive 223 points ahead of 3rd place team from the RLC, proof that no other teams were in contention regarding 1st and 2nd places.

The BFC 12 was under way and 3 who qualified did improve their scores, **Lt Miller** moved up to 4th overall picking up the best 'B' Class Firer trophy, **LCpl Sturdy** moved to 5th and **LCpl Slowey** was confirmed in 6th place. These 3 firers have now qualified to represent themselves and CCU at the Central Skill At Arms Meet (CENTSAAM) at Bisley. The incentive now for these firers, is qualification within the Army 100. The falling plates would follow the BFC 12 and unfortunately CCU did not pick up any prizes for this event. One of the infantry units did however slightly redeem themselves by proving they are the best at running 100m and firing at small squares. Following the falling plates came the prize giving and **Lt Miller** would collect the trophy for Best 'B' Class firer and lead from the front when CCU 'B' team received their medals. **LCpls Grieves**, **Larkins**, **Slowey** and **Sig Rogers** were thoroughly delighted with their achievements for the competition.

The medal winners

All members of the team enjoyed the competition, especially considering the achievement of a team with so little practice. HQ BFC now intends to run a training package over a 5 day period to ensure the competitors have all the knowledge they require. Look out for the next report from CCU which will include notes regarding CCU success and achievements at Bisley.

CCU WIVES EXERCISE *- by Sgt Steve Cooper*

Ex VALKYRIES VENGEANCE was hosted by Akrotiri Tp on 16/17 May. Seventeen ladies took part in the 24hr exercise which was designed to give them an insight into the military skills their husbands often carry out. The exercise commenced with a visit to 417 Maritime Tp at Akrotiri Mole where the lucky ladies had to dress as tele-tubbies and jump off the side of a landing craft and swim to shore as part of their rescue drills. This was followed by lunch on board the vessel as it sailed along Ladies Mile Beach area.

The next event was team sports at the gym where certain team members' competitive streak surfaced. After this the ladies were moved out to Whiskey 1 training area where they received lessons on first aid and map reading. The map reading was put to use as the ladies carried out a patrol to an enemy position. Purple sect managed to steal most of the enemy's kit almost unobserved but Pink sect managed to top this by kidnapping all 3 enemy and stealing their vehicle in a special forces style raid!
A BBQ took place in the evening with a few glasses of wine to wash down the burgers and sausages; a couple of people seemed to suffer from one toc many sheftalia the next morning.

The morning's events consisted of navigation and command tasks followed by firing the SA80 A2. There was some good shooting with potential markswomen in the 2 sects, although one of the sharp shooters was overheard saying "I imagined it was my husband"! After all events the Ladies were de-briefed and prizes awarded. Clearly the ladies had an excellent time raising €170 for SSAFA Forces Help and keen to know when the next exercise will take place.

Two ladies prepare for dunking

A big thank you goes out to 417 Maritime Tp for their involvement during the exercise as well as the lads from Akrotiri Tp who gave up their spare time and put so much effort into the event.

Best overall section:	Pink Section
Best recruit:	**Faye Barlow**
Best endeavour:	**Louise Featherstone**
Best shot:	**Lisa Lougher**

DHEKELIA SEA SWIM AND ALL ISLAND RAFT RACE
- by Sig Rogers

Saturday 31 May saw the return of the annual Dhekelia Sea Swim and All Island Raft Race. After an early start the swim team consisting of **Capt Moody**, **Sgt Stewart**, **Sgt Sankey** and **Sig Rogers**, braved the freezing temperatures (or not) to finish a creditable 3rd place. Special congratulations go to **Capt Moody** who won the event in an incredible time of 21 mins for the nautical mile. Further special mention must go to **Sig Rogers** who only learnt to swim a year ago and finished in an incredible 31 mins. The raft race followed shortly afterwards with CCU following an 'A Team theme'. The team members were Hannibal, (**Capt Moody** complete with grey hair and huge cigar), Howling mad Murdoch (**Sgt Stewart** sporting a leather jacket and cap which took twenty years off him), Face (**Sgt Sankey** looking very sharp in his suit and flip flops) and finally BA Baracus (**Sig Rogers** who went as far as shaving a Mohican into his hair and camming his face). After winning their heat, the CCU team finished a creditable 6th place overall. Special thanks to our ring leader, **SSgt Fisher**, **Cpl Foster** and the rest of the Tp for their support. A great day was had by all and work is already commencing on next year's raft.

The raft race team

AKROTIRI TROOP

OC	**Capt Paul Williams**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Tony D'or**

With the ever decreasing numbers within the unit, work is definitely starting to mount up for all personnel. 81 Sig Sqn (V) are inbound very soon to start conducting many communications projects in various locations in support of CCU. The Tp has been assisting many projects around the station and also in Episkopi, most notably the recent redecoration of the unit bar in which **Sgt Steve Cooper** was called upon to lend a hand and spread his wealth of DIY talent to many lesser mortals. As previously mentioned, Ex VALKYRIES VENGEANCE was planned and co-ordinated by **Sgt Steve Cooper** assisted by all personnel from the Tp. The exercise was a great success and enjoyed by all of the participants. Physical training in the troop has stepped up a gear since the arrival of **Cpl Al Mousley**; his ability to break individuals in a small period of time is becoming legendary! Good luck to all personnel on detachments and courses. By the time this goes to print the Tp will have had a big manning change with the Tp OC, Tp SSgt, Tp FofS all leaving within a month or so of each other.

DHEKELIA TROOP

OC	**Capt Chris Moody**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Kips Fisher**

Dhekelia Tp is pleased to welcome **Cpl Marsh** and **LCpl Watt** to their ranks. Sadly the Tp has also had to say goodbye to **LCpl Sturdy** and our resident cheese ball **Sig Clark** who has moved to Episkopi Tp. In usual fashion, both arrivals and departures were marked with a function in the Bitsa Bar. Upon the request of **LCpl Sturdy**, the Tp donned their finest fancy dress with the prize for the best dressed going to **Sig Rogers** for his interpretation of a human MFO box.

Dhekelia Tp have continued their support to Sussex ACF by again hosting their annual camp, Ex LION CUB 08. With **Cpl Tam Rennie** at the helm, the cadets were treated to a vast array of activities including a visit to the UN at Nicosia, a comprehensive range package laid on by **Cpls Brewington** and **Bate** and a morning with the Boat Section from 62 Cyp Sup Sqn RE. No Annual Camp would be complete though without the obligatory Battlecamp. Based at the range hut in PYLA, the cadets were put through their paces as they negotiated a variety of testing serials and the wrath of **Cpl Rennie**. A special mention must be given to **SSgt 'Kips' Fisher** for his near perfect interpretation of a dazed and handicapped goat herder. Our support to the Dhekelia Station continues and with **SSgt FofS Floyd** currently employed as PEC WOs and Sgts Mess and **Cpl Fossi Foster** heavily involved in the Board of Officers we are as busy as ever. The Tp have also been tasked with once again organising the Dhekelia Dash, arguably the biggest and best event on Island. As testament to the hard work of the Tp, **Cpls Caddy** and **Brewington** have been selected for promotion to Sgt and are to be posted to JCUFI and the RSS FofS Course respectively.

EPISKOPI TROOP

OC	**Lt Dusty Miller**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt Ian Farrow**

Episkopi Tp has recently made use of the unusually quiet period of workflow and focused its attention on completing the refurbishment of the 'Jimmy Ross Families Club' which has been in planning since the Tp took over the running of the club in March. **SSgt Ian Farrow** arranged for the club to close for 3 weeks, gathered his troops and worked in and out of work hours in order to complete his masterpiece prior to the re-opening on 31 May with a typical Cyprus theme of a Beach Party. The doors opened at 1100hrs and the fun and games then carried on through the night. There was a bungee run, a bouncy castle and 'Gladiator' style events to take part in, followed by live entertainment and disco. One of the highlights of the night must have been witnessing **Cpl Bob Wells** canoodling in the corner with an un-named female. A massive achievement on his part! The party was a great success and a good time was had by all.

The monthly Tp social functions are still going strong. The most recent event being 'shark fishing' which was organised by **LCpl 'Pops' Larkins.** On this particular day though, the sharks must have been informed somehow of Epi Tp's inbound head-hunting mission and may have informed the rest of the marine life also. **Cpl Ritchie Silcock** decided he wasn't accepting heading back to land fishless and produced his own bait (from within), followed by **SSgt Ian Farrow** who was also sea sick. This must have willed back the creatures of the sea as there was an obvious change in our luck.

The most impressive fish of the day was ferociously heaved onboard by **Sgt Mark Vinten.** The spectacular beast measured 3.5 inches and in that very moment its dreams of growing up to be a tiddler were cut short. A 24hr Swimathon took place on 3 June at Episkopi camp which saw teams from all over the island compete for charity. **Cpl Bob Wells**, **LCpl Ritchie Barlow**, **Sigs 'Billy' Elliot** and '**Daisy**' **Dougherty** trained in the build up to the event where each took turn to complete as many lengths as they could over half an hour periods. However this didn't take away the full body pain that was endured for the following days. Our team came in 3rd place overall with over 2350 lengths completed between the 4 team members and €250 raised for SSAFA. Well done guys, I'm sure you will all be able to walk without the waddle soon enough. **Sgt Andrea McNeil** deserves a mention on passing her FofS selection in May so well done to her. Lastly we have a few guys to wish a fond farewell to, **FofS John Ashman** who is posted now to Wilton, enjoy. **Sigs Paul Cross, Dylan Randall** and **Jamie Kerr** who is starting his re-trade to EW Sys Op at Blandford. All the best guys.

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (CYPRUS)

CO	**Lt Col McIntosh**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Fleming**

CYPRUS CYCLE CHALLENGE
- byTracey Phillips, Cyprus Lion Reporter

The Joint Service Signals Unit based in Ayios Nikolaos held their 12th Cyprus Cycle Challenge in aid of the Dreams Come True charity in May, with 31 members of the forces community coming together to ride a gruelling 530km around the sunshine island.

The 4 day event was organised by **Capt Paul Whillis** of 1 Sqn. Twelve members of the Unit led by **Sgt Ally Way** supported the event superbly as medics, **SAC Mary Griffiths**, drivers and organisers **Sgt Paul Bone**, **Cpl John Wilson**, **Cpl Mike Britton**, **Cpl Al Butterfill**, **SAC Daz Pollard**, **SAC Jon Kelly**, photographer **Tsarina Wilson**, a motorcycle outrider **WO1 Si Joyce** RN and a physiotherapist **Cpl Becky Lincoln**, ensured all the riders enjoyed a stress-free event and enabled the riders of all abilities to cope with the physical demands of the challenge.

Day 1 saw the riders enjoy a 161km ride which started with a descent from the island's highest point, Mount Troodos, followed by a comfortable flat ride to Ayios Nikolaos. The 7km sprint finish was closely fought out between 5 riders with **Capt Ian Phillips** APTC crossing the finish line just moments ahead of **Capt Paul Whillis**.

Day 2 saw the riders pick up from Ayios Nikolaos to complete 127km to Akrotiri. This time the sprint finish was reversed with **Capt Whillis** taking the top spot ahead of **Capt Phillips** with **WO2 Lisa Dunne** finishing 1st[t] lady for the second day running.

On Day 3, the Challenge moved up a gear as the riders started to take on the demands of the hills including Curium, Happy Valley, Pissouri, the formidable 600m assent from Coral Bay towards Drouseia and then down to the finish at Polis. **Paul Whillis** put in a powerful display at the individual leg taking the lead immediately and dominating the steep and unrelenting climb. In second place was **Ian Phillips** followed by **Lt Adam Gibbs** from the Royal Navy in third. **WO2 Lisa Dunne** again was 1st lady home despite suffering from a heavy cold.

The final day's 106 km ride was in a league of its own as the riders had to summon the energy to take on the 1,952m climb to the finish at Troodos. The day started with a flat 10km coast route leaving the cyclists to contemplate the enormity of the task ahead. As the riders turned onto the climb, **Paul Whillis** pushed the pace early leaving the remaining riders strung out over several kms. After a lunch stop, the race was on as the riders started to increase the pace with their eyes firmly fixed on the finish. After a fall and a snapped chain, difficulties disastrously delayed **Paul Whillis** and **Ian Phillips** dramatically took the lead followed by **WO2 Al Jeffs**, **Cpl Ricky Lafford** and **Lt Adam Gibbs**. **Paul** dug deep and battled back finally catching **Ian** on the final and brutal climb from Kykkos to Mount Olympus. With 5km to go, the 2 rivals were side by side, both close to exhaustion from the punishing pace set throughout the day and the increased altitude. **Ian Phillips** had one final effort left in him and pulled away once again, finishing just yards ahead of **Capt Whillis** to take the top spot.

The exhausted and emotional riders were welcomed into the finish at Troodos by family and friends with the pain of their achievements clearly visible. For the majority, this was the hardest physical challenge they had ever faced and when asked how they felt at the finish, the overwhelming response was "emotional". **WO2 Oz Rowley** remarked, "I have done some pretty challenging physical events in my career, but to sit in the saddle during the never ending climb up this mountain was up there with the hardest of them. I commend all the riders today for completing it."

In all, over €4000 was raised for Dreams Come True, which JSSU has adopted as the Unit charity for 2008. Plans are already in place for the event to continue next year with some cyclists promising to come back and participate again.

Capt Whillis climbing

AY NIK STAGS RUGBY TOUR OF RHODES
- by SSgt Fitzmaurice

This year the Stags took off for Rhodes to play Rodos Rugby Club. This was the first time that any team had toured Rhodes – Greek rugby is still in its infancy, but we thought it had to be worth a try (and yes, that pun was thoroughly and disgracefully intentional). We set off early Thursday morning on what was a long day travelling via Athens (look at a map), arriving that evening. Over the next couple of days we saw the sights of Rhodes Town as well as enjoying some light training sessions in preparation for what was to be a hard game against a team of well-prepared Greek nationals, Greek Australians and the odd ex-pat. Rodos have consistently finished in second place in the Greek National League over the past few years.

Then the game was upon us, beginning in the height of the afternoon sun. The whistle was blown and all the Stags stood still with antlers aloft (Tour rule and you had to be there to appreciate it). The opposing team were unsettled, and panicked, knocking the ball on instead of scoring a try. The game thereafter was well fought but the Stags were beaten in the extreme heat of the afternoon sun. All the Stags played hard rugby but were beaten by a well-drilled side. In particular, by Rodos' No. 8, **Pantelis**, who was a big man with some serious gas. After some serious socialising (rude not to), we recovered and readied ourselves for a long journey home, with some members more broken than others – literally!

The Stags would like to give big thanks to our hosts, Rodos Rugby Club, and in particular **Anestis, Angelo** and **Chris** for the excellent hospitality that was afforded to us throughout the visit. Big thanks also to those who organised the bash: **Steve Haswell**, **Butty Roberts** and **Jase Hunter** as well as some of the initial work done by **Tony Bellis**. Finally, the biggest thanks must go to our constant companion throughout the tour, **Jim Bowen**.

1 SQUADRON - *by LCpl Weston*

It has been an interesting month in 1 Sqn. First, we'd like to congratulate **Cpl 'Jonno' Fielding** on his promotion to Sgt. We're sure that he'll excel in his new post as an instructor at Blandford. Blandford evidently thought so too, for he was en route to Dorset in an unseasonably short space of time after receiving his posting order. Hopefully he'll start sending some more operators our way. Secondly, farewell to **LCpl Gavin Scriven**, who has decided with some help from the missus that Civvy Street is the way forward. He says he's leaving the Army behind; we say he'll be in the TA before the turn of the decade.

Filling this vacuum of talent left by these 2 goliaths of the operator world is **Cpl Craig Simpson**. He has already firmly established himself into the JSSU way of life by signing on to the Unit football team and helping with the running of the junior 'KEAN' football sessions on camp. Congratulations also to **Cpl Stu Cogdell** and **Cpl Kai Phillips**, who were also selected for promotion.

ALL – ISLAND RAFT RACE

Moving on, TRF Sect recently built a raft for the annual All – Island Raft Race at Dhekelia. The vessel took the form of a castle, was three times the size of any other raft in the race and required 7 burly chaps to lift it. **PO Nicki Dragsnes** RN acted the part of King Arthur, bombarding the other crews with water bombs and being pelted by eggs and flour in return. In a morning that was not the Senior Service's finest hour, the predominantly RN crew managed to lose the fo'c'sle within 100m of the shore and the whole unwieldy craft was rapidly lost to the depths. Happily, none of the crew was taken prisoner by the Iranians. **PO Dragsnes** rectified his abject failure by organising a Services' Benevolent Fund Curry Lunch the following day, which was well attended and raised about £100, so he escapes a keel hauling this month.

EXERCISE PURPLE MOUFFLON

Ex PURPLE MOUFFLON was a 2 day leadership exercise carried out at Troodos Camp. It was designed to test SNCOs in leadership skills, and involved command tasks, communication tasks, presentations and appreciations. Seven seniors puzzled over the various exercises, producing everything from a brief on the entire history of the Iraq conflict (**Sgt Clark**) to a practical demonstration of the best way to protect an egg dropping onto concrete from 8 ft (Syndicate 2, led by **Sgt Bellis**). The CO joined us for a convivial supper in the alpine resort of Platres and the exercise, organised by **Flt Sgt Burns** and **PO Gilmour** was deemed good training value in the spectacular surroundings of the Troodos Mountains.

2 SQUADRON - *by Sgt Petch*

A very busy period again for 2 Sqn, with a warm welcome to our new arrivals. A big hello goes to **Sgt Pete Mulcahy** who is taking over from **Sgt 'JP' Thomas,** so he has small shoes to fill there. **LCpl Danny Blandford** replaces **SAC Dave Stepney**, so good luck with that and last but not least a big welcome to **SAC Alex Lynch** and **SAC Bri Savage**. The Sqn says farewell to **Sgt Fraser McCallum** who leaves the Army for Civvie Street; we wish him all the best. **Sgt 'JP' Thomas** also leaves us for the warmer climes of sunny old England.

SQUADRON RANGE DAY

The 2 Sqn Range Day took place over 21/22 May. The event was well organised by **Cpl Gault**. The activities started with the pistol APWT which was the first time many had fired a pistol. **Sgt Petch**, **Cpl Figge**, **Cpl Batty** and **LCpl Hardy** all achieved enough points to gain the title of Marksman. The second APWT was with the SA80. All personnel put in a good show and some gained Marksman's scores with some impressive shooting. The Sqn would like to say thanks to **Cpl Harrison** from the Training Wing who came down to help run the day. The range day was enjoyed by all and was a great success.

SQUADRON KARTING DAY

On a warm Friday afternoon, TMS personnel (along with the Engineers) participated in Ex ROUND ROBIN, a function designed to encourage competitiveness and teamwork within the Sqn. The first event was a 5 man Go-Karting event held on the Ay Nik track. This was then followed by a BBQ and a quiz in the Riggers' Compound. Team 'Tech Gods' comprising **Capt 'Robbo' Robinson**, **WO1(FofS) 'Arry' Arundel**, **SSgt 'Fitzy' Fitzmaurice**, **Sgt Reece Marsden** and **SAC 'Hornedog' Horne** were the victorious team winning all four races and scoring maximum points. **WO2(SSM) Rowley** was clearly worried by the conditions or the sheer speed of the karts, as he managed to spin off the track and crash into other karts on several occasions. A great day was had by all, and we would also like to thank **LCpl 'Tezza' Miller** for the exceptional food at the BBQ. **Cpl 'Gaz' Battey**, **Cpl Britton** and **SAC 'Daz' Huckstepp** also have our thanks for marshalling the races and letting us use the facilities. Must also mention that while Team Tech Gods also won the quiz, they also stuck some winnings behind the bar. Maybe Techs aren't so bad after all.

MANAGEMENT DAY

2 Sqn held a Management Day for all SNCOs and above at Ay Nik on 21 May. This consisted of presentations, discussion groups, endurance go-karting and a meze meal. Many thank to **SSgt 'Fitzy' Fitzmaurice**, **Sgt Dale Thompson** and **Sgt Jase Clayton** for the presentations. The endurance go-karting event in the afternoon showed some very different approaches to winning the event, with some apparently inspired by the Wacky Races. **Flt Lt Rod Babington** spent the afternoon blocking other cars while **WO2(SSM) Oz Rowley** drove the course from memory, always looking over his shoulder and trying to smash into any car that dared to overtake. The eventual winners, **Capt Steve Robinson's** 'fast, yet dangerous' team, triumphed after **Flt Sgt Gary Savins** stopped trying to mirror, signal, manoeuvre and instead found the accelerator. Sgt **Reece Marsden** and **SSgt 'Fitzy' Fitzmaurice** picked up 3 lap penalties after some 'smashie smashie' overtaking, with **Flt Lt Crebbin** and **Sgt Cole** helping the team home. The evening meze refuelled and rehydrated (in some cases) the Management Team after a long day.

JFC/NCSA SECTOR NAPLES

ROYAL SIGNALS LIFE IN JOINT FORCE COMMAND AND NCSA SECTOR NAPLES - *by Sgt Tony Wressell*

NATO CIS Services Agency (NCSA) Naples sector provides communication support for both Joint Force Command (JFC) Naples and other locations/organisations in Italy and southern Europe. This includes providing CIS assets and links for vital operations and exercises within the Mediterranean/Balkans theatres. The JFC site at Bagnoli is also the home to other formations such as Strike Forces NATO (SFN) and 2nd NATO Signal Battalion.The majority of the Royal Signals personnel are employed by NCSA, which is separate from the JFC HQ and the EUCE. **Col 'Stu' Macrostie** heads the EU cell in the "Dungeon", while **Maj 'Kenny' Kendrick** works in the Management Branch of J6 Division in a penthouse office! Who said rank has its privileges?

Maj Kendrick works directly for a Turkish Col and the Division Head is an American Col. **Maj Kendrick** is responsible for Strategic and Command Management Plans, Military Cooperation and accession and integration of new member nations to name but a few of his NATO duties. NCSA Sector Naples is split into Command Squadron (CMS) Customer Services Squadron (CSS), Networks Squadron (NWS) and Nisida CIS Squadron (NCS) supporting the Component Command Maritime (CCMAR). **WO1(YofS) 'Matt' Kutzner** is the section head of the Communication Control Centre (CCC) in NWS. **Sgt 'Gez' Smith**, also in NWS, is a shift worker in one of the tunnels on site.

In CSS, **SSgt 'Rob' Sirignano**, **Sgt 'Richie' Lambert** and **Cpl 'Jamie' Edgell** work within the AIS Core section as system administrators, sometimes supporting exercises first hand. Teams are formed and deployed to support these exercises, generally on board the USS Mount Whitney, with **Sgt Lambert** getting his sea legs by sailing from Portsmouth back to Italy and **SSgt Sirignano** sampling the delights of Stavanger, Norway. CMS, Operations, Plans and Service Management (OPSM) has 3 Royal Signals personnel. **SSgt 'Deano' Leach's** primary role is in AIS projects, formulating Sector task orders, but is also the Deployable Joint Task Force (DJTF) Sgt Maj. **Sgt 'Lloyd' Edwards** is part of the co-ordination team of plans and requirements. My role is as CIS projects and service delivery, planning communications links for operations and exercises. Located North of Naples is the NATO transmitter site - Castel Volturno, where **Sgt 'Ginge' Birkbeck** is a shift technician. Within the Naples area there are a number of other NATO assets. The Island of Nisida (where Pompey and Brutus conspired against Julius Caesar) is the location of Component Command Maritime; it is across a small harbour from JFC Naples and is linked by a causeway to the mainland. **SSgt 'Duncan' Beacher** is a member of NCS providing CIS support in many forms. Congratulations to **Kenny** and **Maureen Kendrick** on becoming grandparents, **Gez** and **Ann Smith** who are expecting their first child in late summer and **Gez** for his selection as an RAF Officer. Farewell to **SSgt 'Rob' Sirignano**, who leaves us for 7 Sig Regt in Jul and a farewell to **WO1(YofS) 'Matt' Kutzner**, **SSgt "Deano' Leach** (NCSA Sector Mons) and **SSgt 'Duncan' Beacher** (31 Sig Regt) who leave in the summer months. A welcome to **Cpl 'Martin' Lancaster**, who is currently working in the CMS COMPSEC department and **SSgt 'Chris' Jacobs** who is incoming in summer.

BRICKWOODS FIELD GUN - *by Sgt Lloyd Edwards*

As a result of working in a tri-service unit, we were given the opportunity to assist our Royal Navy colleagues in entering a team in this year's Royal Navy Field Gun Competition. The Royal Navy Brickwoods Field Gun competition is to commemorate the 119 day siege of Ladysmith during the Boer War in which the Royal Navy moved 4 x 12 pound guns and 2 x 4.7 inch guns from their ships across the land, over difficult and rough terrain on improvised carriages and mountings, in order to aid the defenders and win the battle. Following the war, Queen Victoria announced that the competitions should run yearly, which it has since 1907. The 18-man crew and 4 spare numbers (or 'substitutes) that travelled to HMS Collingwood to represent JFC Naples and to take part in this prestigious competition contained 2 Royal Signals soldiers, **Sgt Lloyd Edwards** (Trail number and extractor) and **Cpl Jamie Edgell** (Drag Ropes). For 6 long weeks prior to this, the Naples field gun crew tirelessly practiced twice a day in their own time, learning and perfecting their drills in the blistering and relentless Mediterranean heat on a sweat and blood soaked track! The antique 12 pound gun and limber we used to practise and compete with had to be transported out to Italy and then back again ready for the competition. Combined

Sgt Edwards and Cpl Edgell with the 12 pound gun used in the Royal Navy Field Gun Competition

the gun and limber weighed approximately 1.5 tons.
The team spent the week at HMS Collingwood practicing and adjusting to the speed and incline of the new track. Also they managed to fit in a few beers and a "Gay Superhero" fancy dress night (no picture provided). The competition consisted of 7 timed runs on the Friday and Saturday morning to put the teams into groups for the final runs on Saturday afternoon, in front of a huge public audience. Many of the Naples crew were competing for the first time, against crews with much more experience. This is pretty dangerous stuff and there have been plenty of injuries. All minor this year as all the crew still have all fingers accounted for! Other teams suffered smashed ankles (from getting in the way of the gun), one guy lost a finger and our only major injury in training, was one of the girls from the BFPO office had an argument with the limber and got "unceremoniously" knocked out of the way!

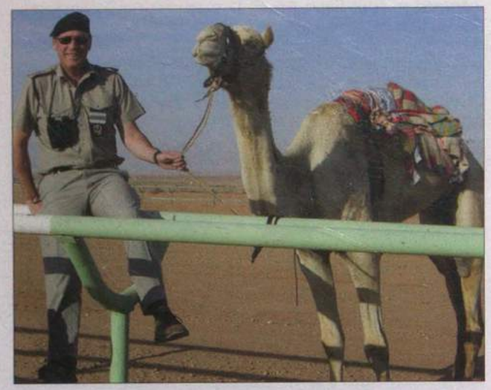
The team had a best time of 1 min 34 secs and earned a place in the plate 3 final which despite our best efforts, we missed out. This didn't dampen spirits too much and we were easily the crowd's favourite, after throwing Cornetto ice creams to the children in true Italian style. After that, a few refreshing drinks were had by all. It is worth noting though that JFC Naples were not the only unit to have Royal Signals soldiers competing in the competition as there was also a small number from Gibraltar making up their 18 man crew, so well done to them too.

THE SANGCOM TEAM RIYADH

JANADRIYAH CULTURAL FESTIVAL 2008

The Janidriyah Cultural Festival is an annual event which takes place on a dedicated site 45kms NE of Riyadh every year. This year's festival opened on 5 March and ran for 2 weeks. The opening day was attended by King Abdullah and other heads of state and VIPs and comprised a Camel Race, banquet and then an official opening ceremony. Due to Saudi Arabia's limitations on male and female mixing, the next 8 days were Men only days with the last 3 days of the Festival being designated as Lady only days. The Festival itself is designed to highlight Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage and display the nation's dances, crafts, poetry and craftsmen. There are approximately 150,000 visitors annually and it is the showcase for the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) to publicly demonstrate their effectiveness and abilities. Subsequently, during the opening day there was a significant presence of Senior Officers on site to ensure all ran smoothly. SANGCOM's LO Central Region, **Maj Pete Stoddart**, was in attendance for the duration of the Festival and ensured that GPT, the Prime Contractor, provided all of the necessary support to the SANG. This year there were no problems, due to the excellent planning and prior work done by GPT. During the Festival, LO Central Region was able to arrange visits for both SANGCOM and GPT families to attend the Camel Races which was a

fascinating experience for all. The planning for next year's festival will commence after Ramadan with the opening ceremony planned for mid February 2009.



Maj Dave Ball and friend

SANGCOM CHARITY HALF MARATHON

Friday 1 February at 0800hrs and Salwa Village Compound, 45kms NE of Riyadh awakes to the unusual sound of a starter's gun. This was the occasion of the first (and hopefully annual) SANGCOM Half Marathon in aid of the Saudi Disabled Children's Association. The race was the brain child of **Maj Dave Ball** whose off the wall comment "let's do a half marathon" at one of the team's BBQs sparked the idea. There followed a rather hectic 6 weeks; sponsorship, admin, prizes, entry forms etc and of course designing and measuring the course itself.

A cold (7°C and a bracing wind) Race day dawned and under Race Director, **Maj Pete Stoddart** the assembled army of SANGCOM, TaylorPlan and Salwa staff marked the route, set out the water points, prepared the reception area, finish point and the other thousand and one things that are required to put on a successful race. There was also the added issue of security. This was one of the biggest concerns, getting 150 people through the security check points, issued with passes and bussed to the reception area within 45 mins. It is to the credit of Salwa staff in particular that we achieved this. Twenty minutes before start time **Maj Stu Gillespie** briefed the 150 competitors and then it was off to the start point. The Senior BAE Systems Representative, **Mr Ian Crawford**, acted as the starter and the race commenced. The route roughly followed the perimeter of the compound with each lap, of 6, being approx 3.4kms and an additional few hundred meters at the start to make the total distance up to 21.1kms. The competitors were of all ages, shapes and sizes with some competing in the one lap fun run and other more serious types doing the full half marathon.

First male and female to complete the one lap fun run were; **Mr Jonathon Cowburn** (aged 10) and **Miss Megan Gillespie** (aged 11), both completing the 3750m first lap in 17 mins 12/13 seconds. The winner of the men's half marathon was **Jonsson Gustaf** in 1 hr 23 mins. The women's winner was **Mrs Lorna Shaw** in an excellent time of 1 hrs 35 mins and in second and third place were two Team Members wives **Diane Burke** and **Jo Stoddart**. A fantastic effort to all those SANGCOM personnel who took place in the event, well done! A special mention must be made of **Mrs Shirley Ball** and **Mrs Alison Heath** who started off hoping to complete 3 laps walking and jogging, but eventually completed the whole circuit. **WO2(YofS) Dan Heath** acted as official photographer and also managed to record some video which was streamed overnight to BFBS in UK, who in another first for SANGCOM, showed it on BFBS reports…fame at last. The not insubstantial amount of SAR 40,000 (approx GBP 5,250) was raised during the day; an excellent result.

Mrs Alison Heath and Mrs Shirley Ball get to the end still smiling

OPERATION DESERT CINEMA NIGHT 2008

On 13 March the SANGCOM desert warriors deployed on their final camping expedition of the season: The Cinema Night! The plan was to travel out to the desert in the morning and play some cricket in the afternoon. The evening would then be spent watching a film on the 'big screen' before returning to Riyadh the next day after some sand dune bashing. Including the 'SANGCOM kids', 29 people took part in what turned out to be an eventful and enjoyable trip. Arriving at the cricket wicket at approximately 1300hrs the children immediately started a game of cricket whilst the adults began erecting tents and arranging lunch. One of the older 'SANGCOM kids' **Maj Dave Ball** was responsible for power and looked to be in his element digging in the portable generator and laying the power cable over a small mountain. Quite how he managed to bury the 3m long token earth spike into the rock hard ground is still a mystery but, as they say, a Magician never reveals his secrets. Whilst all of this was going on, another two of the 'SANGCOM Kids', namely the Project Director **Col Jo Fletcher** and **WO1(FofS) Andy Draper**, were working on a secret project. Climbing rocks and playing with ropes, nobody was quite sure what they were up to. One by the one the children came over offering help and wanting to know what was being constructed. Even when they were told the task was called 'Project Death Slide' they were none the wiser. A sign of the times I suppose - had it been called Project 'Super Mario' or Playstation 3, it would have been obvious!

Anyway, after an unsuccessful test run resulting in the 'Crash Test FofS' pulling half of the mountain down, the project was scrapped. Project 'Deathslide 2' was immediately launched. Taking account of previous lessons learnt and with extra help from **Maj Pete Stoddart** and **WO2(YofS) Dan Heath**, the Project was completed, tested and commissioned, under time and under budget! The SANGCOM Civil Service Acquisition Team could not believe their eyes, this was a first! Thankfully the mountain withstood the stress of many children (some bigger than others) sliding down Deathslide 2, and much fun was had by all. As the sun began to disappear behind the dunes it was time to fire up the generator and start the BBQ. The Chief Electrician of the Corps would have been proud of Magician Ball who managed to start the generator on only his 15th pull of the starter cable. **Lt Col Mike Burke** kindly supplied the film for the evening, 'The Princess Bride'. A very funny film in which one of the main characters, Vizzini played by **Wallace Shawn**, bears an uncanny physical resemblance to one of the Team's senior staff (name withheld to protect the Project Director's OJAR!) back in the DES IPT …. inconceivable!

After devouring stacks of sweets and popcorn, some of which the children ate, the film concluded around 1100hrs. A smart decision was then taken to pack up all of the equipment before bedtime. Literally the second the equipment was packed away, and without warning, a sandstorm ripped through the campsite and continued through until the next morning. There was a fair bit of carnage with 4 tents blown away and much fun as we tried to re-erect them amidst stinging sand and high winds. The scene

the following morning resembled something from Mad Max with the sandy tinge in the air. After breakfast we tackled some very challenging sand dunes and almost every team member managed to get their vehicle bogged in at some stage; a first for the desert warriors caused by the extreme conditions the previous night. All in all this was another extremely enjoyable desert trip and if you have never tried it but would like to, then nominate yourself for Loan Service Duties with the SANGCOM Project Team. The next trip the Team have planned will be during our Eid stand down in October following Ramadan, when we plan to drive to the Al Wahbah Crater and onto Jeddah.

SANGCOM – RIYADH SPORTING OPPORTUNITIES

SANGCOM GOLF SOCIETY

Although temperatures often rise to above 50 degrees in the summer months, there are a number of green (grassed) golf courses within Riyadh. The SANGCOM Golf Society is a thriving organisation with over 35 members. The majority of members are made up from SANGCOM Military and Civil Servants, but also includes expatriates from industry, BAE Systems employees, Embassy Staff including Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia **William Patey** – we even allow the Royal Air Force to join, if only to take their well earned loan service pay off them with the odd wager.

THE SANGCOM RYDER CUP CHALLENGE

One of the last events of the season saw the resurrection of the Annual Ryder Cup Challenge. Our US counterparts, known as the US DOD Office of Project Management for the Saudi Arabian National Guard also have a large golfing contingent, with welfare cards and cheap rounds of golf - as you would expect! After a difficult team selection process our Project Director **Col Jo Fletcher** and Golf Society Captain, **Lt Col Ian Hunter** led a 14 man team out to face America's finest. Unfortunately for the USA

The Combined Ryder Cup Teams

Team, **President Bush** was visiting town which took away some of their team members. The competition was played over 27 holes on the superb Dirab Golf Club course, in temperatures above 40 degrees. The event resulted in a comprehensive UK and Irish Team Victory. The SANGCOM Team's Golfing Hall of fame included: **Col Jo Fletcher**, **Lt Col Ian Hunter**, **Maj Stu Gillespie**, **Maj Dave Ball**, **Maj Pete Stoddart**, **WO1(FofS) Andy Draper**, **Mr Guy Murray**, **Mr Peter Bush** and **Mr Lee Toman**. Our sincere thanks go to the kind sponsors of this event - The Team's Prime Contractor - GPT Paradigm.

THE RIYADH TRIATHLON CLUB

Following on from a winter season with the Riyadh Road Runners and the Riyadh Wheelers Cycling Club, April saw the start of the Riyadh Triathlon Season. The season runs from April to October and includes numerous events and distances such as biathlon (swim/run), duathlon (run/cycle/run) and full triathlon (swim/bike/run). The Club includes members from all walks of life from age 5 to 65. Abilities vary from the highly tuned athlete to the 'doggy-paddle' swim and 'bike with a basket' cycling novice. Events generally take place within western housing compounds or private farm areas, as over a third of the Club's members are female which precludes using public areas. With the SANGCOM team villas all being within 20 yards of a swimming pool and an excellent gymnasium facility on our housing compound, many of the team members have taken part in the Tri Club events this season. Participants in various events have included, **Stu** and **Emma Gillespie**, **Mike Burke** (although almost got lost in the pool), **Dave** and **Shirley Ball**, **Dan** and **Alison Heath**, **Sylvia Purves** and a large number of the kids within the team.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Team is currently struggling with the turbulence of nearly 50% of the military staff changing over this summer. We say goodbye to some real stalwarts **Maj Dave Ball** and his wife **Shirley**, **Maj Stu Gillespie** and his wife **Emma**, **Maj Mick Purves** and his wife **Sylvia**, **Maj Scott Steven** and his wife **Donna** and finally, **WO1 Andy Draper** and his wife **Caroline**. The dining out of all 5 couples took place on 12 June in the British Embassy Riyadh. Apart from a slight blight on the transport front (no driver for the coach) the night went off well. Seventy three attendees, including GPT, BAE and civilian expat guests, sat down for the meal. Catering by the Sheraton Hotel ensured that everyone was well fed and watered and some excellent piano playing by one of the Music Staff of the British International School created a most convivial environment. The Corps Band Master provided sheet music to Begone Dull Care and subsequently the top table left the dinner to the sound of the Corps March. All those leaving have been an integral part of the SANGCOM Team and will be missed by all. We now look forward to welcoming their replacements; **Paul** and **Vikki Meehan**, **Mark** and **Caroline Tivey**, **Jason** and **Erica Nichols**, **David** and **Clare Petty** and **Paul** and **Michelle Wright**.

SPORT

ARMY SAILING LASER 5000 AT THE RYA SPONSORED TOP MARK WEEKEND

Since the 49er was selected in 1996 as the Olympic Open Twin Wire dinghy, the Laser 5000 has shown a steady decrease in numbers. By last year, only 5 boats were entered into the Nationals at Weston SC. The big sheeting loads and heavy hulls meant that many have gone to other classes to find their trapezeing 'rush'. Since that time the Laser 5000 Association Chairman, **Thomas Sauval**, and his committee have made a huge effort to promote the class to the UK sailing community.

Buying a Laser 5000 is very inexpensive at the moment – a top of the range boat can be bought for less than £2000 – and the class is very welcoming. So much so, that there is a huge amount of interest being shown throughout the UK. Of course, just jumping into a boat like the 5000 can be very surprising – not least ecause when the $30m^2$ kite is hoisted many swimming lessons have been the result. In order to try and bring on many of the new blood in the Association, the Association Training focus, **Capt Taff**

Owens, approached the RYA Top Mark Coordinator, **Mike Hart**, to arrange for a Racing Coach to deliver a Top Mark Weekend. So over the weekend of 12/13 April, 9 crews – yes 9 crews – came together at Grafham Water to receive trg from **Peter Barton**, the current RS 800 National and Series Champion, ex Laser 5000 and 18ft skiff sailor. We even had a crew from the Republic of Ireland – well done **Fin** and **Vinny**. Saturday 12 April dawned with a steady Force 4 gusting to mid Force 5 blowing across the reservoir – oh boy! **Peter** spent most of the morning discussing rig set up and perhaps the most important part of the weekend to many who were there, the dry land drills. This proved valuable to many who had picked up bad habits from previous boats or through not being taught in the first place.

Peter Barton discussing dry land drills

After everybody had been through tacking and gybing routines and had a spot of lunch, it was time to take on the Force 4 - 5! The idea was to concentrate on boat handling skills, tacking, gybing, keeping the boats flat etc. It has to be said that the rescue crews were quite busy. Peter laid an upwind downwind course – 5 tacks upwind, 3 gybes downwind. Although the breeze was cold, everybody worked hard with much sweating (and some swearing)!

After about 2½ hrs of this routine, with boats and crews being worked hard, some mishaps improved swimming and taught many the importance of ensuring that the boat is set up correctly before launching. Luckily most of the crews were back on shore before the hail arrived and took away all the wind – hard luck **Thomas** and **Dave**! **Peter** finished off the instruction for the Saturday with some video de-briefs and photos. As usual, the Association cannot go anywhere without having some sort of social and off we all went to the pub for some much earned grub and beer! Sunday arrived – what a different scene – the only rough patches were caused by hangovers! A steady Force 2 – 3 greeted the fleet and we were all keen to get out onto the water before the wind went all together. **Peter** gave us our briefing and stressed the importance of sorting the trim in the boat for light air sailing – well forward and flat! Once again, we practised some boat handling, upwind and down, followed by lots of starting

May the Force be with you!

practice. Even though it was only trg, it was nice to have so many boats all lining up for the start – great!

Now for some racing – short, sharp 2 lap upwind and downwind courses in a breeze that was getting lighter by the minute! On all 3 races, **Mark** and **Nicky Rushton** managed to show the rest of the fleet a clean pair of heels, while everybody else mixed it up at the first upwind mark. Gybing the kite in these conditions meant a different technique to the high wind stuff of the day before and crews were working hard. The final drama of the morning was a freak gust of wind which managed to flatten a lot of the fleet at the same time and **Andy** managed to put his shoulder out! Well that was enough for the morning – time for lunch!

Unfortunately by the time lunch was over, so was the wind and the water looked like a mirror. Still, all was not lost and once again, the Army Sailing Laser 5000 was turned into a dry land trainer and drills were discussed for roll tacking/gybing and spinnaker hoists. The decision was then made to wrap things up and after putting all the boats to bed or getting them ready for the road, **Peter** finished up with a debrief on the action of the day and the whole weekend.

All those who attended learnt valuable lessons; even those who have been sailing the 5000 for a few years. The boat is big, powerful and heavy but what a thrill to sail. Once this boat has been conquered, everybody who has sailed one will have the confidence to sail any of the other classes that are out there. The class association now seems to be going from strength to strength, with a strong fleet at Grafham, the beginning of a fleet burgeoning in Scotland and quite a few boats on the South Coast. These boats are great once mastered and really cheap right now. The next event for the fleet is the Nationals at Weston SC on Southampton Water over the 21/22 June where we hope to get double figures of 5000s on the water. Please see the website at - http://www.laser5000.lasersailing.com/ for more information.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS GAMES CLUB – HOW YOUR MONEY IS SPENT?

Yes, if you subscribe to Corps funds via the Payroll Giving scheme, it is some of your money – some £85K each year – that supports the various Royal Signals sports teams. So where does the money go and how do you get any benefit? Valid questions, which I hope, are answered here. The Secretaries of the Corps sports and activities listed below receive an annual grant from the Royal Signals Games Club to run their sports. Those classed as activities or minor sports get a relatively small grant but others, such as Cricket, Football, Rugby, Hockey, Shooting and Snow Sports get much larger grants as they are more expensive to run and normally have larger numbers participating. Most of the money is spent on eqpt, sports strips and prizes as well as entry fees to competitions including Inter-Corps and Army Championships. Some items of eqpt, such as canoes can be very expensive, over £750 each, whilst others such as cricket, rugby, hockey and tennis balls are very much cheaper. For some sports, individuals buy their own eqpt. For example, golfers buy their own clubs and in most team sports, footwear is a personal choice. The 200 plus who attend the Corps Alpine or Nordic Ski camps and the Corps Snow Sport Championships in November/December each year, will appreciate the grant that is given to run these expensive but popular sports. A good number of the skiers go on to represent their units at the LAND and if successful, the Army Championships. Over 200 competitors attend the annual CORPSORC and a significant number participate at athletics events such as the annual Morrison Cup competition held at Blandford. No doubt many readers will have participated in one or more of the activities listed below or may hope to do so in the future.

Athletics
Badminton
Basketball
Canoeing
Coarse Fishing
Cricket
Cross Country
Fencing
Football (both Men's and Ladies' teams)
Hockey (both Men's and Ladies' teams)
Netball
Orienteering
Golf
Rugby League
Rugby Union (both Men's and Ladies teams)
Shooting
Snow Sports (Alpine/Nordic/Snowboarding)
Squash
Swimming and Water Polo
Tennis
Tug of War (both Men's and Ladies teams)
Morrison Cup Athletics Meeting
Free Fall Parachuting

In addition to these sports and activities, an annual grant is made to 1 Sig Bde to assist with Corps sport in Germany. One relatively little known fact is that a Reserve Fund is held by the Chairman of the Games Club, Comd 11 Sig Bde. This Reserve Fund is primarily to support those Royal Signals individual sportsmen and sportswomen (who subscribe to Corps funds by the Payroll Giving Scheme) who are selected for Army, Combined Services or National teams. Grants of up to £175 are given per junior rank and less for SNCOs and officers. These grants do not just cover the popular sports in the list above but some of the more unusual sports such as Biathle, Duathlon and Triathlon. A recent example was a grant made to 4 individuals in the Army Bobsleigh team. Another example was the grant made to **SSgt Hannah** and **Sgt Holmes**, who were in the Army Clay target team. Biathle – what kind of sport is that I hear you ask? It involves running, sea swimming and running. It is not for the faint hearted as you can imagine the sea can be .....cold! So if you are selected to represent an Army, Combined Services or a National team, apply to the Chairman of the Games Club at HQ 11 Sig Bde for a grant. Please note however that the Games Club does not give grants for AT activities nor generally to those mad enough to do marathons on the other side of the world! Moral support – maybe! In addition to the annual grants given to sports and activities, there is a sizeable grant given to sp an overseas tour by one of the major sports each year. Football, Hockey, Cricket and Rugby take turns in going on overseas tours. This year, it is Football's turn to go on a tour and their destination is USA. A report on this tour will appear in *The Wire* in due course. A smaller grant is also available for one of the minor sports to do a tour each year. Exceptions to the normal tours are made from time to time. Apart from boosting team morale, these tours give our teams additional experience that will pay off in future results at the Inter-Corps and Army Competitions. Lastly, I should add that in all cases, a personal contribution, usually one third of the total cost is borne by the individuals selected for these tours. The Sports Secretaries are always on the lookout for new talent, so contact them if you feel you should be considered for the Corps team. Contact details are:

Sport	Secretary	Number	Unit
Athletics	**Capt F Keith**	95261 5204	HQ SHF, RAF Benson
XC	**Capt J Simpson**	95712 7212	224 Sig Sqn, RAF Digby
Badminton	**SSgt Pengally**	94331 3752	243 Sig Sqn, Wilton
Basketball	**Maj N Smikle**	94382 4640	RSIT Corsham
Canoeing	**Capt S Gunson**	94772 2616	HQ 2 Med Bde, Strensall
Cricket	**WO2 (YofS) Thubron**	94714 4034	34 Sig Regt (V), Middlesbrough
Fencing	**Maj R Anderton-Brown**	94651 2734	OC 216 Sig Sqn, Colchester
Football (M)	**Capt R Bell**	94321 2540	2 Sig Regt, York
Football (F)	**Capt L Potter**	94222 4580	12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, Aldershot
Fishing (Coarse)	**Capt C Kidd**	94342 2738	1 (Mech) Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, Tidworth
Golf	**Maj D Deegan**	94371 2893	BGSU, Blandford
Hockey (M)	**Capt J Budding**	94371 5530	OC BOWMAN Trials Team, Blandford
Hockey (F)	**Capt N Berry**	94222 4830	251 Sig Sqn, Aldershot
Netball	**Sgt H Tweed**	94423 8900	35 Sig Regt (V), Coventry
Orienteering	**Maj M Rayner**	94344 5350	SO2 Employment, DM(A), Upavon
Rowing	**Maj C J Wootten**		CIS Plans, HQ DSF, London
Rugby Union	**Lt Col T Hall**	94371 5467	CIS TDU, CSDC, Blandford
Rugby League	**Capt A Burdge**	94423 2380	QM(T) 30 Sig Regt, Nuneaton
Shooting	**Capt C Kell**	94222 3731	SO2 CIS HQ 101 Log Bde, Aldershot
Squash	**Capt S Bason**	94371 5390	CSD Networks, HQ SOinC, Blandford
Skiing	**Lt Col H Jenkins**	94566 5023	CO 32 Sig Regt (V), Glasgow
Swimming	**Maj P J Griffiths**	94371 2389	SO2 Trg Ops, HQ DCCIS
Tennis	**Lt Col G Mason**	94322 5660	CI ACS Br RSA, Larkhill
Tug of War	**SSgt (RQMS) Orr**	94371 2866	BGSU, Blandford
Free Fall Para	**Capt S J Bristow**	94872 3809	SO3 Ops, 1 Sig Bde

COARSE ANGLING COMPETITION

The Corps anglers gathered at Willow Park Fishery near Aldershot over 15/16 May 08 to do battle in this year's Royal Signals Coarse Angling Championship. The chosen venue is the home of this year's Inter-Corps Championships, so the anglers involved were not only competing for individual glory but a place in the Corps Team.

The venue fished well on both days and **Sgt 'Ben' Bentley** (RSIT) fresh from his exploits with the Army Team proved last year's win was no fluke! Winning his section on both days gave him a perfect 2 point score and an impressive aggregate weight of 88lbs 8ozs. It was good to see a number of novice anglers turn out. This looks good for the future. Particular mention to **LCpl 'Rich' Williams** of 251 Sig Sqn, who performed excellently over the 2 days to post a 4 point score and an aggregate weight of 52lbs 4oz, finishing 3rd overall. On Day 2 we were joined by **WO2(SSM) 'Kev' East**, the current Army Team Captain, who showed his class by winning his lake! **Lt Col (Retd) 'Chas' Dale** was on hand to present the trophies and he also managed to win his lake on the first day – who said he was too old! All those who took part caught plenty of fish and enjoyed the competition. Our thanks go to OC 251 Sig Sqn and **SSgt(SQMS) Rob Howe** for accommodating the competitors and sorting out the admin; all of which went very smoothly.

RESULT		
1st	**Sgt Bentley** (RSIT)	– with 2 pts and an aggregate weight of 88lbs 8oz
2nd	**Capt C D Kidd** (1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215))	– with 2 pts and an aggregate weight of 64lbs 15ozs
3rd	**LCpl Williams** (251 Sig Sqn)	– with 4 pts and an aggregate weight of 52lbs 4oz
4th	**Sgt Buckle** (16 Sig Regt	– with 6 pts and an aggregate weight of 58lbs 2oz

Lt Col (Retd) Chas Dale presents Sgt Bentley with the trophies as the 2008 Royal Signals Coarse Angling Champion

LCpl Rich Williams first day catch of 21lbs 12oz on his way to 3rd place overall

ROYAL SIGNALS DINGHY SAILING

DINGHY SAIL TRAINING WEEK AND NOVICE REGATTA 2008
18 – 23 MAY 2008

For the first time, the Royal Signals Dinghy Sail Training Week and Regatta was held at the Thorney Island Watersports Centre (TIWSC) at Baker Barracks near Emsworth. TIWSC is adjacent to Chichester Harbour and provides a large expanse of water offering a diverse range of sailing conditions. Although billed as the Corps Dinghy Sail Training Week and Regatta, only 7 entries were received due to the current operational climate and dispersed nature of the Corps. This only allowed us to conduct some Novice (RYA Level 2, Basic Skills) trg, culminating in 1½ days of racing. Of the entries, 30 Sig Regt provided 4 with other pers coming from 34 Sig Regt (V), 71 Sig Regt (V) and CSDC at Blandford.

The next Olympic Sailing Team with their intrepid Instructor WO2 (YofS) Andy Mount!

Despite the small numbers, the week proved to be extremely enjoyable for those attending with the weather being exactly right – light breezes to start with (Force 2 – 3) in sunshine, building to Force 3 – 4 by the end of the week; ideal for the close racing which was to follow. The week started with basic drills for turning the boat, demonstrated by **WO2 (YofS) Andy Mount** of 30 Sig Regt, a qualified Dinghy Instructor, who also demonstrated how to get a dinghy upright following a capsize – a skill that would come in very handy as the day progressed! In addition to the practical skills of controlling the boat, the basic theory of how a boat sails in different directions, weather, tides and a host of knots were also taught. By the end of the second day, all the students could get the boat to go in just about any direction they wanted with various degrees of control!

Going for a Sail Away with Sig Josh Pearson and LCpl Dave Wingate leading the way!

By the Wednesday, the course was able to get out on the water for a bit of a 'sail away' which involved sailing out into Chichester Harbour and finding a beach called 'East Head' in lovely conditions. Why go abroad when the sun, sand and sea were all available here – great! However, after setting a small race course and saying 'Go' for a bit of a Le Mans start, the wind picked up a little (well quite a bit actually!). Both **Maj Howard Baker** and **Sig Ross Isaacs** decided that now would be a good time to inspect the bottom of their boats – right in the middle of the main boating channel. The decision was made to cancel the racing and head back to the more sheltered waters of Thorney Channel. By the early afternoon, the team were able to manage some of the finer skills of coming alongside and picking up a mooring. Thursday morning arrived with some cloud but mainly sunny with a good Force 3 – 4 wind out in the harbour – ideal conditions to start the racing. The day was going to be full with 6 races programmed, each lasting around 40 mins around a triangular course.

From the outset it became obvious that **Sig Josh Pearson** from 71 Sig Regt (V) and **LCpl Dave Wingate** from 30 Sig Regt would be going at it neck and neck for the Novice Trophy. It was clear that during the week they had both picked up the skills to stay in front, keeping the boats flat on the water and the sails full. Some of the starts were interesting; with **LCpl Wingate** trying the wrong end of the line several times, with varying degrees of success. However to his credit he managed on several occasions to come through to take either 2nd or 1st. **Cpl Prakash Gurung** of 30 Sig Regt and **2Lt Rebecca Vandenberg** of 34 Sig Regt were slugging it out for 3rd with some close battles at the back of the fleet between **Sgt Drew Mechen, Sig Ross Isaacs**, both from 30 Sig Regt and **Maj Baker** of CSDC. The Thursday racing came to an end with only 2 points separating the leaders, which meant the final 3 races on Friday would decide the outcome of the regatta –right up to the wire. Following the BBQ on Thursday evening, Friday turned out to be another great day for sailing, with the first start at 1000hrs. Once again, both **Sig Pearson** and **LCpl Wingate** led the way, with a strong showing from **Sgt Mechen** who had seen the way to go coming through the placings.

However, the seeds were sown and **Sig Pearson** won 2 races and **LCpl Wingate** only 1. Final places were:

1st - **Sig Josh Pearson** – 71 Sig Regt (V).
2nd - **LCpl Dave Wingate** – 30 Sig Regt.
3rd - **Cpl Prakash Gurung** – 30 Sig Regt.

Sig Josh Pearson receiving his 1st prize and RYA Level 2 Sailing Certificate

Well done to all of those who took part and a big thank you to all of the staff of TIWSC who did a splendid job of keeping the kit on the water and assisting all those on the course. TIWSC is in a fantastic location and can accommodate up to 24 students for either dinghy sailing, windsurfing or powerboat courses. Further details can be requested from the Centre on 94295 8315 (Civ 01243 388315) or e-mail tiwsc@hotmail.co.uk . In addition, further information on Army Sailing can be found on the Army Sailing Association Website or the Royal Signals Yacht Club Website at: http://www.sailarmy.co.uk or http://www2.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/sailing/rsyc/dinghy/index.htm

CORPS HOCKEY

by Lt Col D G Proctor, Chairman RSHC and Brian Mower Sec RSHC

The RSHC authors are back again after missing the June Edition. This time the focus of our report is the AHA Inter Corps Outdoor tournament held at Aldershot on the 17/18 April 08. The build up had included matches with the AGC and RE. In the former the Ladies lost 0 - 5, the Seniors drew 3 - 3. In the latter, the Seniors lost 1 - 5 but the Veterans won 3 - 1. Not particularly inspiring results before this major tournament. Considering what has been a mixed season of results and availability, the team's attendance, overall commitment and performances were better than for a number of years. For the Ladies team, lead by **Capt Nic Berry**, the opposition in their league was just too strong. Losing 2 - 5 against the REME, the Ladies winners and 1 - 3 against the AGC meant an early exit. Following the tradition, awards were made by the squad to **2Lt Hannah Barter** 11 Sig Regt for 'Player of the Tournament', **Sgt Tracey Fairbairn** for 'Player Contributing the Most', and **Sig G Foster** 11 Sig Regt for 'Most Improved Player'.

The Veterans team, as the picture suggests, had numbers, youth, talent and speed on their side. The first game against the eventual winners REME started well. A short corner from **Mr Dick Beaney** provided a justifiable lead. Stalwart defence, you have to run a long way around a Veteran to get to the goal, held the opposition back until a bizarre umpiring decision allowed the REME a goal in open play from an illegally taken long corner. The post match umpires apology was accepted but the points had been lost. The second match was against the RLC. A win was needed but 2 - 2 was all that was got. In a 3rd/4th play off with the AGC, a tired, slightly deflated and an injury packed team were swept aside 1 - 8. This match was also the last Veterans and Corps game for **Lt Col Matt Hanson** 35 Sig Regt. **Matt** has played regularly for the Corps throughout his career, recently often carrying injuries but refusing to be removed from the cut and thrust of the forward line where his goal poaching skills were legendary.

The Royal Signals Veterans adopting that traditional perky stance just before the game at the Inter Corps

The Seniors had a good squad with only the odd 'star' missing for operational and unit commitments. The team managed by **Brian Mower** and captained by **WO1(YofS) Brendan Plant** started well in their first game against the RE who had already beaten the RA, that warm up providing the necessary clearing of the cobwebs. Consequently they were sharper both on and off the ball and won 1 - 4. This now proved the case for the Corps in

game 2 against the AGC where a solid, more confident performance got a 5 - 2 win with 3 goals including a penalty flick from **Capt John Hooker** and one apiece from **Cpl Del Farr** and **Sig James Talbot.** Now in the right mood, we were ready for the RA. Although they scored first, a reply of 3 in the first half and 2 in the second provided a resounding 5 - 1 win. The heroics belonged to the two forwards **Sig James Talbot** and **Sig Stuart Biggs** who produced excellent inter play for their 2 and 3 goals respectively. Day 2 started with a key match for 2nd place in the league and qualification for the play-offs. Unfortunately overnight we had lost our Combined Services goalkeeper, **Cpl Dan Cattermole**, back to his Comm Sys Engr Class1 course, to be replaced by an excellent stand-in **Maj Lee O'Rourke**. In addition **SSgt(FofS)Jamie Butt** was now sidelined with a hamstring injury and **SSgt(YofS) Richard Lloyd** had had to depart. The match against the REME was to prove decisive and the absentees and nervousness in the defence at the start saw the opposition take a quick lead. This was levelled by **Sig Paul Tough** before a further 2 goals against meant we were now chasing the game. In the end 2 - 4 to the eventual tournament winners was a fair score with **Sig Stuart Biggs** getting our second. In a relatively new innovation, we were now in the Plate competition. A round robin league system was designed to produce the 2 finalists. A 4 - 1 win over the RAC and a narrow 1 - 2 loss to the RLC put the Corps in the plate final against the RLC! With a good nights rest behind them and a determination to take something from the tournament, the side blasted into a 3 - 0 lead, all scored by the now prolific **Biggs**. A second half comeback saw the RLC score twice before a final open play goal by guess who, **Biggs**, made it a resounding 4 - 2 win for Royal Signals. His tally was now 11. In all 7 matches were played, more than anyone else, and all 16 squad players participated. Like the Ladies, the Men also voted and award player trophies to **Capt Johnny Hooker** for 'Player of the Tournament', **Capt Nathan Streetley** for 'Most Improved Player', and **Sig James Talbot** for 'Player Contributing the Most'.

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Corps consistently provide players to the Army Mens and Ladies Squads. This year for the County Championships first round **Johnny Hooker**, 14 Sig Regt, **Dan Cattermole** 11 Sig Regt and **Stuart Biggs** 3 Div Sig Regt were all selected and played in an outstanding event that saw the Army team qualify for the National Finals with wins over Herefordshire 5 - 1, Somerset 5 - 4, Devon 4 - 1, and the RAF 3 - 1.

THE FUTURE

Future dates for Units and Players should note the following key events:

12 - 18 September 08: Ladies and Mens tour to Gibraltar.
24/25 September 08: Royal Signals Inter Unit Indoor and Outdoor tournament at Aldershot. Calling notices should be in Units by the time you read this.
2 - 8 October 08: Tour to Cyprus to include Akrotiri Mixed Sevens 4th/5th.
15/16 October 08: Inter Corps Indoor for Mens and Ladies at Aldershot.

Besides these key dates, also note that in August 08 the Chairmanship of the RSHC will pass from **Lt Col David Proctor** HQ SOInC(A) to **Lt Col Sara Copley** CO Des 10 Sig Regt**.** This will be a first for the RSHC but continues the tradition of a Corps player with a good background of playing for civilian clubs taking the management helm. The outgoing Chair and author wishes her and the teams all the success for the future after his short 35 years associated with the RSHC and AHA.

STOP PRESS! ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION WEEKEND

To provide a fitting end to the 2007/08 season, and in the AHA Centenary Year, the RSHC continued the Inter Services and Inter Corps celebrations with a Veterans v Seniors match at Blandford during the RSA weekend. 'Bully off' was at 1200hrs, the playing surface the immaculately marked out field of the Corps cricket pitch in front of the pavilion, our recognised playing surface from 1965 to 1998.

At the centre of the planning and administration was once again **Mr Brian Mower**, the Corps Veterans Manager and Hockey Development Officer in 11 Sig Regt. Prior to the match he was presented with a mounted, porcelain Corps Officer circa early 20th Century, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the RSHC. Other presentations included colours for **WO2(YofS) Scouse Lloyd, Sgt Marcus Murcott,** and the newly promoted **Sgt Del Farr.** Not there but also worthy recipients are **Sgt Tracy Fairbairn** and **Capt Dave Longmuir. Dave** is not actually a player per se but, without dispute, one of the best Umpires in the Services, and a considerable asset to the National leagues. Consequently he has flown the RSHC flag, but from a slightly different perspective, and for that outstanding contribution his

Brian Mower receives his gift for his outstanding contribution to the RSHC from the outgoing Chairman, Lt Col David Proctor

services were recognised by the Corps Sports Board.
The match itself was undeniably a great success with the Veterans coming out on top 7 - 3, probably because of their affinity to grass, the playing not the smoking type. However, that hid the fact that **Maj Phil Cutforth** was playing in goal at both ends for short corners and penalties but at the important times was in the Veterans' goal. The teams, captained by **John Stuart** and **Del Farr,** kept it simple, hit it hard, and played some flowing pieces. All of this was well umpired by **Brain Mower** and **Jason Holcomb**, both late of the Corps. In the stand we had the privilege of welcoming **Brig Noel Moss** and **Lt Col Jim McLuckie,** both regular Corps, Army and Combined Services players of the 1960s. The match was completed with an excellent BBQ courtesy of the **Mower** family. In all a great day and a great success as an inaugural event. So, for those that could not be with us for a whole host of reasons, please note 1200hrs Sat 29 Jun 2009.

Teams line up before the Inaugural Veterans v Seniors match at the RSA weekend

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

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General Secretary and Treasurer: Lt Col (Retd) CP Conlon
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

2008 Reunion. Early arrivals booked into Reception on the Friday afternoon to collect their meal tickets, programme and souvenir lapel badges. These included around 30 caravanners and members from RSA branches in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Northern England. The various static display were up and running by 0900hrs on Saturday and these included; a collection of around 70 old civilian and military vehicles (kindly arranged by **Len Melling**), 26 Harley-Davidson and other large motor bikes (kindly arranged by **Terry Inman**), the local Pimpernel (Royal Signals) Beagle Pack, a show of today's equipment provided by Deployable Systems Group RSS, plus vehicles and equipment as used by soldiers from 37 Sig Regt (V) during last year's flood relief operations. Also up and running was the indoor range where RSA members were able to fire the SA80 rifle. **Pam Morgan** was there to present her late husband's speedway race bibs to the Museum. Her husband **Colin** and several other RSA members were part of teams set up in Germany, Egypt and other countries in the 40s and 50s. **Trevor Davies** had written a book on this, called "War Zone Speedway" and he was on hand to sell and sign his book. Several former speedway riders were present with their bikes, including **James Bond** who, after being in the White Helmets Display Team whilst serving in the Corps, went on to ride for Wolverhampton and England.

The traditional Princess Royal Day Parade started at 1030hrs. The officers and soldiers of 11 Sig Regt were led by their CO, **Lt Col James Langley**. The excellent standard of drill in evidence was down to the training by **WO1(RSM) T Bickerstaff**. The Master of Signals, **Gen Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE**, inspected the troops and took the salute at the march past. Many RSA members joined the soldiers from the parade in the Semaphore Arms bar afterwards, then went into the Regimental Restaurant for the 'all ranks lunch'.

The Corps Band, under direction of **Capt RGK Booth**, started proceedings for the afternoon arena display on Hawke Square. This was followed by a display by the Corps Free Fall Parachute Display Team, led by **WO1 Rob Campbell**. All of the team landed on or very near the target in the middle of the square. The Corps Pipes & Drums, led by Corps Pipe Major **WO2 Billy Wardrope**, then gave an excellent rendition of several traditional Scottish tunes. The Royal Signals Motor Cycle Display team, The White Helmets, thrilled the crowd with a performance of tricks, high speed crosses and jumps. **Terry Inman** then led the Harley-Davidsons from the Christchurch Cruiser Club, on a drive past around the square. The Corps RSM, **WO1 Dave Taylor** took the finalists for the standard bearers competition through their paces to determine the overall winner. The crowd then enjoyed a performance by the Corps 'Northern Band'. The Band is made up of members of the TA at 34 Sig Regt (V). Included in the performance was a cameo display of Irish dancing by local girls. After a drive past by a selection of the many old vehicles on display, the Master of Signals presented the prizes for the standard bearers competition. This year, **John Mumford** of Reading Branch took the honours, with **Bill McNamara** of Glasgow runner up. The massed bands then played a finale before the 'Sunset ceremony' ended the show. Many of the members stayed on to enjoy a get together with the serving members of the HQ Sgts Mess in the evening. Members gathered on the square at 1030 hrs on the Sunday for the traditional 'Drum Head Service' conducted by the Garrison Chaplain the **Rev Rupert Jarvis** and Hon RSA Chaplain the **Rev Peter Clemett**. Standards were 'laid up' during the first hymn and collected during the last hymn. Members of the Rotherham and Sheffield Branches kindly acted as sidesmen and took the collection, which raised £479.00 for the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund. Following the service, the Corps RSM rounded up the members and led them on the familiar March Past. Most members appreciated his expected 'gentle beasting' but to some it came as a bit of a surprise.

2009 Reunion. The date for the next RSA reunion is the weekend 27/28 June 2009 at Blandford.

RSA website. For those who are unaware, the RSA website is now; www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk

New Life Members. We welcome the following recently enrolled Life Members:

Rank/Name	*Service*	*Branch/unit*
Sgt Mike Buchan	1962-78	
Sgt Steve Green	1973-84	
Cpl Shaun Bysouth	1989-00	
Sig Clive Beatrup	1952-54	
Cpl Ray Hall	1988-01	Bristol Branch
Cpl Micky Rose	1966-90	
LCpl Grace McSharry	1997-07	
Cpl Eddie McSharry	1997-date	
LCpl Richard Craven	1987-97	
LCpl Trevor Tait	1971-77	
SSgt Andrew Carter	1995-08	
LCpl Damian Lyons	1991-99	
Sig Terry Westwell	1999-03	
Sig Noel Antliff	1956-59	Aldershot Branch
LCpl Tom Workman	1955-57	
Sig Ron Johnson	1952-54	

Sgt Jack Rose	1945-48	
Cpl John Evans	1998-08	
Cpl John Tompkins	1967-78	
LCpl Ryan Sedgwick	1990-97	
Cpl Stephen Switzer	1977-89	
WO1 Frank Branson	1979-03	
Cpl David Denning	1964-89	
Sig Richard Pearce	1990-96	
LCpl Clive Watters	1988-93	
Cpl Chris White	1959-71	
Sgt Gary Fisher	1995-date	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Charles Manns	1950-55	
Sig Gordon Poole	1942-47	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Sig Trevor Summers	1945-48	Cardiff Branch
Cpl Mandy Lee	1979-87	Middlesbrough Branch
LCpl Michael Sell	1989-96	
Sig Will Wilson	1985-96	
SSgt Andy Lewis	1979-03	
Maj Steve Wood(AAC)	1973-96	(ex YofS)
Sig Graham Wells	1988-97	
LCpl Nigel Flynn	1984-91	
Cpl Dean Harris	1985-93	
Sig Alex Ronald	1991-97	
Sgt Bob Peart	1939-46	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Sgt Gary Boyle	1981-93	
Sig Brian Angus	1988-94	
LCpl Will Tuffin	2001-08	
WO1 Tom Trent	1959-84	
WO2 Doug Newby	1951-77	
Cpl Reg Binks	1950-62	
Sig Ray Jennings	1955-57	
LCpl Mick Martin	1963-73	
LCpl John Brennan	1952-54	
Sig John Webber	1992-97	
Capt Robert Higham	1955-70	
Sig Tony Johnstone	1974-84	
Cpl Selby Robinson	1963-87	
Cpl Russell Parker	1975-92	
Sig Cliff Reddish	1940-46	
SSgt Scott Pringle	1988-08	
LCpl Terry Devan	1951-53	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
WO2 Edward Wingate	1948-68	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Sig Bill Barnett	1948-52	
Cpl Julie Jones	1998-date	
Cpl Liz Chambers	1975-81	Middlesbrough Branch
Sgt Peter Murphy	1976-89	Middlesbrough Branch
Cpl Marek Platt	2000-date	
Sig David Millington	1988-94	
Sig Dale Rothery	1983-93	
SSgt Peter Lagden	1985-08	
Sig Charlie Kilpatrick	1989-98	
LCpl Jim Hewson	1998-05	
Cpl John Jull	1958-60	
Cpl Ted Newitt	1958-61	
Sgt Nicholas Hoare	1971-80	Liverpool Branch
Sgt Steve Dade	1992-06	
Cpl John Terry	1969-78	
LCpl Neale Dodds	1979-85	
LCpl Michael Welch	1967-76	
SSgt Mick Knowles	1987-02	
Cpl Jason Carty	1990-03	
WO1 Mark Simcox	1975-99	
Pte Jacky Kelsall(Jardine)	1960-62	
Sig Norman Jones	1952-54	
Cpl Mark Cozens	1990-01	
SSgt Derek Jenkinson	1987-date	
SSgt Tom Davies	1978-02	

DONATIONS

Florence Green	£10.00
East London Branch RSA	£300.00
J Riley	£30.00
Reading Branch RSA	£190.00
Cheques totalling in memory of	
Mr Dermot William Castle	£220.00
Gerald Perkins	£50.00
Carol and **Mervyn Hill** in memory of **Bernard Gigg**	£20.00
R Waldron	£20.00
Maj RH Blizard	£100.00
Maj Eric Le Quesne in memory of	
Pat Lafferty, **Bill Barnes** and **Bill Venus**	£50.00
Eastbourne Branch RSA	£100.00
Cheques totalling in memory of	
Colin John Gilbert	£318.66
Certa Cito Lodge	£20.00
Maj (Retd) G Harrison in memory of	
Maj Bill Barnes	£10.00
The Middlesex Imperial Yeomanry Lodge	£250.00
John Stroud in memory of	
Pat Lafferty and **Bill Barnes**	£50.00
Tony Lockyer	£100.00
19 Sig Regt Assn in memory of **Col Colin Gilbert**	£50.00
Lincoln Branch RSA	£10.00
Chester Branch RSA	£57.00
Col Mike Dent in memory of	
Maj (QM) Bill Barnes	£75.00
Mrs M Elgey in memory of her husband	
Philip G Elgey	£25.00
Bryan Littlecott	£34.00
Maurice Gray	£4.52
Collection at the RSA Reunion Church Service	£479.90
Mrs JG Taylor in memory of her mother,	
Mrs Jessie Moore	£50.00
Mrs IA Grimwood-Taylor in memory of	
Mrs Jessie Moore	£40.00
Mrs CM Wallace in memory of	
Mrs Jessie Moore	£50.00

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Chairman **Noel Moss**
Secretary **Mary Pagan**

Our annual Quiz Night, held in April, again proved a popular and well attended event. The Winchester Repeaters were the victors, narrowly defeating the lionesses and the Aldershot Choughs – only 3 points between them. We feel that a second Aldershot team deserves mention as in all there were only 4 points between the first 4 contestants – the brains of Britain! The prize for the best serving team went to 261 Sig Sqn, the '1033s'. No less than 10 teams were fielded by the serving sqns and to them we owe much of the success of this event, as we do to the members of the Garrison Mess, who sacrifice some of their space for our use on the Quiz evening. A curry buffet was furnished by the Mess during the interval, ably organised by the management and staff, and we thank them for their continued hospitality and efficiency.

Neville Lyons, our able Quiz Master compiled the quiz. **Mike Wilson**, Deputy Chairman, adjudicated, while the scoring and indicating was done by **Edelgard Moss**, **Gill Ovenden** and other hard worked wives. (What would they do without them!) **Jew Wilson**, with the help of **Mary Pagan**, organised the prizes and ran a successful raffle during the evening. **Peter Sharpe** and **Chris Endean** were the back room boys and our Chairman, **Noel Moss**, was in charge of discipline. A great pleasure on these occasions is to welcome members of the Reading and West London branches and ladies of the WRAC.

Our Chairman **Noel Moss** and **Edelgard**, with 5 other members, had a great time attending the Dedication of the Corps Memorial at Alrewas. We met friends from the Corps, ate heartily, critically inspected other plots and decided ours was the best.

We found the Service of Dedication by the Colonel-in-Chief very impressive and the whole organisation to be commended.

COTSWOLD BRANCH

Chairman **R Woolley**
Hon Sec **J Woolley**

VISIT TO NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM MAY 20TH 2008

What a Memorable Day! We assembled to board our coach 15 mins before time (well we would wouldn't we?). A photographer from the local press was there to record the occasion for inclusion in the following week's local paper. After an uneventful trip up the M5 and other major roads we arrived at the Arboretum for 1030hrs to join some of the rest of our ex comrades. Having refreshed and made ourselves 'comfy', we made our way up 'The Beat' to our Memorial accompanied by our Chairman **Ray Woolley** and **George Blake's** wife **Jenny**, both in mobility 'buggies' The dedication of 'Jimmy' was done very tastefully and with reverence and I'm sure the solemnity of the occasion was felt by all. The address however short about the Memorial and the visit by our Colonel-in-Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal** would I'm sure have been appreciated by all. This was more than compensated by the personal appearance of HRH after lunch in the marquee where one of our Life Members, **Jenny Blake** was one among those presented to HRH.

I revert now to the first person singular. Having enjoyed an excellent lunch, a visit to the main Memorial itself was a must. The edifice itself was awesome and it's difficult to believe that all those personnel had given their lives to this Country since 1945. What I found the most noticeable was the difference between this Memorial and other War Memorials in that the names were not in alphabetical order and even now new names were being carved in. Still trying to absorb the experience of this, I decided to visit the area to see some of the other Memorials. The first of these was the Fusiliers Regt, including the Lancashire Fusiliers, my father's Regt 1914 – 1918. Coincidence? I wonder! Rejoining the group and having chatted to others from different Branches, we made our way to our coach and home at the end of what was a Most Memorable Day. Just one sad event on the journey back **Jenny Blake** fell, hitting her head when we had a 'stop off'. Glad to say she is now OK. The Branch wishes to thank all personnel who were involved in the organisation of this event

EAST LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Maj (Rtd) Paul Burton**
Secretary **Alan Turner**

We had our branch AGM at the end of April which was attended by 43 members. The past year was reviewed with reports by the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Social Secretary. The committee were all voted back in with the exception of **Brian Streetly** who stood down as a Welfare Officer after 3 years in the position and he was replaced by **Jim Fleming**. With the TA 100 Celebrations and other events, we have had a busy time of late, with members representing us at various events including the service at St Paul's after which we were wined and dined at the City Livery companies. On 20 May, about a dozen of us, headed up the motorways to make our way to the National Arboretum in Alrewas for the Royal Signals Dedication service and unveiling by **HRH The Princess Royal**. Having seen pictures of the site earlier in the year, we were a bit apprehensive of whether we should be taking waders, however it was a sunny dry day and we definitely saw the site at its best. One of our members, **Len Brace** took part in the Normandy Landings in 1944 and was one of around 180 other veterans to revisit the area over 5 days, courtesy of the London Taxi Drivers in May. It was the first time that Len had been back to Normandy and he thoroughly enjoyed his visit. He gave us a 20 minute talk on his experience at our end of May meeting. He told us he was impressed with all the organisation that had gone into making the visit for all the veterans a truly memorable experience. On 5June, a group of our members visited the Royal Hospital for the Chelsea Pensioners Founder's Day parade with the **Princess Royal** being the reviewing officer. Writing these notes in early June, we are now eagerly getting ready for the Annual Reunion in Blandford at the end of the month. Following on, in July we have a visit to Chatham for a Veterans Day Event and a few of us have invitations to Royal Garden Parties. A branch photo was taken after our AGM in April by **Brian Streetly,** which can be found along with names of individuals on our web pages at http://www2.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/rsa/eastlondon/index.htm

We always welcome more members and encourage any potential members living in East London, South and East Essex area to join us. We are aiming to be inclusive and would welcome as Associate Members, serving or ex-service men and women from other Arms, Regts and Corps.

GUERNSEY BRANCH

Chairman **Alec S Forty**

Each year Guernsey celebrates the end of the German Occupation in May 1945 by having a public holiday known as Liberation Day. The Guernsey Branch of the Royal Signals Association holds a Liberation Dinner at this time and this year its Guests of Honour were our Lieutenant Governor, **HE VAdm Sir Fabian Malbon KBE** and his wife **Lady Sue Malbon**. **Sir Fabian's** link with the Royal Signals goes back to his earliest days in the Royal Navy, when a friend who was serving in the Corps acted as his best man. Branch Chairman **Alec Forty** concluded his welcoming speech by presenting a pair of whisky glasses engraved with the Royal Signals crest to **Sir Fabian**, who instantly identified the crest as 'Jimmy' and asked how that name had originated. **Lady Malbon** was presented with a bouquet.

Chairman Alec Forty presents a pair of engraved whisky glasses to Sir Fabian Malbon KBE"

Later in May the Army Benevolent Fund held a dinner to mark the Centenary of the TA and arranged for the band of the Royal Signals, under its Director, **Capt Guy Booth**, to make a 3 day visit to the island. The band Beat Retreat before the Centenary Dinner and on another evening, gave a well attended and enjoyable concert, during the interval of which our Branch provided the bandsmen with welcome refreshment. The band is a fine representative of our Corps and we were very proud to have its Director and members with us.

HULL BRANCH

Chairman **Clive Blackburn**
Secretary **Steve Goodyear**

It has been 12 months since Hull saw its streets and houses flooded (June 2007). It is with regret that we report some of our members are still living in abnormal conditions. The drying out,

rewiring, plastering and decorating continues, all of which is going well. Hopefully this work will soon be at an end and they can get back to living in their homes like everyone else – on both floors. We wish them good fortune.The Branch challenged the local Royal Engineers Association and hosted them to a games night on 29 May 2008. There was a good turn out by both Associations which meant no problems in fielding teams in all games. The evening began with a welcome to the RE Association from **Stu Key** and a brief on the games from the entertainments member **Paul Meredith**. The games played were darts, cards, pool, connect 4, dominoes and 10 pin bowling. Score sheets were issued to all games tables for the players to fill in as they went along. When all the sheets were handed in the scores were counted. The visitors had won by 2 points. On closer inspection of the score sheets however, it became clear that the visitors had tried their luck at cheating their way to victory. On the 10 pin bowling score sheet they had claimed a bye point for a game that hadn't yet been played. All rested on this final game. Our Secretary **Steve Goodyear** stepped up to the plate and breezed to victory in the final game of the evening. This meant that both teams had the same amount of points and the match was drawn. The evening was rounded up with pie, chips and peas prepared and cooked by our TA Chef, **Stu Key**. A good night was had by all and the return leg is to be set after the summer. This time a close eye will be kept on the RE and their unwholesome tactics. Last month one of our longest serving members of the association, **Bob Stephenson** passed away. He was a member of the RSA for over 50 years. He will be sorely missed within the branch and particularly at the monthly luncheons. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to his son at this sad time.

LINCOLN BRANCH

Chairman **Mr Fred Patman**
Secretary **Maj (Rted) Derek Wood MBE**

The Branch continues to expand with more new members. We are lucky to have with us now 2 serving members of the Corps, **WO2(FOS) David Street** from JSSW (D) who has been a great help to us. He has settled into the Branch and enjoys the meetings. We also have **Sgt Archie Davidson** from RAF Waddington who will be our Web Master on his return from duty. Also joining us is **David Hambidge** who with WO2 Street represented the Branch at the unveiling ceremony of the Corps Memorial. **David** gave us a full report on his return, explaining that it was to the normal high standard of the Corps and was a memorable day for all. Also joining us is **Tony Davidson** and **ex-WO 1 (RSM) Mick Ginty** of the Corps. **Mick** is heavily involved with the local Cadet Force. **Maj Mick Radford MBE** (ex Royal Signals) is the Lincolnshire ACF Commander. So you can see that the Corps has a good foothold here in Lincolnshire?

The old and the new. The Committee and new members WO2 Street and Sgt Davidson

We had a sad loss one of our staunch members **Colin Hall** passed away. The Standard and representatives from the Branch attended **Colin's** last parade, where we met both his family and friends. He will be greatly missed by us all. We have had 3 presentations recently: **Jim Banks** our Treasurer and **Eddie Brewer MBE** were both presented with their 50 Year Badges and **Maj (Retd) Derek Wood MBE**, our Secretary received the Honour Badge. All were presented by **Maj Frank Philp**, the President and founder member of the Branch. We continue to enjoy our Branch luncheons organised by our Chairman, **Fred Patman** at the Stone Arms, Skellingthorpe. At the rate we are going, with more and more members attending it won't be big enough to take us all. There was also a Curry Lunch which we all attended – the money raised going to both the ABF and the RBL. The Mayor of Lincoln made his charity this year both the ABF and the RBL raising over £14,000 split between them. He has been a stalwart supporter of the Armed Forces during his term of office, for which we have thanked him officially

The Branch Monthly Meetings are now well attended and all the hard work put in by our secretary is beginning to pay off. After the official business is over, we join the Para Association for the social but we are too successful when it comes to the raffle, walking away with most of the prizes – however the up side for the Paras is that we expand their funds each week. We will have joint functions in the future; their secretary **Cllr Gratrick** ex-Para Regt, will be appointed Mayor of Lincoln next year. His son recently left the Corps from his last post at RAF Digby as **WO1(RSM) Gratrick**, ex-216 (Parachute) Sqn. Because we have had enquiries due to our article in this magazine, our meeting place is Sobraon Barracks, Burton Road, Lincoln. The timings are 1930hrs for 2000hrs every first Tuesday of the month less August and December. The Secretary's phone number is 01522 589812 and email derekwoodl@btinternet.com for further information.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

TA100 NATIONAL PAGEANT - *by Steve Brisk*

On Saturday 21 June, it was an early start for 10 ardent members of the RSA Liverpool Branch. A coach was soon underway with personnel from 156 Tpt, 4 Lancs, LUOTC and members from both RSAs Southport and Liverpool. We headed south to join 5,000 spectators for the TA100 National Pageant in the presence of **TRH The Prince of Wales**, **The Duchess of Cornwall** and **HRH The Earl of Wessex**. **Frank Conlan** provided sandwiches and pork pies all round with a spot of Earl Grey from **Steve Brisk**. The Earl Grey soon became a potent "Gunfire" with the aid of a bottle of Navy Rum kindly donated by **Jim Mayne**. We arrived at Scotland Yard, our designated drop off – pick up point at 1230hrs. As we toured the Mall and Horse Guards, **Jim Mayne** was soon engaged in conversation with a tourist from the USA. Her late husband was serving in the UK during the D Day landings; a new friendship had been forged in the Anglo-American relations. There was barely enough time to gain an alliance with the beer pumps and bar staff of the "Westminster Arms". Although **Johnny Hough** and **Para Taggart** had managed to create a bond with the "Westminster Arms" that was almost unbreakable. During the pageant we were treated to theatrical displays of varying landmark years throughout the history of the TA; featuring actors, singers and historical vehicles.

The programme was narrated by **Brig Richard Holmes**, **Mr Bernard Cribbins** and **Miss Rula Lenska**. The deaths last week of 4 soldiers in Afghanistan, 3 of them members of the TA gave the occasion a sharp, poignant theme. The oldest surviving TA member, 104 year old **Edwin Cooper**, was brought on to the stage in a wheelchair and given a loud round of applause and a standing ovation which was instigated by our very own **Steve Brisk**. **Mr Cooper**, a former LCpl from Abergele, North Wales, said later: "The TA has improved a lot since I was a member during the Second World War. I'd love to join today if they would have me." **Gen Sir Richard Dannatt KCB CBE MC ADC Gen**, Chief of the General Staff, addressed the 5,000 spectators at Horse Guards Parade: "Eleven TA soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice and laid down their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003; 3 this week in Afghanistan. With their memories and sacrifices very much in mind, our work nevertheless goes on. The TA's contribution was very much appreciated and valued by professional soldiers". **The Prince of Wales**, referred to the "lives that have been so tragically lost". The rest of his speech was devoted to praising the TA soldiers' dedication, their families for the sacrifices that they made and employers who gave time off for "drill nights, training weekends and annual camps. The TA is a key pillar in the defence of the realm, a unique and indispensable asset to this country". Following the pageant we found a local watering hole closer to Scotland Yard. Once again it was to be a whistle stop bar before commencing the journey home. A customary bottle of port disguised as a flask was produced by **Steve Brisk** which was a welcome addition to aid in the activation of the sleep process. Not that **John Waters** needed any help sleeping, he managed to sleep for best part of the out bound and return journeys. **George Suffler** was so engrossed in a conversation with **Para Taggart**; **Nick Hoare** found it impossible to escape the drones of both voices. **Len Hinds** had sat through it all and was the perfect gentleman. Our thanks are due to so many involved with the TA100 project, but a special thank you to **WO1(RSM) PT Haughton**, 33 Sig Regt. Without his invitation members of the RSA would not have been able to attend. Yet another good time was had by all.

Steve Brisk, Len Hinds, Para Taggart, Jim Mayne, Johnny Hough, Frank Conlan, Terry Hodge, John Waters, George Suffler and Nick Hoare

MANCHESTER BRANCH

Chairman **Ron Taylor**
Secretary **Harry Ferguson**

At the Branch AGM in April, the decision was reached to end the Branch's long association with Ladybarn RBL Club as our venue for Branch meetings etc because of the uncertainty generated by the proposed redevelopment of the site in the future. Two proposals were tabled, Ardwick Barracks and 42 Sig Sqn, Norman Rd, Rusholme. The proposals were voted on and 42 Sig Sqn carried the day, 18 votes to 11. The vote was not entirely popular and we have a few empty chairs as a result. On 20 May, 15 members travelled to The National Memorial Arboretum to witness the unveiling and dedication of the Corps Memorial by the Colonel in Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal**. It was a sunny and breezy day and everybody agreed that it is a very impressive and moving place to visit but owing to the crowds the event attracted and the flat terrain of the site, quite a few failed to catch a glimpse of HRH. Our Chairman, **Ron Taylor JP** was presented to HRH during the proceedings. Two of our lady members **Pat Griffin** and **Jackie Ferguson** managed to obtain permission from their husbands to be with us. **Maj Jim Lawson** also travelled and handed round his trademark toffee tin and our President, **Chris Reynolds Jones** joined us on arrival. It was a very satisfying day despite the ravages of the M6 during our journey home. Pat on the back to Secretary **Harry Ferguson** who completed a sponsored swim on behalf of Swimathon and The Marie Curie Cancer Care. He swam 2 miles in 1hr 54mins.and raised almost £600 – our congratulations to **Harry**. Also to be congratulated are **Terry** and **Muriel Hearldon** who have been elected unopposed to serve on their local council of Birchwood, Warrington. **Terry** was presented with his 50 year badge at the Branch by **Ron Taylor** in 2007.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

Branch Treasurer **Debbie Wolfe** had the great honour of being awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate at Hillsborough Castle on 26 April 2008. The award was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, **Lady Carswell**. Debbie's family also attended. **TA100.** On 3 May an Open Day was held at the prestigious Campbell College in Belfast. Many TA units put on displays including 40(U)Sig Regt(V). Many RSA Branch Members were seen viewing the latest communications equipment in particular.

In May, **Jack Mount** from Devon (Exmouth Branch) was to be speaker at our monthly meeting. **Jack's** memorable history in the Signals was certainly worth listening to but there was a problem; the speaker couldn't speak – he had lost his voice! Soldiers, even old soldiers are renowned for finding quick solutions to problems and know how to delegate, sometimes even to their wives! **Elizabeth** picked up **Jack's** script and read it out in a clear and decisive voice as if she were **Jack** himself. Just once he muttered a correction to **Elizabeth**, possibly to remind us that this was his story! Despite the chiming clock in the Sgts Mess interrupting **Elizabeth** every 15 mins, she simply sang the words from her script in accompaniment to the tune of the clock.

That was a talk that was! "**Jack Mount** and his W/T sect escaped from France after Dunkirk, arriving in Belfast in June 1940 on the 'City of Derby'. On his recent trip, Jack obtained missing information about this event from the Public Records Office in Belfast. They drove their radio vans to Victoria Barracks in Belfast, where OC Sigs, **Maj George Bayliss** welcomed them as they were experienced with war and fully equipped. **Maj Bayliss** made them the nucleus of a unit named Northern Ireland District Signals (NIDS). Their arrival from France reminded him that NIDS formed the French word for "nest", so he arranged for them to wear an embroidered nest in Signals colours on their shoulders. They operated radio stations connecting other units with Belfast and with War Office.

Ballykinler was a main outstation. During his time in Ulster, **Jack** used homing pigeons as well as radio for communications! One pigeon called "Paddy" no.100096 was awarded the Pigeon VC or Dickens Award. **Jack** later re-trained as a line mechanic, visited occupied France 3 times, landed by submarine south of Naples, joined the 8th Army on the Adriatic, served with 2nd Polish Corps from Cassino to Bologna and moved with the Partisans from Udine to Veldon. **Jack** completed 8 years service in 1947 and returned to Belfast, where he did civilian work including teacher training. In 1948, whilst on reserve he was transferred as Signals Instructor to 35 (Ulster) AA (Indep) Sig Sqn under **Maj Chris Lindsay** at HQ in Clonaver Park Camp. He next set up a Signals Section in 5th Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers(TA). In 1961 **Col Chris Lindsay** became Hon Col 66 Signal Regt, the predecessor of 40(U) Sig Regt. Hence our connection with **Jack Mount** goes back to the 1940s".

Noel Johnson with Jack and Elisabeth Mount

Coincidence. NI Branch President, **Noel Johnson** was an army cadet in Victoria Barracks where **Jack** was a Regular Army signaller but they met for the first time in May 08 at Clonaver Park Camp where **Jack** had been 60 years previously.

Sad News. **Maj Dave Doherty** was not a member of the RSA but news of his recent death will certainly bring sadness to a large number of Royal Signals members, past and present, **Dave** was in the TA for a total of 39 years, most of them serving with the Royal Signals at Clonaver Park TAC. Joining in the ranks he progressed through every rank including WO1(SVWO). Commissioned in 1988 he retired as Maj in 1998. **Dave** died of lung cancer on 3rd June 2008. His funeral, in his home town of Larne, included a very big military attendance.

READING BRANCH

Chairman **Mrs Pauline Tennant**
Secretary **Lt Col (Retd) Hugh Nealon**

A lot seems to have happened since our report in the June edition of *The Wire*. April saw us at an informal lunch at a local hostelry, represented at the Aldershot Branch Quiz, gathering at our quarterly Branch Meeting (another pub) and finally attending the unveiling of the Corps Memorial at Alrewas. Our trip to the National Memorial Arboretum was a memorable day out, and will

The Branch party at the National Memorial Arboretum for the unveiling of the Corps Memorial

no doubt be reported elsewhere in this magazine.
As mentioned in the last report June saw the 90th birthday of our Chairman, **Pauline Tennant**, and almost on the due date the Branch Committee were delighted to entertain **Pauline** to lunch at Phyllis Court, in Henley-on-Thames. It was a very convivial occasion, the sun shone and we all enjoyed our meal and a glass of bubbly in a very pleasant setting, overlooking the river.
Pauline will also be guest of honour at a garden party to be held in mid-June, when we hope many of our Branch members will attend to wish her a very happy birthday. The other birthday being celebrated at this time is of course TA 100. There are events in Reading and Windsor, which we hope to attend.

Pauline Tennant celebrating her birthday with the Branch Committee

Unfortunately the Blandford Reunion and the Freedom of Windsor Parade for 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn, clash, and we will not be able to attend both, which is a great shame. However we shall be sending a party to Kneller Hall, for an evening of splendid military music and we hope to have members attending the Pageant on Horseguards Parade and the TA100 display in Reading. A note for the diary of members and friends of the Branch. Our Annual Reunion Dinner will be held at the usual venue, Sonning Golf Club, on 27 September.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH

Congratulations are in order for one of our members, **Jack Hilton**, who has just been awarded the Mayor of Bromley's Award in recognition of many years of unstinting voluntary service to the people of Bromley. **Jack** did National Service from 1948 to 1950, trained at Catterick (where else?) as a Teleprinter Operator and served with the Army Wireless Chain Sqn at the small jungle camp Hora-Hena in Ceylon now Sri Lanka. He joined the Royal British Legion in 1948, became a poppy seller in 1957 and for the last 50 years has helped to raise some £100,000. He has also been a member of the RNLI for 26 years helping to raise money for them. Well done **Jack**!

Jack Hilton being presented with the award certificate by the Mayor, Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe

The Branch goes from strength to strength and will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of our reformation with a dinner on 18 July at the Bowling Cub, South Croydon. We meet on the second Thursday of every month. Further details can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, **Steve Bland** on 020 8656 9740 or by email at blands@blueyonder.co.uk.

WEST LONDON BRANCH

Our annual dinner held in April was well attended. The menu was good and the service commendable. **Pat Miller** ran a very successful raffle. We all were pleased to see **Jack Carson** and **Ray** following **Jack's** recent indisposition. It was a pleasure too to see them accompanied by close friends, who for many years have often attended our social occasions with them, also those of the Burma Star, of which **Jack** as a veteran has been a stalwart supporter.

Several of our members visited the Arboretum for the dedication of the Corps Memorial and were impressed by the presentation and excellent organisation of the event. This was followed at the end of May by another most interesting Railways talk by **Paul Whittle** who is a railways buff and certainly knows his stuff!

WEST WALES BRANCH

Our branch attended the second annual Combined Services Dinner at the Selwyn Samuel centre in Llanelli on the evening of 7 June 2008. The event was organised to foster esprit de corps between local ex-service organisations within the area.

It was attended by approximately 100 diners representing the following associations: Royal British Legion, Royal Naval Association, HMS Ganges Association, Welsh Guards Association, Royal Welsh Fusiliers Comrades Association, Royal Regiment of Wales Comrades Association and the Royal Air Force Association. The Guest of Honour was **Col (Retd) F Batten MBE** who addressed the gathering after the meal with a speech outlining the work of SSAFA, a charity obviously close to his heart. The evening was judged a success by all who attended and look forward to the next in 2009.

AIR FORMATION SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

President: **Lt Col DA Craft**
Vice President: **Mr Gerald Evans**
Chairman: **Dr David Vickers**

Members of the Air Formation Signals Association (AFSA) met in reunion at the North Stafford Hotel, Stoke-on-Trent, over the weekend 9 – 11 May. After an informal buffet dinner on Friday evening, **Pat Soward** played DVDs of the 2007 RSA Reunion and the SO-in-C's latest 'History of the Royal Corps of Signals'. Both were received with spontaneous applause!

After hearty breakfasts the following morning, members travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum for a short service to dedicate 'The Rock' which compled the Air Formation Signals Crescent. The Rock is a stone from the Blandford Camp roundabout on which a commemorative plaque has been fixed with words to explain that the 10 trees form one coherent memorial to all who serve, or who have served in Air Formation or Air Support Signal Units. Members processed from the visitor centre at the Arboretum to the Crescent led by **LCpl Nanda**, a piper of 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn stationed at Stafford, the standard bearers of the Birmingham, North Stafford and AFSA Branches and the **Rev Jim McManus**, Chaplain to the AFSA. The Arboretum was very busy on that day and our procession attracted much attention from the photographing public!

The procession about to start with LCpl Nanda leading the standard bearers Andrew Wigley, Chris Collier and Tony Holmes

During a short service, **Jim McManus** reminded us of the religious significance of rocks and stones and finished by blessing The Rock. Chairman, **Dr David Vickers**, and **John Horne** laid wreaths on behalf of the AFSA and Birmingham Branches and this was followed by a two-minute silence introduced by **LCpl Nanda** playing a lament.

After the dedication

Members then had a short time to examine the new Armed Forces Memorial and the RSA Jimmy before re-boarding the coach for a visit to the Museum of Brewing at Burton-on-Trent. Our visit to the museum was well timed as we were told that support by the owners, the American brewers Coors, who bought Bass-Worthington in 2001, is to stop at the end of June when the museum will close. After a complimentary 'half' in the bar and a bar snack, we toured the museum. **Russell Samuel** homed in on a vintage Guy bus that was receiving 'healing hands' treatment and the prize winning Shire horse in the stables attracted much attention. Earlier we had seen him pulling a carriage for a wedding party; driver, horse and carriage all in immaculate condition. With numerous artefacts, working machinery, audio-visual aids, vintage vehicles and the Shire horses, the museum told the story of brewing at Burton from the earliest days. For example, ships would take beer to the Balkan countries and return loaded with furs which gave rise to the hat making industry in Burton. Returning to the hotel, the AGM was kept short and sharp by Chairman, **Dr David Vickers**, and then followed the reunion dinner. The raffle, masterminded by **Maureen Soward** and assisted by **Joyce Horne** took a new form this year. Members were asked to bring a prize and those who brought a prize were invited to purchase a single draw ticket for £5. Every member who brought a prize won a prize – although it did not pass unnoticed that our Chairman selected the prize that he had brought! The raffle made £95 and attracted a further £55 in donations resulting in a cheque for £150 being sent to the "Help for Heroes" charity. When asked, members voted unanimously for a return to the North Stafford Hotel again next year and already suggestions for a trip on Saturday morning have been received.

This report ends on a sad note. One of our founder members and staunch supporter, **Leslie Large**, died very suddenly on 18 April. His funeral on 2 May at Wolverhampton, was attended by standard bearers **Tony Holmes** from the Birmingham, **Andrew Wigley** from South Stafford and **Chris Collier** from the AFSA Branches. **Leslie** received a good send off from a 'standing room only' congregation and we are deeply indebted to the standard bearers of the Birmingham and South Stafford Branches for their support on these two occasions.

254 OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

Fewer than usual old boys were able to attend Droxford 2008 over the weekend of March 14/15 and there were many apologies from those who were ill or who had more pressing engagements. **John Venning** was one who had to cancel, he died on 28 April and his funeral on 6 May was attended by a contingent of ex-boys, who had expected to have enjoyed his company at dinner.

Our heartfelt condolences to **Valerie** and her family. On Friday evening we were joined by **Gordon Gibbs** who was delighted to be able to attend this, his first meeting with ex-boys for many years. In his younger years he played much football and one of those present unkindly suggested that this was the cause of his 'knackered' knees. In spite of this he was in excellent spirits and from his stories, it was apparent that he was a less-than-dedicated soldier – except when playing football!

Saturday morning dawned cold, wet and windy. Members went their separate ways and reassembled for dinner. As always our host, **Brian Lay** had created a menu with something for everyone – a choice of 6 starters and 7 main courses followed by deserts, coffee and port. In his welcoming words **Pat Soward** made particular mention of **Joyce Barrett** who had so recently lost our 'founding father', **Ken Wood**, and **Auriol Bussell** with her daughter **Mandy**. He also welcomed **Keith Munday** who had chauffeured his parents, **Lou** and **Jean**. **Keith** later confessed to having enjoyed our company and marvelled that we, who had first met when we were much younger than him, still found pleasure in each other's company in such an uninhibited atmosphere. This was probably the last dinner of the Southern Chapter at the Upland Park as **Brian Lay** is actively looking to sell the hotel and it is possible that it may become a retirement home. If so we will meet at another venue nearby next year but it will be difficult to find an establishment where the proprietor is so understanding and accommodating and the staff so eager, willing and efficient.

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman **Mick Teague**
Secretary **Tony Hull**

In 1954 **Tony Hull** was on his way back from 18 months in Korea and Japan to what he thought would be a home posting, when he was dropped off the ship at Suez and then spent a couple of years in Egypt. He joined the Suez Veterans Association 5 years ago and this year he and his wife, **Beryl**, went on a Reunion with them to Ismailia, Egypt in early May. Also in the party were BEBA members, **Tony Pfeiffer**, and his partner, **Barbara Duffy.** There were several coach trips laid on, the first of which was for wreath laying ceremonies at Moascar and Fayid Cemeteries. There were a lot of graves for the Royal Signals at both Cemeteries and it was sad to see the young ages at which they had died. One excursion was across the Suez Canal by ferry to the large Egyptian War Memorial commemorating the 1967 War with Israel. The trip enjoyed the most was the one to Cairo and the Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza.

On May 19, a party of 10 members of the Beverley Ex-Boys Association drove up to stay overnight near Lichfield in order to be ready for the Dedication of the Corps Memorial on 20 May. We were joined for dinner by **David** and **Eileen Pegrum** and a very pleasant evening was had by all. The morning of 20 May dawned bright and sunny. We all arrived early at the Arboretum and after a cup of coffee, made our way down "The Beat" – a wide, grassy avenue – to the Memorial. The "Jimmy" stands tall and proud on its plinth and makes a memorial that does credit to the Royal Corps of Signals.

The Colonel-in-Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal**, arrived just after 1200hrs to unveil the memorial. The service was conducted by the **Rev Andrew Cooper**, Senior Chaplain Blandford Garrison, together with the **Rev Peter Clemett**, Honorary Chaplain to the RSA. **Rev Cooper** then blessed the Memorial with holy water. After the service a number of RSA and service Corps members had been chosen to be presented to **HRH**. **Tony Hull** was extremely proud to be presented as a representative of BEBA. The Beverley Ex-Boys Assn was well represented and those attending were: **Tony** and **Beryl Hull**, **Alan Davies** and his son, **Colin**, **Peter** and **Mary Gray**, **Jimmy** and **Eve Logan**, **David** and

Beryl and Tony Hull, Dave and Eileen Pegrum and Pat Drummond at the National Memorial Arboretum

Eileen Pegrum, **Eddie** and **Margret Whiffen**, **Pat Drummond**, **Brian Ireland**, **Fred Freeman**, **David** and **Pauline Oddie**, **David Frances** and **Jim Whelpton**.

Our Reunion this year will be held at the Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry over the weekend of 10/11 October. As this will be our 10th Anniversary, we do hope as many of our members as possible will attend. The Staverton Park is a De Vere Hotel with excellent leisure facilities including an 18-hole golf course.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	Served Years	Died
Abbott - Cpl LW Abbott	1935/47	01/03/2008
Adams - Lt Col BWP Adams B SC(ENG)	1954/84	26/04/2008
Adams - Sgt B Adams	1975/93	16/06/2008
Adams- Lt Col BWP Adams	1954/84	
Addington - Capt ER Addington	1946/66	??/04/2008
Arnold - Sig DJ Arnold	1990/94	28/06/2008
Ayling - Sig H Ayling	1942/45	15/05/2008
Baker - LCpl GA Baker	1947/49	c 2008
Barsby - Sig Barsby	/08	03/03/2008
Bentham - Sig RH Bentham	1962/68	19/05/2008
Boase - LCpl P Boase	1955/79	26/01/2008
Bond - Sig EAW Bond	1954/57	01/02/2008
Bonnart-Braunthal - Lt Col F Bonnart-Braunthal	1950/72	23/04/2008
Bridle - D Bridle	????/??	c 2008
Bryant- Sig JE Bryant	1976/??	22/04/2008
Burgess - WO2 RP Burgess	1958/77	15/05/2008
Cadwalladr - Lcpl JL Cadwalladr	1958/58	??/04/2008
Carter - Cpl AC Carter	1939/46	27/04/2004
Cathcart - Maj WGA Cathcart	1946/82	06/05/2008
Chiswell - Capt JA Chiswell MBE	1947/84	13/04/2008
Corcoran - Capt M Corcoran	1964/94	04/08/2007
Davies - Col GAL Davies	????/??	14/06/2008
Dodson - SSgt RS Dodson	1948/62	01/10/2007
Falla - Sgt S Falla	1938/46	??/05/2008
Hall - F Hall	1939/45	15/06/2008
Hall - Sig CA Hall	1952/56	02/05/2008
Hammond - WC Hammond	1941/47	26/03/2008
Hardy - Maj ER Hardy	1949/74	c 2008
Harfield - Maj AG Harfield BEM	1944/80	16/06/2008
Jones - Sig GH Jones	1954/57	11/04/2008
Large - Sig L Large	1943/47	18/04/2008
Lawrence - Maj JH Lawrence	1942/58	07/05/2007
Meechin - Cpl D Meechin	1965/75	08/01/2008
Moore - JR Moore	????/??	01/05/2008
Moyle - LCpl GW Moyle	1950/55	10/01/2007
Oates - Maj WE Oates	1936/71	c 2008
Powys-Lybbe - Lt Col A Powys-Lybbe	1929/54	??/??/????
Reeve - Cpl S Reeve	????/08	17/06/2008
Rennick - Brig DPK Rennick	1938/70	19/06/2008
Richardson - VJ Richardson	1939/46	08/06/2008
Riley - Sig B Riley	1952/54	19/05/2008
Roughley - Sig BJ Roughley	1974/79	c 2008
Rush - Sgt JE Rush	1938/46	05/05/2008
Smith - S Smith	????/??	c 2008
Smith - Sig DE Smith	1948/50	03/01/2008
Steel - Sig M Steel	1949/51	??/05/2008
Stephenson - Sig RL Stephenson	1941/46	26/05/2008
Thompson - Sig M Thompson	1979/84	20/03/2008
Toombs - Maj A Toombs	1939/69	26/05/2006
Williams - Cpl CB Williams	1942/47	16/01/2007
Williams - Cpl KM Williams	1945/48	30/04/1986
Wood - Lt Col J Wood TD	1939/46	11/06/2008
Young - LCpl CFJ Young	1939/41	14/04/2008

OBITUARIES

STOCKDALE – WO1 Frank Stockdale BEM died on 22 February 2008. - *by his son, Ken Stockdale*

Frank joined the British Army on 25 November 1936 and went to the Lincolnshire Regiment at the beginning of 1937. He then transferred to the Royal Signals in May 1937; the start of his 30 years career with the Corps. During his service he spent time in the Middle East, where he met and married **Joya Behar**. He went on to serve in North Africa, West Africa, Malaya, Cyprus, BAOR (Rheindahlen) and the UK in Lincoln, Newton Abbot and London.

As I am sure with all long serving soldiers, he was separated from his family for long periods during various postings, until arrangements could be made for them to be reunited. Not only was Dad a strong-willed person but I have just come to realise, Mum must have been the same, being brought up in Palestine and then thrust into the 'military' life and being separated from her husband. In 1952, while serving in Malaya, he was awarded the BEM in the King's Birthday Honours List. This was presented to him by **Gen Sir Gerald Templar**. Dad also had the honour of meeting The Princess Royal whilst serving in Cyprus. Sport played a major part in his Army service, representing the Corps in football, cricket, hockey and rugby. While serving in London, he was signed on as an amateur for Millwall FC and also played a couple of times for Gillingham.

After his discharge in 1967, **Frank** moved to Sheffield where he became a Barrack Inventory Accountant with Northern Command until he retired. He also played a major role in setting up the Sheffield branch of the Royal Signals Association at 38 Sig Regt (V). I am sure he would have been proud of the fitting send off at Rotherham Crematorium incorporating a RSA Guard of Honour, Standard Bearer and an Army Chaplain. The Corps flag, WO1 hat and a pace stick adorned the coffin. Many old comrades came to pay their last respects and I apologise if I didn't thank you in person on the day but I would like to thank everyone one of you through the pages of *The Wire*.

My saddest regret? Having just been awarded a lifetime honorary membership of the RSA, Dad was invited to go to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Both he and Mum were so looking forward to going but sadly illness meant they were unable to go. That would have been the icing on a large and richly filled 'cake'. I could go on about his achievements in the Corps but suffice to say I am so proud to be his son. My sons in turn are proud to be his grandsons, having spent many hours listening to him entertain them with tales of life in the deserts of North Africa and the jungles of Malaya. He is missed so much by his friends, comrades, family and especially his sons and daughters. God bless Dad and Mum and may they rest in peace.

REUNIONS

The 2008 Reunion of 216 Para Sig Sqn was held at the Ardsley House Hotel, Barnsley, on Friday and Sat 2/3 May. Friday night saw the DZ taken and held so the 'Old Guard' could meet and greet over a few beers.

On Saturday morning there was a Golf Tournament for the sporting elite, while the rest went shopping or sight-seeing. In the evening, 155 veterans, wives, and partners gathered to wine, dine, and dance the night away. At the start of the festivities, the Sqn Standard was marched in by our Branch Standard Bearer **Dave Fox** and set in place of honour on the stage. We were then served a superb 3-course meal and much liquid refreshment. When everyone was quite replete, **Brig John Griffin** addressed a very relaxed OCA. He welcomed everyone, especially those who had journeyed from as far afield as Singapore (**Hugh Smith**), Cyprus (**John O'Rourke**), Spain (**Billy Irwin** and **Myrtle Marshall**), Malta (**Pete Pritchard**) and South Africa (**Bob Paterson**). **Brig John** then gave a news update of the current 216 Para Sqn, serving in Afghanistan. He also reminded us of the Airborne Signals Reunion at Caythorpe on 6/7 September. During the speech we rose to toast "Absent Friends", in particular the recently departed **Steve Marshall**, **Robbie Laing** and **Matt McBirney**. The final, resounding toast was as always, "The Squadron."

The Belles of the Ball – Maureen Whitehead, Margaret Campbell, Myrtle Marshall, June Hamilton, Diane Kirkman and Trish Illingworth!

After that, **Jimmy Campbell** gave his usual light-hearted debrief on the day's Golf Tournament, which in a close competition, was won by **Robin Stanley**, who collected the Steve Marshall Memorial Trophy – in memory of one who did so much to revive the reunions. **Bob Mills** finished a very close second, while our Best Lady Golfer was once again, **Linda MacDonald**. **Geordie Wilson** received a remotely controlled golf ball, which claims to be impossible to lose – doubtless **Geordie** will disprove the manufacturer's claim! **Hugh Smith** won the "Longest Drive" – Singapore to Barnsley in a Vauxhall Vectra! The prizes were presented by **Myrtle Marshall**.

Next, **Jim Flockhart** stepped up to speak briefly about "Sqn Legends" who have gone before us to the "Final DZ." How we must continue to revere their memory. He caused no little embarrassment to a certain 'hack' by calling him forward to receive a bronze statuette of a 'Signaller with SLR' for "...helping preserve the legends." Thanks **Jim**.

An embarrassed Hack

This was followed by an artistic solo performance by **Billy Irwin** on musical spoons, delivered with typical 'Noddy' enthusiasm. Wee **'Mac' MacDonald** says he has entered **Billy** for the next X-Factor. Before the dance proper there was a Raffle and a Dutch auction of (mostly) airborne memorabilia. This was MCd by **Ray Duffy** in inimitable style. **Geordie Wilson's** raffle prize was a silver Pegasus statuette; he was (nearly) speechless with delight! **Peter Whitehead** won a Golf Trolley, which was later seen sporting a cloud of coloured balloons and a puncture! **Ray**, by his efforts and the generosity of the audience, managed to raise a good sum for OCA funds. He also sold £100 worth of 216 lapel badges during the weekend. Well done, **Ray**.

The disco which followed had most of us dancing (?) into the wee small hours. Later, as we tottered of to bed, thinking of the fast-approaching breakfast, we agreed that the venue was just right; the food and drink superb; the staff friendly and efficient and the music just the ticket for our advanced years. Thanks for that input, **Paul Richardson**. During and after a painfully noisy breakfast, everyone voiced approval of a marvellous reunion. There was a unanimous vote of thanks to the OCA Committee of **Ralph Porter** (Chief Organiser), **Ray Duffy** (Secretary), **John Aspinall** (Treasurer), **Craig Treeby** (RBL Branch Chairman), **Keith Weller** (Sqn Website), and **Alan Hogg** (OCA Data Base Design). Their various labours brought the OCA much pleasure, and are greatly appreciated by us all. We also wish to thank the Hotel Manager, **Ann Kelley**, Event Co-ordinators **Julie Slater** and **Dawn Kelley** and all the Staff at the Best Western Ardsley House Hotel for a very friendly and highly professional service. By the way, according to our local contact, **John 'Chalky' White** – bar takings for Friday and Saturday nights exceeded all known records for the Hotel! We departed mid-morning Sunday, slightly jaded, but in good heart. Exhaustively re-united, but nonetheless

The morning after – Grumpy Hamilton, Bob Paterson and Keith Weller seated and Ray Duffy standing

keen to return for another event in 2010. **Dave 'Zacky' Finer** and **Linda**, his bride-to-be, left with best wishes ringing in their ears. They are to be married in June.

GOOD ADVICE FOR 'UNSATISFIED' EX-AIRBORNE SIGNALLERS

First, any ex-members of 216 Para who have yet to experience a Sqn Reunion, are earnestly advised to make contact with any of the committee members. For contacts, info and pictures, visit the website at http://www.216parasigs.org.uk. Current OCA members who have not yet joined the RBL Weston-on-the-Green Branch should do so now by setting up a Direct Debit. A significant percentage of all funds raised are therefore made available for needy welfare cases. **Ray** and **John** await your call.

Second, if you haven't already been to a Caythorpe Weekend (the spiritual home of Airborne Signals) you should go on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September. You are guaranteed an entertaining time at the Village Fete, lots to eat and drink and a Service of Remembrance in the village church. For more details and a booking form please contact **Capt Dave Wilson** at 216 (Para) Sig Sqn, Colchester, Tel: 01206-782990. If you need a Sqn tie, or any other Sqn memento, call 216 (Para) Sig Sqn PRI Shop, Tel: 01206-782867 for a prompt efficient service. Finally, all the advice given above is also directed at ex-members of 5 AB Bde Sig Sqn, the historical successors to the 'old' 216 Para Sig Sqn, who are cordially invited to join the OCA, and participate in all such festivities. You will be made most welcome. Similarly, while we are always happy to meet members of the current 216 Para Sqn, we readily acknowledge they may not want to integrate fully with the "Old 'n Bold", just yet. They can if they wish but perhaps their time is yet to come.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

From: **Doris Zender** [mailto:doriszender@web.de]
Alte Schulst. 3
54552 Üdersdorf
Tel.: 06596-1018

Dear Sir

My name is **Doris** from Lemgo, Germany. I'm looking for my Dad, **John Randall** or **Rendel**. **John** was in Lemgo in 1954 with the Royal Signals – 1 ASSU. I think **John** came from Torquay or Newton Abbot. My Mum's name is **Gerda Ursula Welsch**. Please contact me if you can help me make contact with my Dad. Thank you.

Yours...

THE ROYAL SIGNALS BENEVOLENT FUND

Below is an extract from a letter recently received by **Linda Rowley**, the Corps Welfare Secretary, from a family of an ex-member of the Corps who have been helped by a grant from the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund.

Dear **Linda Rowley**,

I am writing this letter to you and to the Royal Signals, on behalf of both my Mum and myself to place on record our sincere appreciation and expression of gratitude for the very generous grant you have provided, through SSAFA Forces Help, towards Mum's bathroom alteration to provide a level access shower. The work was carried out last week and we are so pleased with the outcome – this will now provide a lot safer facility for my Mum, who at 84, has started to have her mobility severely impaired, as well as dealing with the early stages of Alzheimer's. Sadly, my Dad died 8 years ago and Mum has found it very hard to manage

on her own. She has lived in the same house for 51 years and it is our intention to see that she stays there as long as possible. Thank you, once again - we are so pleased that, in time of need, you have been able to help out the family of an ex-serviceman.

Yours sincerely...

UKNDA (DET) DONNINGTON

OC Det: **WO1(YofS) Cade**
Det SSgt: **SSgt Brown**

Once again this small but busy detachment has been flat out with commitments to all theatres world-wide. However this hasn't prevented **WO1(YofS) Jason Cade** finding time to complete the London Marathon for the Army Benevolent Fund in a time of 4hrs 44mins. Due to the detachment's close links with the new Typhoon (Euro-Fighter) production, we were all hosted to a visit to BAE Wharton thanks to their Custodian Officer, **Tony Olsen**. During the visit all members of staff were treated to a tour of the Typhoon production area, which gave the detachment an extremely interesting view of the aircraft's assembly. Later in the day, all members of the detachment were given an opportunity to prove their worth as a modern day combat pilot, as each member was given the chance to fly the new Typhoon – but only the simulator! None the less, each member climbed aboard and with instruction managed to get the aircraft in the air and fly a very realistic loop over the sunny sights of Blackpool. Take off was fairly easy, in flight was not too difficult, but come the moment of landing **Cpl Nathan Jones** decided that the trees on approach need trimming as he flew his Typhoon straight through the small woods on approach to BAE Wharton – to the hilarity of the group. However this was bettered by one of the detachment's civilian members, **Mr John Bott**, who single-handed managed to fly through the hangers on his approach! Our thanks go out to BAE Wharton for this fantastic opportunity. Finally and for the first time, the UKNDA Detachment Comd, **WO1(YofS) Cade**, has taken over as the RSM(Des) for MoD Donnington Station and with that the prestigious role as the Presiding Mess Member.

THE CORPS TOUR 2008 CHARITY MOTORBIKE RIDE IN AID OF 'HELP FOR HEROES' AND THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND - *by Sgt 'Yogi' Welch*

The Corps Tour charity motorbike ride started on 21 April 08. It was to take 3 enthusiastic motorbike riders on their own bikes, with 2 support crew in a van, covering a route of 3740 miles, through 8 countries and all in 12 days. The team consisted of the 3 bikers, **Maj Craig Sutherland**, **WO2(FofS IS) 'Dinger' Bell** and **Sgt 'Yogi' Welch**, with **Cpl Danny Carter** and **Sig Ben Scaife** in the Support Crew van. We were extremely lucky to secure the patronage of the SOinC(A), **Brig Ted Flint ADC** and **Mr Charley Boorman** from 'Long Way Down' and 'Race to Dakar'.

The event started to take shape in December 2007 and a target of £20,000 was set, to be shared between the Army Benevolent Fund and 'Help for Heroes'. As well as the effort that the Corps Tour Team put in, Regular and TA Regts and Independent Sig Sqns across the Corps were invited to raise money in direct support of our efforts. The overarching intention, as the name of the tour suggested, was for the Team to visit every Regular Royal Signals unit in Europe, with the exception of Gibraltar and Cyprus. The fundraising would start during the build up to the tour and then hopefully continue throughout the trip, although it was understood that most units were exceptionally busy and heavily committed to operations and exercises and the level of support that we could expect would vary immensely depending on how busy units were. As January 2008 arrived, valuable funds started to accumulate in the Team bank account.
The Team deployed far and wide to promote the event and gain as much public support and awareness for our event as possible. The team and other members of 2 Sig Regt, involved in fundraising events were amazed by the groundswell of public opinion in favour of the Armed Forces. Indeed, the people of York and North Yorkshire proved to be very supportive. In addition to the 'hard cash', we also had our support vehicle loaned to us from 1car1.com, a set of motorbike tyres donated for each bike from North Eastern Tyre and Autocare, free fitting of the tyres by Triumph Motorcycles, free servicing before and after the trip by Suzuki Motorcycles, ferry tickets from Calais to Dover provided by WA Shearings Travel Agent and numerous gifts of equipment and items suitable for use as raffle and auction prizes from a variety of sources such as Sony Europe, Technicolor and Infinity Motorcycles.

Mr Roger Griggs(Retail Director for North Eastern Tyre and Autocare) with the Bike Team receiving the donated tyres - Photo courtesy of North Eastern Tyre and Autocare)

Then the big day arrived. At 0900hrs outside RHQ, the 3 bikes were lined up with 6 or 7 other bikers from the Regt as part of the cavalcade. Two of the team were on good old British motorbikes, a Triumph Daytona T595 and a Triumph Sprint and the third was on a Honda Varadero. North Yorkshire Police Motorbike Section gave us a 3 bike escort to get us through York. The Lord Mayor of York arrived to cut the tape and send us on our way, local media jostled for best position to take pictures and the awe inspiring sight of 2 Sig Regt lining the route out of camp stood before us. After 4 months of planning we were finally on our way. As **Ewan McGregor** said in 'Long Way Round', "Ain't nothing stopping us now but the leaving".

The Departure with Police Escort on 21 Apr 08

Our first stop was at 19 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Catterick which was a non-eventful hour long ride but a good shake out of those nerves and apprehensions. The Padre came with us for the ride to Catterick as he had 'God Squad' business there. It soon became obvious that if we were to keep to the planned timing and the ferries, we were going to have to ride like the wind. After Catterick, we headed north to Edinburgh to meet **Maj Gen David McDowell**, GOC 2 Div and our administrative chain of command, who informed us that he was the best motorcyclist in the Corps, and was able to give us some valuable tips about keeping the 'rubberside down'. After a swift cup of tea in the GOC's office and a few photographs we were off to Stranraer to catch the ferry to Lisburn. We were going to have leave the support crew at Stranraer due to the cost of the ferry ticket, but we would catch

Maj Craig Sutherland, WO2 Colin Bell, Maj Gen David McDowall, Sig Ben Scaife, Cpl Dan Carter, Sgt Yogi Welch outside HQ 2 Div

up with them the next day. By now the enormity of the event was starting to show itself; talk was limited, and the 3 bikes just ate up the miles. Coming over the top of the hills on the A77 with the sun setting and a fantastic view of Ailsa Craig made it all worthwhile. We didn't have time to stop and admire the view as we had a ferry to catch, but the few glances we did get made it a joy to be riding there and then. We arrived at Lisburn in the dark, and after finding our accommodation, a quiet drink and a reflection on the first 400 mile day, it didn't take us long to get to sleep. The following morning we had time to meet the OC and a few of 233 Sig Sqn. Yet more pictures, a cup of tea and we were off to catch the ferry back to Stranraer. The next leg was going to be punishing and we had to get on the road. The local police took a liking to us and stopped us on the way back to the ferry but after a quick brief about what we were doing and who we were from **Maj Sutherland** we were on our way again. Let's just hope that wasn't going to be a theme for the event.

After getting off the ferry, with a couple of hours delay and heading south to Stafford, it quickly became apparent that this was going to be a very long day. Despite this we were now in our stride, the bikes were working well and as a team we were gelling together and looking out for each other on the road. A few fuel stops gave us chance to chat, stretch, get a warm brew and for people to ask who we were and what we were doing and then, best of all, to give us a few pounds. Arriving at Stafford, the support crew, **Cpl Carter** and **Sig Scaife**, had sorted our accommodation and after a quick brew it was off to bed again. The following morning the weather took a turn for the worse; heavy rain gave us our first real morale sapper. After meeting CO 22 Sig Regt, we were on our way to 30 Sig Regt at Nuneaton in the wet; deep joy! It rained most of the way to Nuneaton, and 3 very wet and not too chuffed riders followed by 2 very dry support crew arrived at 30 Sig Regt. A very welcome cup of tea, a donation and a chat with the Regt HQ and we were off again. Not too far out of Nuneaton, **WO2 'Dinger' Bell's** bike had a 'moment'. His bike SatNav, kindly donated by Sony Europe, had been wired into the bike by means of a cigarette lighter socket, and after so much rain it shorted, blowing a fuse that stopped his bike completely. A little while later and a new fuse and we were off again, but that had eaten up valuable time, so we had to aim direct to 14 Sig Regt in Brawdy and come back to HQ 11 Sig Bde in Donnington later if we could. At last the rain stopped and we enjoyed an outstanding ride over the Brecon Beacons. A short stop for food and a cup of tea at a well known bikers' cafe in Abergavenny and we were off again. Before leaving we noticed that our Patron, **Charley Boorman**, had been there previously, having left an autographed photo beside the counter.

The view as we dropped out of the hills to the coast was as impressive as the A77 in Scotland. The warm sun and the smell of the sea took our minds off aching bums and backs and the constant need to make up time. We arrived at 14 Sig Regt to find a welcoming committee waiting for us outside RHQ. We were quickly shepherded into position for photographs and speeches and a very large donation. A welcome cup of tea followed and some quick running repairs were carried out and we were off again to Newport to visit the Patriots Motorcycle Club (MC). The Patriots MC is made up of ex-serving and serving members of HM Forces, and is an official 'back-patch' motorcycle club. The Club Secretary, **Denzil Connick**, ex-Parachute Regt, who lost a leg during the Falklands War, had emailed **Maj Sutherland** to invite us to sample the Patriots' hospitality during our tour and so that they could add to our fundraising efforts. "Turn off the M4 at Junction 28 and you will see some bikes in a lay-by" we were told. We were tired and aching, but after turning the corner our disbelief at the sight in front of us made it all worthwhile. 60 or more bikes and trikes of all shapes and sizes were parked in line with the riders and well-wishers clapping us, as we were waved to the front of what seemed to be a never ending line of bikes. **Denzil** introduced himself and welcomed us. With an escort of bikes into Newport to the Clubhouse, their generosity and warmth continued. The Patriots had prepared a dinner for us, cooked by **Denzil's** wife **Theresa**, and had erected a table in the inner sanctum of the Clubhouse, and while we ate we were told more

The Patriots receive their briefing from Denzil Connick prior to our "meeting" Photo courtesy of the Patriots MC

about the Patriots. We couldn't relax too much though, after a welcome warm/cold shower, we were introduced to other Patriots from all over the UK who had come especially to support our event. Two bands had been laid on for us, representatives from the local Royal British Legion attended and our Support Crew set up the auction that we had planned to run. As well as laying on this event for us the Patriots had already been doing a lot of their own fundraising on our behalf and after the auction they donated a total of £1500 to the Corps Tour event. To cap off the evening we were also given some presentation pieces for the Regt as mementos. We left the Patriots the next morning, after a night that could only be described as being akin to a night in 'The Young Ones' house. The hospitality that we were shown was excellent, leaving us with nothing but admiration for a group of ex-serving and serving members of the armed forces that had gone out of their way to raise money for charity and support our event.

Again we were quiet on the next leg, mostly thinking about the night before, but also about the days ahead. We were started our journey that morning from Newport to the Severn Bridge with a Patriots' escort from those members who were heading back to Portsmouth, Tidworth and Kent. Our first port of call that day was 21 Sig Regt in Colerne and with the gate guard obviously expecting us we were straight in and parking up outside RHQ, where we met the RSM. The Regt was having a charity curry lunch in support of the Army Benevolent Fund's Biggest Curry Lunch and we were welcomed in. After photographs and an explanation of what we were trying to achieve we set off for 10 Sig Regt in Corsham. 10 Sig Regt, despite its disparate nature, made a concerted effort across all its Sqs to support our fundraising drive and managed to raise a staggering £6700 between them. On arrival at their HQ, we were presented with the cheque in the presence of Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, **Brig David Hargreaves**. Again after more photos and another cup of tea and we were off to Milton Keynes. Riding as a group was becoming second nature by now, taking it in turns to ride point, covering for each other on the motorway, giving mutual support on A roads,

we were riding as a pack without thinking about it. The Support Crew were always somewhere near, even if we did lose them in heavy traffic, **Cpl Carter** and **Sig Scaife** would catch up with headlights blazing out of the distance, 2 smiling faces and more often than not a video camera being aimed at us. The stop at Milton Keynes with 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn was quick, just long enough for a meet and greet and the usual tea, white no sugar, and a generous cheque towards our cause. As we left, the cloud that we had managed to keep in front of all day finally caught up with us. The rest of the day proved to be wet and miserable, leaving Milton Keynes in the rain and getting to Colchester very late and very wet. We met the RQMS of the Rear Party of 16 AA Bde HQ and Sig Sqn and after a very quick chat in the rain, we headed to the NAAFI for a warm brew before heading off to the ferry at Harwich. We had some time while waiting for the ferry to plan the next phase of the event, prep the SatNav, and get fish and chips and another brew. Everywhere we stopped people walked up to us with the intent of giving money. Rarely did we see coins, mainly notes! It was an overnight ferry, and we made best use of the time, some of the team were sleeping before we left UK waters. It was at this time in the event that we found out about **WO2 Colin Bell's** snoring; it was to prove to be nothing more than horrendous. The only positive note, because we were on a ship, we were safe in the knowledge that other ships would hear us coming should the weather turn foggy.

We landed at the Hook of Holland, and after **Cpl Carter** was breath-tested by the Dutch police for looking the 'worse for wear' (tiredness, not alcohol!), and a few phone calls to Garrison FM we were on our way, and straight into our first European traffic jam. It was at this point that the Honda jokes started to come thick and fast from the Triumph side of the team. The chain of **Sgt Welch's** Honda started to work loose and this was something that was going to give him plenty to worry about for the rest of the tour. The ride to Maastricht turned out to be fairly eventful from a navigational perspective; pulling up at a set of traffic lights just out side Maastricht, **Sgt Welch's** SatNav said 'turn right', **WO2 Bell's** said 'turn left' and **Maj Sutherland's** said 'turn round'. A group decision was made and we turned right, which turned out to be the wrong way. It seemed that 3 SatNavs, all with the same address, can each find their own way of getting lost. We decided there and then that the next time this happened we would all make our own way to the final destination as per our own SatNav as a bit of an experiment. On arrival at 1 NATO CIS Battalion, we were greeted with more tea and photographs and had the opportunity to give the multinational RHQ a brief of the tour and in return received an interesting briefing about this little known unit. After the presentation of some badges for our Corps Tour reflective vests, a very generous donation and another tighten on the Honda's chain and we were off again to 16 Sig Regt in Bruggen. The weather was fantastic, nice and warm and dry. The SatNav got us to Javelin Barracks with little drama, however, at one point, as we crossed the border from the Netherlands into Germany, our SatNavs went blank as a result of the new road layout in the area of the Camp. We eventually reached the RHQ and parked outside. Another welcome cup of tea with the Adjt, who was the only man about, and time to explain in detail what we were trying to achieve, we were presented with another very generous donation towards our final total. The Support Crew had planned our accommodation and we were led to very welcome single man rooms where we all could get some sleep before a very much needed day off. A warm shower and time to sit outside in the warm German night to reflect on the trip so far with a couple of beers and a pizza was a perfect way to end the day.

The following day was a rest day, time to check the bikes, give them a clean and some well earned maintenance. Yet again the Honda needed more TLC than the 2 Triumphs, but it wasn't long before they were ready. You would imagine that the last thing you would want to do on your day off is get back in the saddle, however, that is exactly what we were going to do. The Patriots MC had contacted their sister club in the Netherlands, called the Veterans MC, and their President made contact with **Maj Sutherland** to arrange an RV. The Veterans are subtly different to the Patriots in that each member must ride a Harley Davidson motorbike, whereas anything goes with the Patriots and also each member has to have served on an operational tour somewhere in the world. We were met outside Javelin Barracks by the Veterans' Road Captain and President of the Club on big Harley Davidson's and escorted to their Club House in Venray, about 35 miles across the border, where we met more of the Club members and their girlfriends and swapped biking stories, posed for the usual photographs and were given some presentations by the club. Prior to returning 'home' the President took us to his own Harley Davidson shop where the obligatory posing photos were taken. We left the Veterans and headed back to Javelin Barracks to get some well earned sleep and prepare for the next phase. Leaving Javelin Barracks the next morning, we headed for 4 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Osnabruck. Although the unit were deployed on operations we received a very warm welcome from one of the few Royal Signals left in the camp. **LCpl Edmondson** was on duty in the HQ and had been expecting us, despite it being a Sunday and only her and one other member of the Bde Staff were on duty. She made us by far the best cup of tea on the whole trip and stood in for the OC when we took our

LCpl Edmondson with the team at 4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn

photographs outside. The weather was fantastic and it was a pleasure to be on the bikes. Over the next few days we had a little less daily mileage to complete which allowed us to relax a little bit and enjoy the German countryside. So with that in mind we headed off to visit 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn right next door to Bergen-Belsen. The range roads on the approaches to the camp were great riding, nice and quiet, through woods and apart from occasional potholes, they were mostly dead straight. Despite it being a Sunday the Sqn 'Head Shed' came in to meet us and present us with their 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn Desert Rats wrist bands which we slipped on next to our 'Help For Heroes' bands, and then tucked into some hot bacon rolls and very welcome ice cold soft drinks. After the obligatory photographs outside SHQ, **Maj Sutherland** discovered that he had a pillion who wanted to ride in his tank bag, **'Diesel'** the QM's Jack Russell. **Cpl Carter** used this stop to pre-plan his next PPP. As he is due posting soon, the Corps Tour was a fantastic way for him to see every unit and 'try before you buy'. We left 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and did a very short hop down the road to Belsen Concentration Camp, where we took 2 hours

Outside SHQ of 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn with Diesel the biker dog!. Cpl Dan Carter, WO1(RSM) Paul 'Frankie' Greenwood, Sig Ben Scaife, Capt Mark McNellis (Sqn 2IC), Sgt Yogi Welch, WO2 Colin Bell, Maj Craig Sutherland, Diesel and Capt (QM) Philip Hay

out of the riding to walk round the Visitors Centre and grounds to use the trip to discover a little about what happened there. It was a sombre 2 hours and incredibly moving, especially seeing the grave of **Anne Frank** and for those who have never been there it is definitely somewhere that you must go.Next stop for the night was 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt. The sun was shining all the way, the traffic was light and riding through Herford was a trip down memory lane for both **Dinger** and **Yogi**, constantly giving out target indications on things and places we remembered from many years ago. On arrival at 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, after some confusion, we eventually were given some accommodation and then got our heads down. After an early start and quick chat with a lady from the Herford Station paper we headed off for 102 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Gutersloh. The weather was great and the ride was even better, and made all the better by being met at the gates by one of the Sqn on his own motorbike. We were escorted for what seemed like miles through camp to be greeted by the entire Sqn lining the route and clapping us in. **Maj Sutherland** was able to thank the Sqn for their support and receive an extremely generous donation from one of the soldiers involved in the fundraising, **LCpl Swanick**, before tea and toast with the officers and seniors of the Sqn in the crèche!

LCpl Swanick of 102 Log Bde HQ 7 Sig Sqn presents the cheque to the Corps Tour 2008. WO1(RSM) Holroyd stands on the left and Maj Andy Parfitt is on the right

Next place to visit was 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Paderborn where we met up with old friends and carried out a couple of interviews with a reporter from BFBS. After a short break and the never ending pull of the open road we were off, heading back to Bruggen and 7 Sig Regt for our last night in Europe. Even though we still had a long way to go, we were now on our way back and we did start to feel a little low contemplating the fact that the tour would soon be coming to an end. We met the CO and some of the command team of 7 Sig Regt, caught up with a few friends and chatted over a cup of tea whilst we steamed in our waterproofs after another soaking on the road. The dash to Calais the next morning was our next challenge. With the ferry booked and deemed 'unmissable' we started early to allow for any mishaps. Not too far out, however, we hit some of the worst traffic jams of the tour. With a sarcastic 'Goodbye, see you in England' to the van over our intercoms, we filtered through the traffic. A well earned fuel and breakfast stop after the heavy traffic gave the van a chance to get in front of us and off to the port but they had no time to stop for food. We made it to the port in plenty of time, confident that all was good and we would soon be on the ferry and back in to the UK. Pulling up at customs, **Sgt Welch** had a panic and couldn't find his passport. After much grovelling and explaining, the Customs bloke let him through on his MOD90 and drivers licence. By this time the rest of the team were lined up and waiting for the ferry and after a thorough search of his kit the passport was eventually found secreted away inside his mapbook. The ferry took only long enough for food and a few phone calls, and then we were back in Blighty and on our way to Aldershot to visit 11 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and 251 Sig Sqn.

The trip to Aldershot was uneventful but very wet, and as we ate up the miles around the M25 and then on to the M3 the weather got worse as we got closer. As we approached our RV with the bikers from both Sqns, we eventually saw a single bike on the side of the road, 2 up. An arm wave to follow and we were off again following the bike and his pillion, who looked quite nervous, to a car park. It turned out that the pillion was on his first ever bike ride. This had all the taints of the Patriots MC. We pulled into a car park and there waiting in the pouring rain were about 15 other bikers from the unit. After a quick introduction, we were escorted through town into the barracks, and despite the horrendous weather both Sqns were lining the route from the front gate to the SHQ of 251 Sig Sqn. All the troops, although very wet, looked genuinely happy to see us arrive, clapping and cheering us in but this was most probably because they could finally get out of the rain. We were ushered into a warm dry hanger and the Sqn paraded in front of us. Back into the standard arrival brief and words of thanks from **Maj Sutherland** and then it was warm brews and biscuits all round. At this stage, things were starting to look grim for the Honda Varadero and **Sgt Welch** had to put a good hour of TLC into his bike to make sure that it was ready for the next day. The following morning started with us trying to 'find' breakfast which you would think was easy, but not in Aldershot; the transit accommodation and cookhouse are in different barracks and we had to wander around aimlessly until we eventually were able to feed ourselves. Next stop was Netheravon to visit GOC HQ Theatre Troops to 'tip our hats' to our operational chain of command. The ride to Netheravon was wet but uneventful, and with very few miles to try and eat through today we could at last take it easy but in the rain it was hard to enjoy. So far we had had wet weather for exactly half of the tour. Getting to Netheravon we were greeted by all the staff but sadly the GOC had taken ill after his recent trip to Iraq, and instead we were met by the COS who made us feel extremely welcome. After a brief chat with the HQ Staff the collecting pots were out and we were escorted around to all the deepest darkest corners of the HQ collecting all the loose change. After a warm and welcome brew (a bit of theme across the entire tour!), we headed off to Tidworth to meet 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. Again we were made to feel very welcome, catching up with old friends, and telling tales of our expedition so far and as a bonus it wasn't raining. While the weather held we made the mammoth drive to Bulford where we met up with the Adjt of 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt.

The Team with the Adjt of 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt

After another cup of tea, a photo kindly taken by a member of the junior ranks kitchen and a very generous donation from Rear Party of the Regt, we prepared for yet another massive ride across the road to 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. One of the essentials of the trip was single man rooms. Sadly on a number of occasions this was not available and we all had to bunk down together, as was the case in Bulford. This was excellent for team talks and admin, but bad because of **WO2 Bell's** snoring which he emphatically denied. On a number of occasions he ended up with a single room by default while the rest of us were forced to sleep in the corridor. On the penultimate night **Maj Sutherland** recorded his night time noise as proof and the following morning we all had a good laugh at his expense.

1 May 08 finally dawned and we all knew that this was effectively the last day. We had spent the night working out our accounts to balance how much we had raised against how much we had spent doing the fundraising. We left Bulford after a little bit of admin and headed for Blandford where we were due to meet the CO of 11 Sig Regt, and then in the afternoon the SOinC(A), **Brig Ted Flint**. The ride to Blandford became more and more sombre the closer we got. We all felt a sadness that this epic tour with all its highs and lows was coming to an end. The weather was surprisingly very good and the roads were quiet. It turned out to be a very good ride in the sun, a contrast to the downpours a few days earlier. We stopped just short of the road leading to camp to make sure that we arrived on time because once again we were early and this gave us a chance to have a final chat, congratulate each other on what we had achieved and make a few last min phone calls to friends. Then with **Sgt Welch** taking the lead, we headed to the front gate of Blandford Camp. Although the road was empty, we only just managed 30mph such was the mood of the team. On reaching the front gate we were met by 4 Royal Signals White Helmets on their Triumphs waiting to give us an escort throughout our time in the Garrison. First was a trip round camp, making loads of noise I might add and stopping outside HQ 11 Sig Regt.

The Team outside 11 Sig Regt with Maj Lloyd Golley and the White Helmets

After more tea and a chat with members of the Regt's Command Group we headed to the Regimental Restaurant to set up our last stand of the event and raise the last dribble of money by way of an auction, which turned out to be practically a giveaway of the last of the donated equipment. We basically asked any of the soldiers passing how much they would be willing to give us for certain items and we raised what we could, but roughly another £250. We moved from there with our White Helmets escort up the hill to visit our Military Patron, the SOinC(A). After turning the corner at the top of camp we could see the whole of the staff from the building waiting for us, applauding and welcoming us. The SOinC(A) came down the steps and met and shook the hand of every member of the team as we dismounted. **Brig (Retd) David Shaw CBE**, Director Regional Fundraising and Liaison from the Army Benevolent Fund, and **Robert Lawrence MC**, who was badly wounded on Mt Tumbledown during the Falklands War, attended to represent the 'Help for Heroes' charity. This was effectively the completion of the fundraising for us. We had finally raised £35,200 in total for two very worthy charities, and it was a great honour for us to be able to present our cheques to the charities in such distinguished company. It was fantastic to have the opportunity to do this in the presence of our Patron and Boss, but additionally, because our other Patron, **Charley Boorman,** couldn't be present as he was on another round the world trip, we managed to get hold of **Robert Lawrence**, a personal friend of Charley's, who had just recently returned from a mammoth trip across India in a motorcycle sidecar. As a casualty of war himself, who better to sum up the reasons why we were doing what we did.

Maj Sutherland meets the SOinC(A) outside his Headquarters in the presence of the Corps RSM, WO1 (CRSM) C Bruce BEM

Robert Lawrence MC, WO2 Dinger Bell, Sgt Yogi Welch, Brig Ted Flint ADC, Maj Craig Sutherland, Brig (Retd) David Shaw CBE escorted by four members of the White Helmets

Photos and the handover of cheques took place on the steps with the SOinC(A), the VIPs and the team, then we were invited to the SOinC's office away from the rest of the world for tea and a chance to remember the highlights of the event, and chat with the VIPs who took a keen interest. We had to leave Blandford shortly after to get to Nuneaton for the night so that we were within a 120 miles of York for the final part of our epic tour. So after thanking the SOinC(A), the Corps RSM and the invited VIPs, we left, making best speed for Nuneaton. We were all quiet during the ride with the final day looming and that feeling of it all coming to an end grew larger and larger. The ride to Nuneaton went without incident, and after a team night out in Nuneaton at an Indian restaurant as a final meal, we went to bed. The following morning was cold, damp and foggy, after some last minute tweaks on the Honda, a pat on the tank and a few loving words we left looking forward to our reception back home at York. The weather looked like it was going to improve and we were on the final leg. Less than a mile out of Gamecock Barracks **WO2 Bell's** bike had had enough and with a horrible grinding noise stopped, ironically just about the same place where the fuse had blown many days before. We were pressed for time, and although we had discussed before we started the event that due to time constraints the team would have to continue even if one bike was in the back of the van, it just didn't seem fair that this should happen so close to the finish. Looking at the bike we thought that it was the back brakes, and for obvious reasons was not something to be messed with, so much to the disappointment of Dinger, we loaded it into the van and left. The Support Crew and Dinger went on ahead at the speed of 30 African racing camels with the intention of getting to York and getting help from one of our sponsor garages so that he could ride in with the team at the very end. **WO2 Bell** stated categorically that he would only return to camp on 2 wheels even if he had to push the bike in himself. In the meantime **Maj Sutherland** and **Sgt Welch** rode steadily nursing the Hondas, fingers crossed that the bike would make it. It was on its last legs too. We stopped at a car park not far from Imphal Barracks and were met with big smiles from **Dinger**; he had done it. He had somehow managed to get a mechanic from York Suzuki to come out and do enough to the bike to allow it to at least cross the road into camp. We climbed onto our bikes, with a sense or pride, mixed with some sadness,

and rode into Imphal Barracks. The whole of 2 Sig Regt were lining the roads waving and clapping the Corps Tour 08 Team back home. Three abreast we stopped outside RHQ to be welcomed home by the CO and the Command Group. Various photos by local media, radio interviews and questions from the Regt and that was it, the end. The Regt dispersed and the team were finished. The support that we had received throughout had been second to none and that included both the civil and military communities who seemingly could not do enough to support us. It was truly humbling. The Corps Tour Team 08 and its Patrons would like to thank everyone who assisted us in making this event a massive success. With a total of £35,200 raised we couldn't have done any of it without the support of the Corps no matter how big or small. *On Two Wheels – Certa Cito.*

CORRESPONDENCE

From: **Derek Fisher**
Ex Sgt Palestine Command Signal Regiment

Dear Editor

I attended the dedication of the new Memorial at Alrewas and was honoured to be the only person to put a wreath on the memorial in memory of **Capt Alexander Mackintosh** , Royal Signals and **Sgt Staples**, RAOC, both friends of mine who, along with 20 other servicemen and 70 civilians were killed in the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22 July 1946. At nearly 82, I consider myself very lucky to be here as I was alongside **Capt Mackintosh** when he was shot by the terrorists. May I say what a fantastic job the sculptors have made of the memorial and it will be appreciated by all.

Kind Regards...

From: Linda Wallis (linda.wallis40@ntlworld.com)

I recently found Army certificates for Arthur Norman Stephenson Lee No 231634, First Class, Special and a Warrant dated 1940. I would like to think that these important papers could be returned to family of the above. Please contact me at the address above.

Yours ...

From: **John Deas** (rebecca.deas@talk21com)
111 Hoylake Road
Sale, Cheshire.
M33 2XJ (Tel 0161 969 7475)

Dear Editor

I am ex-Royal Signals (1958-1964) and I am a member of the Sale Branch of the RSA. I am an avid Dinky Toy collector and I am looking for a rare early toy made 1937/41. Could any of your readers help? The description is as follows: DINKY No 37c Royal Signals Despatch Rider (1937/41). Green bodied bike, with khaki rider. White or black rubber wheels unboxed. Only about 1000 were made with the blue box with insert No A223 7. If anybody can help they will be well reimbursed. Please contact me using any of the addresses above.

Yours...

From: **Albert Needham**
16 Shirley Drive
Arnold
Nottingham NG5 7JX

Dear Sir

Would it be possible to include the photo in the next issue of *The Wire*. In the picture are **RSM Yorky**, **Ron Lorrance** and **Sig Albert Needham**. All three served together. It would be nice if anyone remembers them from 1952 – 1955

Thank you...

From: **Geoff Wilson**
19 Long Riding Avenue
Hutton
Brentwood, Essex
CM13 1DZ

Dear Editor,

I am replying to the queries posed by **Mr Larby** in the June issue of *The Wire* about the *SS Arabia*. Along with 3 other friends I spent a few days on the *Arabia* in 1942 having come down from the "Blue." I have several photographs taken on the *Arabia* but I am afraid that the ravages of time have taken their toll and they will not reproduce. Yes the *Arabia* was only used to accommodate Royal Signals personnel but we could take friends from other forces' units on board for a meal or drink. The ship was moored and did not travel up and down the Nile. One of my photos does show the bar, lounge and dance floor but I have no recollection of any tea dances taking place when we were there. I hope this is of some help to **Mr Larby**.

Yours...

PHOTOGRAPHS OF WAR GRAVES

Mr Tony Shaw, an ex-Corps member, recently visited the Benghazi Commonwealth War Cemetery, He has sent The Wire office photographs of the following graves of ex-members of the Corps:

Sig R Goodship	Died 28 May 1943
Sig W Cole	Died 24 January 1942
Lt GCD Auchmuty	Died 23 March 1941
Sig WH Thomas	Died 13 February 1943
LCpl EC Barton	Died 31 December 1941
Sig R Asbrey	Died 27 March 1941
Sgt MI Whitehead	Died 24 January 1042
Sig SD Bird	Died 19 December 1942
Dvr A Lyons	Died 10 February 1943
Cpl GA Percival	Died 31 January 1944
Sig V Powell	Died 27 February 1941

If any relatives or friends wish to have a copy of one of these photographs, contact the Wire Office at the address on page 1 of this magazine.

East London, Colchester, Bedford and Cambridge RSA Branches led by The Chelsea In Pensioners march past Ilford Town Hall on the 36 Signal Regiment Freedom of the City Parade

THE CORPS MEMORIAL AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM AT ALREWAS

The Branch Standard Bearers on parade behind the memorial with the Corps Band in the background

HRH The Princess Royal approaching the memorial escorted by the Master of Signals

HRH The Princess Royal meeting members of the Royal Signals Association

HRH The Princess Royal, Brig Wood and the Master t their respects to the memorial after the unveiling

In previous editions of *The Wire* we have followed the progress of the new Corps Memorial being erected at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Cheshire.

Tuesday 20 May 2008 was a fine sunny day and more than 1000 past and present members of the Corps made their way down "The Beat" to the site of the new memorial. The statue of 'Jimmy' on an imposing plinth was funded almost entirely by contributions from individual members of the Royal Signals Association. It was formally unveiled by our Colonel-in-Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal** and this was followed by a service of dedication.

After a break for lunch, **HRH** met several groups drawn from the serving Corps and various Royal Signals Association Branches. The day was a great success and there appears to be universal approval of the new memorial and its location in the National Memorial Arboretum

THE wire

October 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

THE CORPS MEMORIAL AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM AT ALREWAS

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HRH The Princess Royal, Brig Wood and the Master p their respects to the memorial after the unveiling

In previous editions of *The Wire* we have followed the progress of the new Corps Memorial being erected at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Cheshire.

Tuesday 20 May 2008 was a fine sunny day and more than 1000 past and present members of the Corps made their way down "The Beat" to the site of the new memorial. The statue of 'Jimmy' on an imposing plinth was funded almost entirely by contributions from individual members of the Royal Signals Association. It was formally unveiled by our Colonel-in-Chief, **HRH The Princess Royal** and this was followed by a service of dedication.

After a break for lunch, **HRH** met several groups drawn from the serving Corps and various Royal Signals Association Branches. The day was a great success and there appears to be universal approval of the new memorial and its location in the National Memorial Arboretum

THE wire

October 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

HONOURS AND AWARDS

We congratulate the following Royal Signals personnel who received Awards in the Armed Forces Operational Awards List in July 2008.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS) in Afghanistan

LCpl JD Trigg 2 Sig Regt

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS) in Iraq

Maj AT Lamb TA JSCSC

THE ROYAL SIGNALS WARRANT OFFICERS AND SENIOR NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS CONVENTION 20 – 22 NOVEMBER 2008

The 2008 Annual Royal Signals Warrant Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers Convention will take place over the period Thursday 20 November – Saturday 22 November in Elmpt Station.

The aim of the Convention will be to brief Corps WOs and SNCOs on current and future matters concerning both the Army and the Corps. The Corps RSM is keen that units give their widest support to allow WOs and Seniors to attend this event, where possible.

The Point of Contact is;
WO2(SSM) Love
7 Sig Regt
229 (Berlin) Sig Sqn
7SR-ELJ-229-SSM
Tel: 94868 4824
0049 2163974824

The following students were awarded RSI prizes on recent graduations:

Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/020	**Sig Palmer**
Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/021	**Sig Watts**
Communication Systems Basic Regular Course	07/022	**LCpl Colling**
Potential Technician Basic Regular Course	07/008	**Sig Hill**
Driver Basic Regular Course	08/001	**Sig Cairney**

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The Wire

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Please refer to *Guidelines for Contributors*. **http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/thewire/**

Subscribers

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EDITORIAL

This month's edition once more reports the activities of a busy Corps featuring news of operations from four of our Regular Regiments and 2 of our Brigade Signal Squadrons. In addition there well organised accounts of exciting military and adventure training throughout the rest of the Regular and TA Corps and still more reports of social events and fund raising for good causes. Let no-one say that life is boring out there.

I have included an preparatory piece (p 95) with a few good photographs featuring the main activities which have been going on through this month on Ex MIDNIGHT SUN, the Royal Signals TA adventure training exercise in Greenland in August. I hope this will whet the appetite for more specific articles from the participants which will appear in the December issue. There seems to be scope for more excellent photographs and exciting reports and I want to encourage those of you who have taken part to get writing and meet the deadline on 15 October.

I have to remind units again that the deadlines published in *The Wire* are the deadlines for receipt in The Wire Office and not the date of posting by snail mail. I would also encourage those who send material by E mail to confirm receipt with the Assistant Editor. Some E mails do not get through and the sender is not always advised of this; do not assume we have got your submission.

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FRONT COVER

Sig Stokes of 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Talill, Afghanistan

BACK COVER

Sig Motherwell plays the bagpipes as 16 Sig Regt returns to Elmpt.

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

CORPS WELFARE

One of the objects of the Royal Corps of Signals Association is to provide comfort and relief either generally or individually to past and present Signallers and their dependants, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

It is the responsibility of the Welfare Section of the Association Headquarters to control expenditure. Over the period 1st August 2007 to 31st July 2008 the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund provided £368,807 of assistance to 663 applicants. Some of these grants have been instrumental in providing 16 Electric Scooters, 9 Stair Lifts and 20 Level Access Showers. There were numerous other types of assistance requested, such as help with priority bills (rent or utilities), clothing, emergency house repairs etc. All this was possible only with the support of caseworkers from SSAFA Forces Help and The Royal British Legion who provide all the relevant information upon which decisions could be made. If necessary we liaised with the Army Benevolent Fund, The Officers' Association, the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League, Combat Stress, Veterans Agency and many more.

The Assistant Regimental Secretary deals with applications requiring a grant of £600 or less. Major Grant Meetings are held every 4 weeks to consider cases requiring larger amounts of money from £601 up to £1,200. This committee comprises a Retired Senior Officer, a serving Field Officer, a serving NCO and the Welfare Secretary ensuring that every aspect of the Corps is made aware of what is happening within the benevolence side of the Association. During the past year there have been 11 Major Grant Committee Meetings at which 175 grants were awarded to the total of £171,551.

Below is a table which shows a monthly breakdown of all grants awarded from our funds during the period 1st August 2007 to 31st July 2008 and shows a comparison with the previous period. The table shows a decrease in the number of grants awarded by 41 but only a small decrease of £948 in the actual expenditure. This reflects the increase in the cost of materials and the general rise in the cost of living.

MONTHLY TOTAL OF GRANTS AWARDED DURING THE PERIOD 1 AUGUST 2007 – 31 JULY 2008

MONTH	TOTAL OF GRANTS AWARDED	NUMBER OF GRANTS	NEW CASES	GRANTS TO PREVIOUS APPLICANTS	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AGED 65+
2007	**£**				
August	29,402	50	36	14	26
September	22,185	41	21	20	20
October	22684	38	26	12	21
November	38,765	66	48	18	21
December	36,686	52	38	14	25
2008					
January	33,360	59	31	28	25
February	36,340	65	37	28	27
March	27,383	45	28	17	19
April	39,748	74	45	29	41
May	23,151	51	43	8	22
June	30,670	63	40	23	30
July	28,433	59	36	23	27
TOTAL	**£368,807**	663	429	234	279
Comparative 12 month period					
01/8/06 – 31/7/07	£369,755	704	464	247	342

NUMBER OF GRANTS BY AMOUNT
1 AUGUST 2007 – 31 JULY 2008

£1 – 200	£201 – 400	£401 – 600	£601 – 800	£801 – 1000	£1001 – 1200	Over £1200
76	206	227	19	37	98	0

These figures do not include the Christmas grants which are sent with a Corps Christmas card to people receiving annuities and various applicants who are considered to require a little extra as they appear to be living 'on the bread line'.

A card and gift are also sent to individuals in various homes and hospitals. A list is shown below.

1 at Broughton House
2 at the Lady Haig Poppy Factory
1 at a Star & Garter Home
4 in Princess Louise Hospital
4 in Scottish Veterans Residences
4 in Psychiatric Hospitals
19 In-Pensioners at Chelsea

The total amount spent on Christmas grants in 2007 was £3,660.

There are currently 59 recipients of an annuity (supplementary allowance). The cost is £11,505 per quarter. This type of assistance is funded by the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) and administered by us.

We have 18 families in receipt of Nursing Home Shortfall Fees. These are paid quarterly, funded by the ABF. In addition to the funding of annuities and Nursing Home Shortfall Fees, we have received assistance with 34 general grants totalling £39,295.

Occasionally we receive 'thank you' cards or letters. Below are a few extracts from the messages of appreciation received recently:

"On behalf of my family I would like to express our extreme gratitude to you in helping us overcome our difficult financial situation. We have found it impossible to keep our heads above water these past few months and we thought we had nobody to turn to about our situation. It is nice to find that there are people such as yourselves who are willing to help."

"My wife and I are both in our 80s and disabled. The 2 riser/recliner chairs you helped the Royal British Legion to purchase have made an enormous difference to our health and comfort. We are most grateful for your help."

"On behalf of my Mum I would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for the very generous grant you provided to alter her bathroom to accommodate a level access shower. The work was carried out last week and we are so pleased with the outcome. This will now provide a safer facility for my Mum who at 84 has her mobility severely impaired. We are pleased that in time of need you have been able to help the family of an ex-serviceman."

MOVEMENTS

Name and Rank	Unit to which Posted
JUNE 2008	
Capt SC Church	6th (UK) Div
Capt MW Emmerson	30 Sig Regt
Capt MS Rai	ECM Tp
Lt RHC Day	10 Sig Regt
JULY 2008	
Maj DTH Wilson	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
Capt JRC Horton	DHU
AUGUST 2008	
Capt AOH Biggs	DLO
Capt CG Parkes	14 Sig Regt
Capt KS Scaife	102 Log Bde & Sig Sqn
Capt ED Swift	30 Sig Regt
WO1 CS Hales	R SIGNALS Band
Lt ML Gray	DT NU Courses
Lt TW Skinner	RHQ, HQ SOinC(A)
2Lt HR Ayres	7 Sig Regt
2Lt CI Bottoms	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
2Lt CM Davidson	21 Sig Regt
2Lt RJ Hayes	102 Log Bde & Sig Sqn
2Lt RL Meite	30 Sig Regt
2Lt G Park	2 Sig Regt
2Lt KJ Scott	10 Sig Regt
2Lt AS Sterndale Bennet ...	30 Sig Regt
2Lt A Todd	102 Log Bde & Sig Sqn
OCDt MA Bryan	3 (UK) Div & Sig Regt
SEPTEMBER 2008	
Maj J Howell-Walmsley	BGSU
OCTOBER 2008	
Lt Col SJ Baldwin	DES
Maj DTH Wilson	JSSU (CYP)
Capt NS Clay	16 AA Bde & Sig Sqn
Capt RJ Darlington	Def School of Tpt
Capt AC Slack	BOWTAG(N)
Capt JD King	Fleet C4 ISTAR
NOVEMBER 2008	
Capt DS Burnett	SFSG Army
Capt J Chatman	2 Sig Regt
Capt G P Drake	RHQ 10 Sig Regt
Capt CG Parkes	14 Sig Regt
Capt BM Stone	30 Sig Regt
Capt RD Bennett	7 Sig Regt
DECEMBER 2008	
Lt DG Atkinson	10 Sig Regt

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

FAREWELL DRINKS FOR PADRE ANDREW COOPER BIKER AND SENIOR CHAPLAIN DCCIS

- by Cpl Ed Lewis

On the evening of 27 June 2008, a few old and bold members of the White Helmets said a final farewell to Blandford Garrison's Senior Padre, **Andrew 'Coops' Cooper**. Riding motorcycles backwards at each other at speed, as we do, often reminds me of the old saying, 'You won't find an atheist in a foxhole'. That's why we like to keep Padres close to the Team! **Coops** was often to be spotted in the White Helmets' garage over the past 3 years with his very own Triumphs or on Bovington training area during the Team's selection courses, much to the concern of the students! Over the years a strong bond was made between the Padre and the Team. It was hinted by **Coops** early in June that he would like a drink with the Team before he departed Blandford and I jumped at the opportunity to have a little fun at the Padre's expense. The evening consisted of a short minibus drive by **Cpl Mal Cooper** (no relative) and a few drinks in a local country Inn, nothing more, nothing less! When it came to speech time I did the standard funny story routine and jokes before the presentation. Then I went out on a limb as the pub had stopped serving food. "You're on a Major's wage and you haven't even stumped up for a buffet", I said. I then produced 5 loaves and 2 small fish for the Padre to do his magic! Well quite obviously at this point he hadn't turned enough wine into water, so no miracle was to happen! I then presented **Coops** with a White Helmets plaque, which should take pride of place in his new home (the down stairs toilet)! Later on in the evening the Padre's powers kicked in and after a pint of Badger he produced a fine platter of sandwiches, fish they were! Maybe a miracle did happen...

I would like to say a final thank you for everything you have done for me, the Team and its members, both in a personal and professional capacity during your tour at Blandford Camp. We wish you a peaceful tour in Corsham and hope to see you on the Triumph soon!

EXERCISE MANCHE TIGER 16 – 20 JUNE

- SSgt Jenkins RAC

Ex MANCHE TIGER started early for the 2 organisers, **SSgt Shaun Jenkins** and **WO1 Rik Groves**. We deployed on the Sunday as the advance party with the aim being to meet the skipper and load stores onto the yacht. On our arrival in Gosport, we were met by the skipper, **Chris** and he introduced us to the boat, *HMST Dasher*, a 55ft Nicholson, our home for the next 6 days. Once the boat was loaded, we found we all had similar tastes, especially when it came to red wine!

Monday morning saw an early start for the main body. The transport departed from Blandford at 0700hrs arriving at JSASTC approximately an hour and a half later. **Rik** and I met the rest of the team on their arrival and walked them down to the yacht, where they were introduced to **Chris** and their home for the duration of the exercise. The rest of the day consisted of drawing our wet weather clothes, familiarisation, training and safety briefs. **Chris** then divided us into 2 watches depending on our experience, Red Watch being **Lt Col Tim Dyer** (Mate), **Maj Jon Fraser**, **Maj Simon Dyson** and myself (engineer/electrician), Green Watch being **Lt Col Charlie Bishop** (Mate), **Maj David Allison-Green**, **Rik** (purser) and **WO2 Andy Potter** (medic). After a hearty meal consisting of that spawn of the devil, pasta, prepared by yours truly we motored out of JSASTC. Once out into the Solent we practised man overboard drills, the raising and taking down of sails and general seamanship skills. Once **Chris** was happy, we set sail for Yarmouth. The wind was steady and the sea was calm, which made the sailing both good and enjoyable. This gave us all the opportunity to take the helm, which was an interesting and exciting experience especially when we had to avoid the traffic in the Solent. We arrived in Yarmouth at approximately 2300hrs, found a vacant buoy, tied up and got our heads down for a couple of hours having made a decision that night sailing would be great fun.

Two sea dogs teaching a new puppy the trade

Tuesday's call to hands was a shock to the system. At 0215hrs both watches sprang to life despite only having a couple of hours sleep. Work was prioritised with a typical English mentality and as with all good workmen nothing happened until we all had a brew! Now fully awake and revitalised, we released the boat from the buoy and motored out of Yarmouth. Once at sea, the sails were raised and *Dasher* cleared the Needles peninsula within the hour. The decision was then made that instead of heading to Cherbourg, we would catch the Alderney race and head to Braye harbour a distance of 102 nautical miles. At 0400hrs we went into our four hourly watch cycles and Green Watch gratefully fell into their bunks whilst Red Watch took over the helm. It wasn't long before first light and the sun came up, it was a glorious morning with the sea state being 1 – 2 and visibility excellent. Green Watch took full advantage of the good weather and soon got to

Is that a smile or grimace on Maj Fraser's face?

grips with the tacking and gybing drills. We arrived in Braye Harbour at about 1830hrs after nearly 15 hrs continual sailing. The harbour was quite full with only a couple of buoys left. We chose one and harboured up for the night. Within an hour the boat taxi was called and started to ferry us ashore for essential ablutions and sustenance.

The HOG at work

Wednesday's call to hands was a lot more civilised at 0630hrs. By the time we had carried out some personal admin and eaten a very appetising breakfast prepared by the resident chef (the Hobbit of the Galley or HOG), we eventually slipped buoy at 1000hrs and headed for St Peter Port, Guernsey. It was Green Watch's turn to take the helm first. The sea state was 2 - 3, the visibility was good and with the increased wind speed, we found ourselves making great waves (excuse the pun) along the Alderney race. We arrived at Guernsey at 1730hrs and moored up in the harbour alongside a floating jetty. The Avon dinghy was deployed giving **Rik** (look at my pecks) **Groves** the opportunity to prove his amphibious landing skills and we went ashore with the exception of **Andy Potter** who had leant the hard lesson that boats are not made for tall individuals! The evening's activities included very little sightseeing and lots of beers and yet another opportunity for **David Allison-Green** to Skype his wife, in the nicest possible way.

Next day call to hands was at 0500hrs. After carrying out the usual admin and eating breakfast, we slipped our mooring and headed out to sea. Our original intention was to sail to Cowes via the western passage of the Isle of Wight. The sea state was 2 – 3 and visibility was excellent. We returned via the Alderney Races with **Tim Dyer** and **Charlie Bishop** competing to man the helm

and doing sterling impersonations of seasoned veterans. Special mentions must be made to **Rik Groves** for his ability to get a 55ft sailing boat to do a 360 degree pirouette in strong winds! Due to strong winds in our favour we arrived at the way point too early to pick up the tide, so we decided to sail around the eastern side of the Isle of Wight and return to JSASTC. We arrived in Gosport at 2100hrs having nearly had to practise man overboard drills for real as high winds, a distinct lack of coordination and sea legs resulted in **Andy Potter** head butting **Simon Dyson** in the stomach resulting in both of them hanging over the railings. At this point I would like to commend the rapid response of the crew but unfortunately nobody reacted due to being incapacitated with laughter! We moored up in the harbour and then in typical military fashion, we jumped off the boat and followed the skipper to an all you can eat Chinese restaurant. After a couple of hours plenty of food and drinks had been consumed, we all returned to the boat barely able to breath. It was noted that the boat actually sat 6 inches deeper in the water that evening, it would have been 12 inches if **Jon Fraser** had slept in the boat and not on the jetty, a clear sign of a good night.

Friday's call to hands was at 0600hrs and we had a light breakfast because we were all still full from the night before. We got stuck into cleaning and completed any maintenance that was needed. After spending a few hours unloading the excess compo and fresh rations purchased, the boat was handed back to JSASTC. Ex MANCHE TIGER was an extremely successful exercise and broadened the expertise and experience of all participants. The exercise was very cost effective and team spirit, morale and enthusiasm were high throughout. Everybody benefited from the experience and the value we gained from bonding as a team more than justified the expense. In total 267.6 nautical miles were covered, including 6 hrs of night sailing. It is the intention of some of the exercise participants to pursue further sailing experience as well as the intention of CSD (A) to organise a trip further a field next year.

ROYAL SIGNALS PIPES AND DRUMS

- by Sig Coleman

Senior Pipe Major	**CSgt (PM) Huxter**
Corps Pipe Major	**WO1(FofS(IS)) Wardrope**
Pipe Sergeant	**Sgt Scott**
Drum Sergeant	**SSgt (FofS) Thomas**
Drumming Instructor	**Cpl Brennan**
Secretary	**Col (Retd) Moncur**

2008 has been a quieter year for the Pipes and Drums after the very busy 2007 season. This recent period has seen us reorganise and start to train new pipers and drummers in readiness for 2009 and beyond.

A very warm welcome to **CSgt (PM) 'Marty' Huxter** who joins us straight from 5 SCOTS on Op HERRICK and who will mentor us and act as our connection with the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming for the next 2 years. **Pipey Huxter** is posted to 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn, 11 Sig Regt as an instructor on the Sgts' Course. **WO1(FofS(IS)) Wardrope** has recently taken over as Corps Pipe Major (PM) with **Sgt Scott** taking over the reins as Pipe Sgt before attending the Army Pipe Majors course in September 2008.

We also says goodbye to **PM Gordon Rowan** who has gone off to the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming to take up the position of PM after 4 successful years in Blandford.

Although this has been a slightly quieter year, we have still managed to take part in the annual Poole Arts Festival, where we performed to an audience of some 2000 guests who were contributing to charity.

This was our first major event where we were led by the new Corps PM, **WO1 Wardrope** and accompanied by the **Forbes** brothers, **Sig Ian Forbes** from 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt and his brother **Sig John Forbes** who is currently in 11 Sig Regt training as a Comms Sys Op.

June saw us again at the RSA Parade which was a chance for **PM Marty Huxter** to meet all the Pipers and Drummers for the first time, while preparing with the Corps Band for the parade as well as performing a bagpipe recital at the Garrison Officers Cocktail Party.

In July we travelled to Corsham to take part in the annual 10 Sig Regt Reformation Parade. The Friday night saw some of the pipers take over the nearby Cotswold Families Centre and make full use of the facilities on offer before leading the Regt on the parade square as the Mayor of Hounslow took the march past. This parade saw us field 2 new drummers, **Lt Clive Thomas** (who

A rare happening – brothers Sigs Ian and John Forbes at their debut performance together at the Poole Arts Centre concert

is actually a secret piper) from 31 Sig Regt on the bass drum and **Sig 'Dooky' Tuck** who is undertaking IS Eng training at 11 Sig Regt.

Pipes and Drums training weekends now occur monthly and will start to alternate between Blandford and Bramcote. Recent training weekends saw a return of **Lt Chamberlain** 33 Sig Regt (V) who has just got married. A warm welcome also to **SSgt (FofS(IS)) Graeme Tennick** from 4 Bde HQ Staff, **Sgt Davey MacKenzie** from 32 Sig Regt, who is about to deploy to Op

SSgt(FofS) Neil Anderson, WO1(FofS(IS)) Billy Wardrope, SSgt Ian King and Cpl Sean Brennan concentrating hard at the RSA weekend

TOSCA in his new kilt and **Sig Gyanendra** who is a Class 2 Piper and has recently transferred to Royal Signals from 2 RGR and is currently training as a Comms Sys Eng with 11 Sig Regt.A number of Corps regular pipers and drummers have recently been posted to 30 Sig Regt and have taken up their varied appointments across the Regt.

This has not been part of any "grand plan" but more because their PPP applications were successful. This will ensure that any Class 3 pipers and drummers in the Regt can practice together and progress on to the Class 2 and 1 standards of piping and drumming.

If you have previously played the pipes or the drums or would like to do so, why not consider joining the Royal Signals Pipes and Drums. Full training and equipment are provided. Suitable individuals may also attend courses at the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming if released by their COs.

For more details contact **Col (Retd) Moncur** on Blandford Mil 94371 2647 or Civ 01258 482647.

NEWS OF TRAINING

YOUNG OFFICERS' TRAINING

- by Capt Katherine Allt

With everyone unsure of what **Capt Allt,** the Course Officer, had planned for Ex LONDON DASH, which was a team-building exercise, we were all relieved to be gathered at the Union Jack Club. Prior to being dispersed, the course was split into syndicates. Our first task was to decipher various cryptic clues.

Handing in our route cards certainly brought back Ex LONG REACH memories but fortunately we couldn't have been further from the Black Mountains if we tried! Using the underground to zoom around the capital, our aim was to complete various challenges at a number of famous landmarks, however, as always, one syndicate under the watchful eye of **Maj Golley**, decided that tabbing was a far better option. This resulted in plenty of confused sideways glances towards the bunch of would-be apprentices! Things further developed at the Globe Theatre when **2Lts Lord**, **Carey** and **Winkles** began acting "Romeo and Juliet", much to the bemusement of passers by and similarly when **2Lt Flavelle** starting selling "VTC" at Speakers' Corner.

One syndicate was put out of their comfort zone in Saville Row when they were tasked to "give out fashion advice"; the unnamed victim was later found perching on the steps of Abercrombie and Fitch with his boxers hanging out! Further tasks at The Gherkin, The Tower of London, Broadcasting House and Selfridges, to name but a few, were all successfully completed. In between visits to London, the beach, 'The Snug', **2Lt Hick's** 30th birthday celebration and various other Blandford social events, TC71 was able to make time in their busy schedule for a visit to 215 Sig Sqn during Ex FIRST JOG.

This provided us with a great opportunity to observe and interrogate a fully deployed Bde HQ in a tactical environment.

2Lts Lord, Harris, Carey and Winkles seeing the sights of London

This was of significant benefit but the highlight was being given a cam net effectiveness demonstration, even if the Sqn OC was a bit overly keen on his Army euphemisms!

Sadly we couldn't be joined by **Lt Le Bars**, our French exchange officer of 6 weeks, who was heavily involved with TC70's Ex MERC CHAIN, listening to various orders and eating rations, apparently a very different experience from in France! Whilst increasing his knowledge of Bowman, **Lt Le Bar** certainly improved his English and made the most of the many BBQs. He is at present trying to persuade his seniors to let him return to the UK to find an English girlfriend!

NEWS FROM FORMATIONS

XI 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE

Comd **Brig CJ Thackray**
COS **Maj IA Blower MBE**

11 SIGNAL BRIGADE ADVENTUROUS TRAINING – EXERCISE DRAGON PRAETORIAN - *by Maj Andy Aitken*

Taking place in and around Capel Curig Training Camp (CCTC) from 7 – 11 July 2008, Ex DRAGON PRAETORIAN was 11 Sig Bde's adventurous training exercise for Field Officers. The exercise was organised by **Maj Andy Aitken**, and comprised a session considering the potential future reorganisation of the Corps, followed by 3 days of trekking in Snowdonia National park. Field officers from the Bde HQ, the Unified Systems Support Organisation and 2, 14 and 30 Sig Regts participated and administrative support was provided by **SSgt(SQMS) Nuttall**, **Sgt Morrison**, **Cpl Barrow** and **Cpl Martin** of 245 Sig Sqn (EW).

The Comd, **Brig Jake Thackray**, opened the exercise by introducing **Lt Col Sara Copley** and **Maj Rachel Jones** from Command Support Force Development, HQ SOinC(A). Following an excellent presentation which revealed some of the thinking behind the possible future shape of the Corps, **Lt Col Copley** tasked syndicates to propose ORBATS for sqns within Bde Sig Regts. As expected, the accumulated brainpower of 25 officers came up with some valuable proposals and interaction between the Bde and HQ SOinC(A) will continue for some time on this subject.

Following the classroom session on Monday, we were more than ready to start trekking. Day 1 of the 3 day programme was intended to be a fairly gentle introduction to the hills of North Wales. Starting at Capel Curig and finishing at the Llyn Ogwen, the 'Glyders' is a highly popular trekking route. Although only 15km, the route is undulating, which makes the climb of 804m feel like more. When examining the map the previous evening, there had been shouts of "it's only 15k; we'll be finished by midday". As we progressed up the first hill, conversation levels dropped, being replaced with heavy breathing. A reasonable first day now seemed like a half decent idea, particularly as the group's average age was over 40. Six hours later and we had had an excellent first day, with the weather being kind. For much of the day the group was led by **Maj 'Blod' Godwin**, complete with walking stick. He set a blistering pace, but it soon became apparent why – he was only trekking on Day 1 due to work commitments. A true pacemaker.

Days 2 and 3 consisted of an expedition with an overnight camping stop. The Carneddau Ridge is a 19km route with wonderful views when the weather is good. Unfortunately **Maj Aitken's** bid for decent weather had been rejected and visibility steadily reduced as we gained height. Obviously poor visibility poses no significant challenge to officers with maps and spirits remained high until the torrential rain started. It was at this point that we discovered a successor to **David Bellamy** in our midst. In addition to being a highly qualified and experienced walker and climber, there is little that **Maj Ben White** doesn't know about wild flora and fauna. As forecast, the rain persisted for the rest of the day. Indeed the one and only day of the year that the Bde's finest were to stay under canvas was the very day that weather forecasters were predicting "a month's rain in a day". We temporarily escaped the elements by stopping for lunch in the bothy on Foel Grach and there were few complaints when later that afternoon the campsite appeared in the distance. Having pitched tents, a deal was struck with the farmer, and we spent the rest of the evening cooking and making our own entertainment in part of his barn. A cracking evening was rounded off with the Comd cooking bacon butties for the entire group.

Somehow all the tents remained watertight during an extremely stormy night and by 0800hrs we were ready to start our third and final day of trekking. This was to be our most challenging day, with the 20km including going up and over Cwm Tryfan in the shadow of Tryfan's impressive east face, followed by an ascent of Snowdon. It was early in the day that **Maj Bob '20 minutes' Lovett** earned his nickname. Whenever asked how long the next leg would take, his response was always an optimistic "20 minutes". After 3 hrs of trekking and a coffee break, we started up Snowdon. At 1,085m, this was definitely going to take longer than the proverbial 20 mins but at least the weather had brightened up. We decided to climb using the Horseshoe route, and descend on the straightforward Pyg Track. The final kilometre to the summit of Snowdon is pretty steep, so we were delighted to see the visitors' centre appear out of the mist. Mission accomplished.

An 11 Sig Bde event is not complete without an end of exercise social function and DRAGON PRAETORIAN was no exception. Thanks to the professional catering support provided by **Sgt Whitfield**, **LCpl Loveridge** and **Pte Adjei** from Brawdy, the BBQ was the ideal way to finish the week. After contributing to the planning of the future of the Corps, we had covered over 50km in 3 days, thus ensuring that the aims of the exercise were achieved. Just as important was the fact that we all knew each other better than we had 4 days earlier. With appropriate facilities and being so close to the hills, CCTC is an excellent facility, which I encourage you to consider for future adventurous training. It is easy to book and the staff are helpful and accommodating. In addition to thanking the administration team and chefs from 14 Sig Regt, I am very grateful for the assistance provided by CCTC's **Adrian Condren** (Comdt), **Maggie Jacobs** (Admin Officer) and **David Snape** of Defence Estates.

Wet, but happy!

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT
YORK

CO **Lt Col JJ Cole OBE**
RSM **WO1(RSM) JA March**

TRAILWALKER (UK) 2008 - *by LCpl Trigg*

The weekend of the 19 July saw a team of "Yorkies" from 2 Sig Regt, led by the CO, **Lt Col Cole OBE**, compete in a gruelling 100km cross country event, Trailwalker (UK) 2008. The team, comprising **Maj Anderson**, **Capt Yates**, **WO2(SSM) Hayes** and the CO, not only completed the trek successfully in a respectable 20 hrs 16 mins but finished in 7th position of all military teams and 39th out of 287 overall.

The 2 Sig Regt Trailwalker 2008 Team

Accompanying the team, a 3 man support crew were quickly on hand at each Check Point (CP) to provide food, water, changes of clothes, seating and shelter. **Sgt Martin**, **LCpl Myall** and **LCpl Trigg** deftly navigated the intricate network of minor roads and near dirt tracks to get ahead of the team at each location and prepare for there arrival.

At the start location, elements of 246 (Ghurkha) Sig Sqn provided food and shelter, while being entertained by a breathtaking display from the Band of The Royal Ghurkha Rifles and introductory speeches from **Brig Thackray** and various charitable organisations.

The mass start went off smoothly at 0600hrs and at CP 1, the Team blazed through confidently. The event went well to CP 4, where the team took a brief respite to eat a light lunch, change socks and take stock of the challenge still ahead.

At CP 7, the team were being to feel the strain with, **Capt 'Eddie' Yates** making a consolidated effort to complete the task and **Maj Anderson** sustaining a minor knee injury. The pasta meal provided at the CP and a good foot wash left the team in good spirits and moving onward. Approaching midnight, CP 9 marked the final stop with the support crew before the big push to the finish. In pitch black and near-freezing temperatures, the team practically hobbled over the line for their final respite. After large quantities of tea and coffee, they set off with quiet resolution and cylumes glowing.

Finally the Team staggered across the finish line for tea and medals. Broken, bruised and blistered, they took to the podium and received their medals and retired to the mess facility provided by 22 Sig Regt for a well earned Baht. At this point, the CO could barely walk, **Capt Yates** and **Maj Anderson** immediately lay down but the dark horse of the group, **WO2(SSM) Hayes** demonstrated remarkable stamina and was seemingly unaffected by the double-marathon distance.

An unbroken night's sleep saw the "Yorkies" rested and slightly recovered. Under clear blue skies and in blazing sunshine, we departed Brighton Race Course to head triumphantly back to Imphal Barracks in York.

REGIMENTAL ADVENTUROUS TRAINING
- by LCpl Hodgkinson

On Sunday 20 July 2008, Support Sqn armed only with 45 packed lunches and a guitar prepared for an arduous 4 hr coach journey from York to Capel Curig for a week's adventure training. The journey to Wales was made somewhat more interesting after our coach was escorted off the motorway by a motorway patrol vehicle for a routine check but after a quick inspection, the Sqn were back on the road and soon entering Wales.

On arrival at Capel Curig, we dumped our bags and departed in force to recce the nearest civilisation in Bets y Coed to find a suitable watering hole for the next few evenings. After a few swift drinks we returned to camp for a good nights sleep before the 5 day training package began. Bright eyed and bushy tailed the Sqn paraded to be split down into 4 groups for the various activities, which involved mountain biking, kayaking, rock climbing and hill walking.

The first day's activity for my group was mountain biking. Expecting a nice gentle ride through the Welsh countryside, we left Capel Curig on the mini bus to collect our bikes and after a quick safety brief, we set off to be greeted by a monster of a hill to attempt to climb. We soon realised what we had let ourselves in for. After an hour of uphill riding we arrived at the start of the Marin Trail, which I later found out is aimed at experienced riders!

The single track descent was hard work and pretty hair raising at times and it did not take long for a few bad judgments which resulted in crashes and a puncture. **LCpl Thorpe** spared no time in lying on the nearest bench while the puncture was being repaired. A few more crashes and a wrong turn later we consulted our map and began our return to where we had begun to be met by our mini bus, which took us back to Capel Curig to get patched up.

We rose on Day 2 with our "up and at 'em" attitude slightly dented, due to the unforgiving saddles of the bikes from the previous day. Today's activity was kayaking, which struck fear in the hearts of a few members of the group, including myself. Once at the lake, we got dressed for the occasion which was quickly followed by laughter as **LCpl Best** had been given the most elegant pink jacket to wear on the water. After a good hour of trying to squeeze into our kayaks, we were ready to hit the water. **Cpl Dilip** proved to be a natural on the water and thrashed us all in a race. Once our confidence on the water had been gained, it was soon lost after a few errors of judgement, which resulted in a lot of refreshing capsizes. We set of across to the other side of the lake which took quite a while as a few of us were not best at going in a straight line.

Once at the other side we attempted a rock slide to the amusement of passing train passengers. After we were suitably refreshed from the cold water, we headed back to the other side of the lake with a strong head wind to complicate matters. Back safely on shore, we emptied the water from our now flooded kayaks and returned to Capel Curig for a nice hot drink.

Arriving on the hottest day of the week in an old slate mine near Llanberis we prepared for Day 3: rock climbing. Sun cream applied and harnesses securely fitted, climbing began. Starting with a relatively easy climb to learn the basics we scaled the rocks with not too many problems. It was only when we moved on to the harder rock faces that the complications began.

After a highly entertaining climb from **Cpl Dilip** which involved him scrambling up the slate while not actually gaining any height, we moved on to the biggest climb of the day. It was not the hardest but definitely the highest and by this time everyone was getting tired and blisters had started appearing on fingers. This resulted in a lot of leg cramps half way up the rock face, which was entertaining to watch but not so entertaining when you were up there. Exhausted and happy to be alive the group returned to camp.

Our Day 4 it was hill walking. We were not overly enthusiastic about this activity having seen and heard the pain the other 3 groups had been in from a climb that even giants would struggle with named "The Devil's Kitchen". We kept our spirits up however with the possibility that we would not take that particular route. After a short journey in a mini bus we arrived at the bottom of The Devil's Kitchen, had a quick look at the map and we were off. Struggling up the hill at a slow pace, we were left feeling embarrassed as a runner passed us almost effortlessly.

At the top of The Devil's Kitchen, the view was amazing and made the hard work worthwhile, until the next hill we had to climb was pointed out.

Onwards and upwards we went, scrambling up the mountainside to what we had been assured was our final summit. Having reached that, we sat down for some lunch and to the amazement of the group **LCpl Best** saw this as an ideal opportunity to ring his mortgage advisor. Lunch finished and bags packed, we were off. We could see the car park where we were due to be collected – the only problem was the path shown on the map was not actually a path.

So we began our descent, carving our own path in the mountainside. With only a road to cross to get to our pick-up point we were relieved to have made it but it was not over yet. Our planned path to the road involved scaling a wall and crossing somebody's garden. Having jumped the wall we were met by the owner who was sunbathing in her garden – unimpressed, she sent us on our way. Pick-up point reached and legs tired, we relaxed and waited for our bus.

With the activities complete the 4 groups became one and set off for the final day of white water rafting at Bala. With 7 people on each boat we began building up speed. We hit the first section of white water, which came as a surprise to many people. Our guide on the raft found it extremely amusing to get us stuck facing the wrong way with ice cold water smashing into our faces. Once we had got the hang of it, we had a race with another raft and it was more speed than control, as we bounced down bouncing off the river banks with **Sig Steane** and **LCpl Griffin** almost reduced to tears through fear. With everyone tired and extremely wet we returned to Capel Curig for a BBQ and a few drinks to relax after an exhausting week.

White water rafting at the Regt's adventure training

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj P Anderson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) J Meek**

Postings In	Postings Out
Maj Bosley	**Lt Col Sutherland**
Maj Toze	**Maj Taylor** (RMO)
WO1 Eckersley	**Capt Slack**
SSgt Pargin	**WO1 Deakin**
Sgt Field	**SSgt Porteus** (LAD)
Sgt Lyon	**Sgt Belshaw**
Cpl Knight	**Sgt Slocombe**
LCpl Bagshaw	**Sgt Turner**
LCpl Longwe	**Cpl Brown 068**
LCpl Mawer	**Cpl Carter**
Sig Anson	**Cpl Knibbs** (LAD)
Sig Best	**Cpl Porter**
Cfn Sadler	**Cpl Shaw** (LAD)
Sig Stather	**Cpl Whittaker**
Pte Wise	**LCpl Gharti Magar** (Chef)
	LCpl Jackson (LAD)
	LCpl Jones (LAD)
	Pte Oliver (Chef)

Sp Sqn has continued with its usual hectic schedule deploying into the field on Ex KEY FOB 08 to practise low level 'skills and drills' prior to the Regimental exercise, Ex KEY FLIGHT 08. In addition they have also completed a MATTs week, Sqn Board Of Officers and adventure training in Capel Curig. The Sqn is now looking forward to a busy exercise period supporting the Regt on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS and Ex JOINT VENTURE, hopefully in Cyprus, but more than likely in South Cerney.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Graham**
SSM **WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

214 Sig Sqn are now in the period of pre-deployment training for TELIC 13 in November this year. As with any pre-deployment package, there is a healthy mixture of special to arm training to get all of our communications skills up to speed and also the 'green' element to ensure we are all honed warriors. The Sqn is covering 3 main tasks on TELIC 13. These are providing the Baghdad Communications Unit (BCU), providing the communications support to Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) and supplying backfill to 200 Sig Sqn with 20 Armd Bde. Those soldiers not deploying will be providing an active rear party who will provide support to those who are deployed, while maintaining the Cormorant fleet and going on training courses with a view to future commitments post-TELIC. New troops are being formed to reflect these tasks; so it is a temporary goodbye to Saxon, Roman and Viking Tps and hello to Baghdad, Kuwait and Rear Tps. Although the names are not particularly original, it does give

the inevitable t-shirt designers something to work on. Support Tp will retain its function but will come under the umbrella of Rear Tp. As part of the preparation for our impending operational tour, the Sqn has handed over all of its enduring and high-readiness commitments. Viking Tp waved a tearful farewell to SLE/ICS2 detachment and we all bade a sombre farewell to our Op VERITAS Rear (Tampa) opportunity. The exercise schedule remains relatively unchanged as we are supporting Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS 08, albeit as part of the pre-deployment training for Kuwait Tp!

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Clixby**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

219 Sig Sqn is currently split between 3 main locations: Baghdad, Kuwait and York. The Sqn also has elements in Tampa. It is a busy time with provision of the Baghdad Communications Unit and the Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) CIS Tp on Op TELIC and with the remainder of the Sqn back in York partaking in a very busy exercise period in the build up to Ex JOINT VENTURE in November 2008 and the standing up of very high readiness ICS capability in 2009. **Maj Alex Clixby** replaces **Maj Andrew Mould** as OC, with **Maj Mould** embarking on his new job in MOD London. Other new arrivals include **2Lt Richard Tudhope** who joins us fresh from his Tp Commanders course and we welcome **Sgt Field**, **Cpl Brown** and **Sig Barker** to the York fold.

BAGHDAD COMMUNICATIONS UNIT - *by Cpl Paul Wright*

OC	**Lt J Corns**
SSgt	**SSgt S Young**

The OC, FofS and a Tp from 219 Sig Sqn are currently serving on Op TELIC 12 as the Baghdad Communications Unit (BCU), located within the International Zone, Baghdad. We have had a busy start to the tour, taking over from 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt towards the end of May. As always though, the mighty 219 Sig Sqn hit the ground running and quickly got to grips with how things work out here.

Apart from working hard to keep everything in good running order, we have also managed to get out for unit PT every week, where our PTIs, **Cpl 'Shez' Sherrington** or **LCpl Borwick** (10 Sig Regt) enjoy getting their own back on anyone that has annoyed them throughout the week. Most people are also taking the opportunity to spend loads of time in the gym on 'Op MASSIVE' and working on the tans with 'Op BRONZE', while juggling a busy work schedule providing communications to over 300 UK military in the Baghdad AOR!

For our entertainment, there is a weekly quiz to which we invite other nations to join us from around the IZ and any money raised goes to charity – we are planning to donate the charity money to a local Baghdad Anglican Church and 'Help for Heroes'. We have also raised some money for charity with nights such as Pig Racing (where people placed up to $250 to back a little fluffy pig!) and a live music night organised by **SSgt 'Not So' Young**. Additionally, **LCpl Wendie Cunington** has organised bingo, **LCpl Mark Hartfield** arranged a volleyball tournament and **Cpl Paul Wright** organised a poker competition.

There is also a small detachment from the Tp working near Baghdad International Airport in 'Brit House'. Headed by **Sgt Lee Pailing**, with technical support provided by **Cpl 'Al' Kirby** and **Cpl Mick Frain** and with support from the 2 RAF personnel (**Sgt Donna Sefton** and **Cpl Andy Gillam**), life at Brit House is always busy with ongoing projects, a non stop flurry of visitors and the occasional function for the top brass!

Congratulations to **Cpl Frain** who recently went home on paternity leave to a new born baby girl! The Americans are always here with their support for an amazing cookhouse but it's a shame they don't apply the same enthusiasm for reliable electricity to our communication nodes!

THE PRIME MINISTER COMES TO BAGHDAD

On 19 July the Prime Minister, **Gordon Brown**, came to Baghdad and visited the British Embassy in the International Zone. Five members of 219 Sig Sqn got to meet the PM, along with personnel from the BSU and PROFOR. The select few were **Cpl 'Shez' Sherrington**, **LCpl Wendie Cunington**, **LCpl Dave Hayden** and **LCpl Andy Borwick**. We were lead from the front by the OC, **Maj Clixby**.

On arrival there was a distinct difference in excitement shown between the guys. When asked who wants to stand at the front and meet the PM, **LCpl Cunington** did not hesitate. She received a quick lesson on how to greet the PM from the lads. She practised her curtsy and after taking a bit of convincing, finally agreed to call him 'Your Highness'. The straight faces finally caved in and she knew she was a victim of a horrible prank. We then apologised and said that coming to attention and saluting would be perfectly fine!

As **Gordon Brown** entered the room he was faced with the eager **LCpl Cunington** and the rest of the initial greeting party. Walking straight passed them, he made his way to the rest of us hanging back at the finger buffet. He started his hand shaking and question asking as he made his way around the room. **LCpl Hayden** followed him taking photos of every random person that he shook hands with. During all this there was a look of distress on **Wendie's** face, for she thought she had missed out on her opportunity for a photo with the PM. Never one to give up, she elbowed, bit and punched her way back into the line. **LCpl Hayden** passed the camera to me to get the final shot of he and **LCpl Cunington** meeting the PM. Sure enough he got in his picture, however **LCpl Cunington** proved not to be so lucky; the camera battery died! All in all it was a good experience to meet our Prime Minister and we all now have a handshaking photograph to prove it....well most of us do anyway!

KSF CIS TROOP WIRE NOTES - *by Cpl Forster*

OC	**Lt CP Jones**
SSgt	**SSgt S Sweeney**

With the bedding in period of the tour over and everyone now settled into their routines within KSF CIS Tp, it was time for another busy few weeks. We hosted a number of different visits from different units, all interested to see how the communications infrastructure was developing at KSF to facilitate the planned move of Staff from the Basra COB to Camp Buehring. We have had a surge team from 10 Sig Regt working out here with us for about 6 weeks, developing a new infrastructure backbone to bring a number of new buildings on line for the Staff.

The busy period of visits finished with the welcomed arrival of the 214 Sig Sqn recce team comprising **Lt Chris Healey** and **WO2 (FofS IS) Ian Hirst**, who will be bringing their Tp out to take over from us in November. The end of a busy visit period allowed us time to divert our attentions elsewhere and crack on with the Tp's training programme. Our nominated training NCO, **Cpl 'Fozzy' Forster**, organised a comprehensive programme which included a PFT at 0530hrs, map reading theory, BCDT, Super 6 and 2 range days. Once again, we were able to make good use of the excellent training facilities available in the American Training Village at Camp Buehring.

Some of the training periods were rather more eventful than others; in particular one of our Grouping and Zeroing range days. After a number of failed attempts to actually get on the ranges since arriving in Camp Buehring, due to a number of failed arrangements caused by the Anglo-American language barrier, sandstorms and confused timings, we were confident that the range day organised for the morning of 17 July would be a success. It was an early start for all concerned, especially **Cpl Forster** and **Cpl 'Johno' Johnson** who had to leave camp on a route recce at 0130hrs. The Tp paraded at 0300hrs ready to go. The cross-country journey to the range was fairly uneventful until we arrived at the enormous American range complex where, due to the strong winds of the previous few days the range roads were completely covered over with sand. In true soldier fashion, we pressed on, following the route taken by the lead Land Rover. Despite some careful and very clever driving the whole convoy got bogged in the sand and had to be towed out by the locals who were out clearing the roads.

LCpl Mikey Carter's vehicle mechanic skills were invaluable to the un-bogging efforts, he took a quick look under the chassis, sucked air in through his teeth, and declared proudly that the vehicles were indeed, stuck! We eventually made it to the range and completed our package.

The return journey was a little less eventful thanks to the rally like driving efforts of **SSgt 'Sean' Sweeney** in the combat minibus and also the route clearance efforts of the locals.

The Tp are nearing the half-way point of the tour, and with the R&R plot in full swing and plenty of work to do, morale remains high. The Tp bid farewell to **Lt Catrin Jones**, who returns to the UK for posting to AFC Harrogate.

311th EXPEDITIONARY SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (ESC) *vs* CAMP BUEHRING INTERNATIONAL COMBINED SERVICES XI – MATCH REPORT - *by Cpl M Johnson*

19 July 08 saw the first football match between the Camp Buehring XI and the 311th ESC. The Camp Buehring team organised and coached by the KSF CIS Tp, comprised 10 British and 5 US soldiers, had 2 weeks training prior to the match and were quietly confident going into the match against the 311th who had recently beaten the Kuwaiti Army side 4 – 2. The 311th team, consisting of 25 Americans plus various coaching staff, cheerleaders and of course a water boy, were in top form going into the game following their recent win.

After a 3 hr coach journey to the Kuwaiti Naval Base and a quick dip in the pool, we were ready for kick off. The match kicked off in 40ºC heat and the Camp Buehring team, captained by **Cpl Johnson**, went straight on the attack and opened the scoring through **LCpl 'Karl' Braithwaite**, 2 Sig Regt, who 5 mins later added a second. **SAC Mills** RAF added a third before a shell shocked 311th pulled one back just prior to half time.

Against the flow of the match, the 311th scored a surprising second in the opening minutes of the second half. The Buehring team rallied together and soon made it 4 – 2 through **SAC Mills**. This was quickly followed by 2 goals from **WO2 'Alfie' Alford**, one from **Sgt Adams**, US and with the 311th looking despondent, **LCpl 'Mikey' Carter**, 2 Sig Regt, made it 8 – 2 before **SAC Mills** rounded off the scoring, completing his hat-trick, with a cross that he claimed to be a shot. The match was a great success and the 311th were keen to challenge the Camp Buehring team to a rematch soon after the final whistle, which was accepted instantly. After a dip in the pool to cool down, it was time to board the coach and return to Camp Buehring.

2 Signal Regiment Team showing off their silverware

15 (NORTH EAST) BRIGADE SAAM 2008 - *by Cpl Sanjay Rai*

The 15 (NE) Bde SAAM 2008 was held in Catterick training area on 10/11 May 2008. This competition was held to allow 2 Div Units and individuals to qualify for the CENTSAAM 2008, due to be held at Bisley ranges during the period 5 – 10 July 08.

The 2 Sig Regt Shooting team consisted of **Capt Hebindra Pun** (OIC), **WO2(SSM) Dhir Khokaja Pun** (Team Captain), **Cpl Khagendra Tamang**, **Cpl Sanjay Rai**, **Sig Anup Gurung**, **Sig Lal Pun** and **Sig Sanjaykumar Rana**.

The competition was predominantly run by the TA Volunteers (150 Tpt Regt, RLC) and the competition itself was attended by 11 TA and 3 Regular Units. The Regular Units consisted of 2 Sig Regt, Infantry Training Battalion A (ITB A) and Infantry Training Battalion B – Gurkha Company Catterick (ITB B). The ITB B was our main contender as they were led by former Queen's Medallist, **Capt Man Bahadur Pun**. Due to the Regt's busy schedule and commitments, we missed out most of the training for this competition but managed to take part in the rehearsal on 7 May 08. We had a minor advantage as we had competed in the Corps OSC and managed to bag some silverware for the Regt there.

It was a good experience shooting alongside TA units and especially with the TA staff who unknowingly made us run 2km twice on the Para Cup Competition at 0730hrs in the morning. During the Falling Plate Competition, the Regimental 2IC, **Lt Col C R Sutherland** and the RSM, **WO1 J March** visited the team on the final day.

The Falling Plate Shoot was the only event which was open to all units; both TA and Regulars. Though we were the Winners of Corps and Inter-Corps Falling Plate Competition at Corps OSC 08, we did not take it for granted and fought hard to beat ITB A team in the final. After 2 days of hard competition, we managed to secure the following trophies and silverware:

Rifle Team Regular Winner
Falling Plate Winner
Fleeting Encounter Match Regular Winner (Moving)
Para Cup Winner
Unit Championship Winner

Apart from the team competition, there were prizes for individuals as well. There was a tough competition between the former Queen's Medallist, **Capt Manbahadur Pun** and former Corps Champion **Cpl Khagendra Tamang** for the individual prizes. **Cpl Khagendra Tamang** became the Individual Champion at Arms Winner, LSW Champion Winner and Rifle Champion Runner Up. **Sig Sanjaykumar Rana** won the Overall Class B Cup.

Thousand of rounds fired, thousands of enemies killed and finally 2 Sig Regt was declared winners of the 15(NE) Bde SAAM 08 and 2 Sig Regt team qualified for the CENTSAAM 2008 in which we hope to do well.

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj BG White**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

HELLOS AND GOODBYES

246 Gurkha Sig Sqn finally said goodbye to **Capt Nirmal Bhattachan** and family (left on promotion to Maj), **Capt Ganesh Gurung** to sunny Brunei and **SSgt(YofS) Hanes** to 22 Sig Regt. Warm welcome to new Sqn 2IC, **Capt Purna Gurung** and family from Brunei, **Capt Teshar** and family from Tp Commanders course and **SSgt(YofS) Jones** from the factory.

OP VALERO – KOSOVO DEPLOYMENT - *by Sig Anup Gurung*

The potential for Sek Kong Tp, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, to deploy to Kosovo on Op VALERO had existed since November 07 and I eagerly waited for the day of deployment. There had always been rumours of possible deployment, but it had never materialised. However, when the Tp OC, **Lt Tom Harrison** and Tp SSgt, **SSgt Dev**, headed for Ballykinler, Northern Ireland for the 2 RIFLES deployment brief, I was chuffed as I was going to be on my very first operational tour.

On 19 May 08, as the other members of the Sqn were warm under their duvets, 18 members of the SLE assembled in front of the armoury where the CO gave us a concise farewell speech, which made clear what was expected of us during the deployment. The long awaited myth of SLE deployment was on the verge of turning into a fact as the wheels rolled at 2315hrs.

I was excited, but the drive was long and tiring and took us 5 hrs to reach South Cerney. Arriving there we learnt that our flight was delayed, which actually wasn't a surprise. After a quick breakfast we hopped onto Brize Norton transport, where at exactly 1115hrs (20 May 08) we took off in a VC10. After 3 hrs 10mins, I was finally achieving my dream, which actually started with a scary landing! As we got on the coaches, the kind driver smiled and said 'Mirdita' in reply I said 'Britannia' (British Army)! Though I would not like to admit it, I did feel like an idiot when I learnt that he was just greeting me in his language! Entering Camp Jubilee (the British and Portuguese base) we did our normal administration and PT sessions until our freight arrived on 24 May after which we headed further North to Camp Novo Selo (a French base).

Our task was to provide one mobile communications asset (Cormorant CLASp) and Satellite Ground Terminal (TALON) to support the 2 RIFLES BG in Kosovo. Once in location, we settled into routine with the operational battle rhythm. The services we provided and used Cormorant as bearers for were; Video Tele Conferencing, JOCS along with insecure voice and secure voice/data. The LWRN's had a variety of tasks and proved to be both reliable and flexible deploying to Camp Plana supporting A Coy (10km north of Camp Novo Selo), to Camp Belvedere supporting B/C Coy (20km north of Camp Novo Selo) and providing support to the Forward HQ at Jubilee Lines. In addition, the crews of the LWRN were also employed as rifleman to help ease the patrol rotations. Though there were a few minor problems with JOCS, these were quickly rectified and proved the deployment of ICS Det 1 and LWRNs successful.

I am sure **Cpl Manbir** has gained a fine experience and a bucket full of knowledge working on JOCS and **Sig Lal** has had time to refresh his infantry skills which he must have enjoyed being on vehicle patrol. Despite being on a busy schedule, we managed to have some fun time, including 6-a-side football match with the French and Portuguese and volleyball with the Fijians. We were also fortunate to attend a memorial parade organised by Queen's Gurkha Engineers in memory of late **SSgt Balaram Rai** QGE who died while on duty in 1999.

Finally on 30 June 08, the Operations Room dropped its link and on 4 July 08 at around 1130hrs we boarded a Boeing 737-800 and left Kosovo and headed for UK.

All my eagerness and excitement was finally realised when on 16 July I received my first medal on my chest from the CO. I hope to have many more memorable adventures and experiences in future.

EXERCISE NORTHERN UKALI-ORALI - *by Sig Hangsing Subba*

After long and hectic weeks in the month of May 2008 with the JFLogC HQ build up training, Island Tp, 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, finally had some spare time towards the end of the month. Our Tp OC, **Capt Hebindra Pun Saheb** organised an adventure training package in the Lake District area over the period 26 – 30 May. It was a 4 day long package which included climbing the 3 highest peaks in the Lake District, a visit to Honister Slate Mine and a boat trip around Bassenthwaite Lake in Keswick.

We left York at 1500hrs on 26 May in 2 minibuses to Warcop Training Camp near Penrith. We arrived in the Trg Camp at 1700hrs and were allocated our accommodation by **SSgt Tirtha Rai**, our Tp SSgt. After dinner, we had our map reading revision lessons and we all got our heads down early that evening ready for an early start next day.

The next day we were divided into 2 groups. Our group was to hike up the Helvellyn Mountain. Located in the central Lakeland, It is the third highest mountain in the Lake District, reaching the height of 950m. As we hiked up we were caught by some rains and strong winds and the temperature also started to drop drastically. It was definintely cold and wet. When we reached the top we couldn't get a good view of the lake below due to the bad weather. That evening we reached the camp at around 1600hrs.

The next day we were to climb up the Scaffel Pike. It is the highest mountain in England at 978m and is the largest of the Scaffel peaks. It is one of the most difficult climbs in the Lake District due to its jagged promontory. Both of our groups were to ascend the peak from different routes and had decided to meet on the top. As we started the climb, the route got rather difficult. Navigation became more difficult because the paths were not marked clearly on the map. Furthermore the weather made navigation more difficult and challenging.

As we were about to reach the top we had to cross huge boulders of rock, where there was barely no footpath. It was fun, enjoyable and dangerous as well. When we reached the top, we met with the other group and had our lunch there. As we descended I couldn't believe that England had some of the best landscapes in the world. That hike was the longest and the most tiring of all.

Having a break on the way to Skiddaw peak

The next day we were to climb up the Skiddaw peak. It is located near the town of Keswick and is the third highest peak in England, reaching a height of 931m. It is one of the most famous climbs in the Lake District that and offers a number of ascents. The weather turned out to be perfect on that day which helped us to capture some of the most beautiful views of the lake and Keswick below as we climbed up. That evening when we reached the camp there was a BBQ and football match organised by our Tp staff.

The football match was played between the 2 groups. The match proved to be more competitive then we had anticipated and we had to play extra time to declare the winner team. The next day was the last day of our package and we went to visit the Honister Slate Mine. It is believed to be one of the oldest slate mines in the United Kingdom and has also produced some of the finest slates in the world.

A guide who accompanied us throughout the tour also gave us a brief description of the engineering works during the Victorian era. After the mine visit we went for a boat trip to Bassenthwaite Lake, one of the beautiful lake in the district.

Group photograph before entering a tunnel into the Honister Slate Mine

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

CO **Lt Col PEJ Drew**
RSM **WO1 MR Eastman**

The Regt is now almost complete back in Bulford, waiting for the stragglers from Op TELIC and HERRICK as they complete their operational tours.

There has been a significant change over of personalities during the Summer. Farewell to **Maj Dave Wilson** (OC HQ Sqn) and **Babs** as they head for Cyprus and to **Capt Richie Bell** (QM(T)) on posting to 2 Sig Regt. Also to **Maj Helen Bosley** (OC 206 Sig Sqn) on posting to 2 Sig Regt and **Lt Rob Monk** who disappeared during the Summer to JOTAC and 20 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn, but not before he competed one last time for the successful Regt Athletics Team.

Amongst our WOs, farewell to **WO1 Torrington** on posting to 11 Sig Regt, **WO2(RQMS) Ayling** on posting to 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and **WO2(RQMS) Pay** who has moved to 216.

Our new arrivals are **Maj Darrell Skimming** (OC HQ), **Capt Carl Budding** (QM(T)), **2Lt Cyrus Karumba** straight from Blandford, **Maj Ronnie Westerman** who is taking command of 206 Sig Sqn, **WO2(SSM) Scarrott** (202), **WO2(SSM) Taylor** and **WO2 Disley**.

Shortly all the personnel who stepped up during the op tour will step back down again.

One final farewell to **Cpl Garry Warwick**, who very sadly died after a long illness on Saturday 26 July 2008. Our thoughts are with **Amanda** his wife and his family at this difficult time. **Garry** and **Amanda** were only married on 11 June and the last few weeks have been particularly difficult and emotional for everybody involved. The funeral service and cremation took place at Bulford Garrison Church and at the Salisbury Crematorium on Friday 1 August. (Editor's note: see page 87 for the obituary.)

POTENTIAL NON COMMISSIONED OFFICER (PNCO) CLM COURSE PILOT 15 – 25 JUNE - *by WO2(SSM) Taylor*

As a new part of the CLM process we were directed by SOinC to prepare and deliver the PNCO course. The course is a new concept and breaks away from conventional trains of thought, mainly due to the appointments of the individuals being assessed. We're used to looking at the Sect Comd and all the associated responsibilities, however the PNCO is focused on the 2IC as befits the potential rank of those selected for the course and this brings it own training challenges. Development not destruction!

After many hours of planning and preparation, the team headed up by **WO2(RTWO) Mick Taylor** were ready to push out to Rollestone Camp and begin the delivery. From a start number of 18 candidates pulled from 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt, 1 and 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqns and 21 Sig Regt, we ended up with a mixed bag of 10, due to various commitments and exercises.

They were a nervous and apprehensive bunch of senior Sigs and newly promoted JNCOs sat in the classroom ready to receive the opening brief from the CO.

Once the ground rules had been laid out, our ethos promoted and all the horror stories put to bed, we plunged straight into the classroom-based CLM instruction. This consists of a broad and diverse number of subjects from Values & Standards to The Combat Estimate, with physical aspects mixed in to keep the students on their toes and develop the full spectrum of skills.

One of many highlights during the week were the students' individual presentations where we witnessed everything from Mixed Martial Arts delivered by **LCpl Pichilingi**, mainly at **LCpl Zanone's** expense and pain, to the inner workings of SCUBA diving thanks to **LCpl Marks** with much laughter and hilarity from all involved.

The E & D and Discussion group assessments were taken care of by 10 AEC at Tidworth and for some of the students it was the first time they had come into contact with ETS staff. They provided a fantastic package, which tested and developed the whole course.

The physical side of the course is based on command and the student being able to make sound decisions when under duress with minimum input from the DS.

Our sessions were based around the whole fire team having to work together for a nominated commander, this included information extraction, planning, briefing, navigation and load bearing. The single biggest thing that caused stress was the wearing of full CEFO, which surprisingly most had never done!

The Command Task day was a great success with expert instruction from **Cpl Matty Gough.**

LCpl Tatman and Pte Sutton bearing the load

Contact Right!

LCpl Vine making his plan

Each student getting a chance to plan, brief and execute a plan to hopeful success in the given task. All worked extremely hard and **Sig Richards** and **Pte Sutton** deserve a special mention for their sheer load bearing capability, heroes are born from such acts!

The sessions received good feed back and we found that with a focus and things happening concurrently the students get more out of it, as opposed to an undirected degradation period.

The week progressed and the tension began to mount about the final exercise. We were due to deploy on Saturday morning to Everleigh Farm SPTA which would become our COB. After the mandatory safety briefs and demonstrations, we kicked into the scenario and the command appointments began. Each grouping had a nominated DS Sect Comd to keep things in quiet check.

The crux of the delivery centres on BCCS both foot and vehicle so the foundations had to be laid first with a day's intensive fundamental skills and drills practice delivered by **Sgt Chapman** and **Cpl Grimes,** where we stripped the layers back to the wood and started again.

All students reacted well and the standard was set. Movement, camouflage, fire effect and control, passage of information, speed and momentum to name but a few. Once these were in place the contact drills and vehicle procedures flowed and progressed well, with all involved working at 100% and producing some impressive reactions and counter attacks.

The exercise progressed and the intensity increased, lack of rest and battle fatigue saw all giving a true personal performance. **Cpl Bill Reddy** and his enemy force being responsible for the fantastic scenarios that culminated in a long final vehicle and foot serial encompassing all the skills the students had learned including a very taxing foot Casevac. Mistakes will always be made, but this is where we need to learn the lessons!

A final clear up and we moved back to Bulford for a well deserved BBQ and resentations. Once showered and changed, the thought of ECBA and rations were pushed firmly to the back of the mind and swapped for those of steak and beer. The course saw 10 young soldiers grow and develop hugely in a very short space of time.

The final presentations were awarded as follows; Top Student went to **LCpl Pichilingi** and the Top Field Soldier to **LCpl Tate** – both well earned and deserved.

Overall the course was a huge success with all involved learning, developing and taking lots away from the experience. As a centre of excellence, this Regt looks forward to welcoming all those within the southern region on future PNCO courses, it promises to be a worthwhile and positive experience.

WINNERS OF ARMY MENS INTER UNIT ATHLETICS TRACK TROPHY

The Regt athletics teams rounded off the most successful Corps team athletics season by the men winning the Track Trophy and Runners Up overall and the women coming 3rd overall at the Army Inter-Unit Championships at Tidworth on 2 July.

A number of athletes were selected to represent the Army at the Inter-Services Championships held at *HMS Temeraire* in Portsmouth – **Cpl Gunn** (100m and Triple Jump), **Cpl Francis** (Triple Jump), **Cpl McSween** and **Sig Cargill** (4 x 100m Relay).

The Regt is already planning for next season – **Maj Owen** takes over the reins from **Maj Flavell** and the indoor training facility in the Nuffield Hall in Bulford continues to develop with equipment for pole vault, hurdles and throwing events.

Well done to all athletes and to the support and management provided by **SSgt Spruce**, **Cpl Bosanquet**, the Chain of Command and those in the workplace covering for athletes whilst competing.

3 Div HQ & Sig Regt – Runners-up in the Army Athletics Finals 2008

INTER SERVICES ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS
- by Cpl McSween

The Inter-Services Athletics Championship was hosted by the Royal Navy at *HMS Temeraire* on 16 July 08. The weather was good and the Army athletes were ready and raring to go. Our Regt had 4 athletes who had been called up to represent the Army. **Cpl Jackie Gunn** put her bobsleigh aside to grab the silver medal in the triple jump. **Cpl Nat Francis** also participated in the triple jump and came 3rd receiving the bronze medal. **Cpl 'Macka' McSween** and **Sig Cadrie Cargill** made up part of the 4 x 100m relay team which came 2nd to the RAF. In the overall competition the Army team came out victors and celebrated by having an end of season meal in Aldershot.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj H Bosley (Maj L Westerman)**
SSM	**WO2 Yendell**

EXERCISE ROVING RHINO 08

206 Sig Sqn have been widely dispersed across the globe over the past 6 months, the majority have been on Op TELIC deployed as the Baghdad Sig Sqn, along with individuals on Op HERRICK, in Kuwait, Kenya and the Falkland Islands and the remainder on detachments to 202 and HQ Sqns. 206 has now reformed and we were thrust straight into Ex ROVING RHINO to shake away the cobwebs (literally for Trident Tp and their ageing Ptarmigan vehicles).

Cpl Wilson knows it's his last exercise at 3 Div as he and LCpl Nicholls take time out

The first phase of the exercise involved erecting the Divisional Main HQ, which takes a good 3 days and can accommodate around 120 Staff Officers. The first day of the build will be remembered for the incessant downpour and while the England cricketers sat in the pavilion, there is no such thing as "rain stops play" for us.

Despite the weather and the fact that most of the Sqn had not built the HQ before, enthusiasm and determination meant that the HQ started to take shape quickly. **WO2 Yendell** was rumoured to be locked in his office with tears streaming down his cheek as the Sappers proceeded to drill dozens of holes in his sacred parade square for the tent pickets. There were some who were taught a lesson in personal administration but at least they kept everyone else in high spirits with realistic impressions of drowned rats.

On subsequent days, the sun came out and the temperature shot up, but once the shelters are erected, most work is conducted inside, and ironically everyone had their Gortex with them! Once the HQ was fully built and the infrastructure installed, we moved onto the communications phase on Salisbury Plain. Over the next week, LO detachments deployed to various locations on the Plain in order to establish comms with HQ. Navigation sometimes proved to be a bit tricky; however you shouldn't really end up in the wrong place, given the combat indicators on the ground: the bright blue Portaloos are a good sign that you are in the right spot. True to the saying 'what goes up must come down', the final phase of the exercise was to pack up Div Main HQ, which took 2 days. Concurrently **Maj Helen Bosley** handed over command of the Sqn to **Maj Ronnie Westerman**. **Maj Bosley** has successfully commanded the Sqn on 2 tours of Iraq and leaves behind a highly motivated group of soldiers who are keen to impress the new OC!

But before she left, **Maj Bosley** was 'treated' to Tp skits. Whilst not exactly looking in the mirror she observed 3 different impressions of herself, which was just the excuse that some of the soldiers needed to put on make-up and dresses: the highlight (lowlight) of the skits was **LCpl Symington's** dance, which was quite disturbing for all those who were present! Ex ROVING RHINO summed up the Sqn's ethos, which is to have fun whilst working hard. During this period we've also said goodbye to **LCpl Kelly**, **Sig Trueman**, **Sig Burgess** and **Sig McKeown** all off to civvy street and **Lt Monk**, **Sgt Gough**, **Sgt McMahon**, **LCpl Alderton**, **LCpl Thomas**, **Sig Nicholls** and **Sig Washington** to new challenges within the Corps. As well as the new OC we've welcomed **Sgt Davis**, **Cpl Parta**, **Cpl Rodmell**, **LCpl Herbert**, **Sig Bates**, **Sig Williams** and **Pte Evans** to the team.

NEWS FROM 3 DIV HQ & SIG REGT ON OP TELIC

We're coming home, turn the temperature down, the rain on and put the beers in the fridge. Don't send us back to Iraq again – please. Kiwi Trophy here we go!

7th SIGNAL REGIMENT
ELMPT

CO **Lt Col NJ Makepeace**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M McDonald**

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON – JULY UPDATE

OC **Maj Rawlinson** RA Signals
SSM **WO2(SSM) J Love**

The last couple of months have continued in a frenetic, focused fashion with a swathe of distinguished Sqn members leaving and a host of new faces rolling through the door.

In SHQ, **YofS Ewan Cowie** has left to the "dark side" of 255 Sqn, 16 Sig Regt, while **FofS Richie Avery** has gone off to be a Desert Rat at 7 Armd Bde in Hohne.

Sgt Jase Crossley has stepped up over the last few months to cover first the FofS and then the YofS jobs – an unenviable position in which he has done a great job. The relief was clear to see on his face however, with the arrival this week of our newly borrowed **FofS James Butt** and fresh off the course **YofS Dean Wicks**.

The Regt focus is steadily turning towards operations and Afghanistan next February and the Tps are quickly becoming skeleton-manned, as Special To Arm (STA) courses start kicking in.

It has been another busy period and with PDT and STA in full swing from August, as well as the normal plethora of autumn exercises, everyone is looking forward to summer leave; not least **WO2 John Love**, who is now nicely settled into the SSM chair having arrived from Tayforth OTC 2 months ago.

229 (BERLIN) SIGNAL SQUADRON'S BATTLE CAMP
- by Sig Gray

This year's 229 Sqn's Battle Camp was organised mainly by **SSgt Blakeley** and the location was the dreaded Haltern. The Admin Party and the Directing Staff departed on 4 April and the remainder of the Sqn followed on Sunday. Once we arrived we hit the ground running as we went straight into map reading with **Sgt Norris**. MATTs continued in the evenings for the rest of the week, with ranges during the day. The ranges consisted of an APWT, GPMG training and numerous pistol shoots. The Range DS, **Cpls Simpkins**, **Grounds** and **Berry** clearly felt at home here with all their Skill at Arms training. After a week of training, the field phase finally arrived, to put all our skills to the test. As usual, after a great week of sunshine it also started to rain but morale still remained high.

We patrolled to our first harbour location where we found that our navigator, **LCpl Alfereti** had taken us to the wrong location (more practice needed!). After a few days of finding battlefield casualties lying everywhere, including **Sig Fletcher** who managed to get fake blood on almost everyone, we ended in a defensive shoot where we used GPMGs and our personal weapons and managed to fire off 17,000 rounds – surprisingly we won the fire fight!

Wednesday arrived and we had a March and Shoot competition between the Sects in both Pls. After trekking 2 miles on what seemed to be Mt Everest, we loaded up and fired upon our targets. All credit to **Cpl 'Scouse' MacArthur**, **Sgt 'Drill Master' Wood** and **Sgt 'Airborne' Watson** who ran the course 6 times.

With the exercise completed and all MATTS passed, it was time to wrap things up with a BBQ where the awards for Best Section was won by 3 Sect, 2 Pl led by **LCpl Claydon**, 2IC **LCpl Cook** and the award for Best Soldier went deservedly to **Sig Priestley**.

WILMERSDORF TROOP ADVENTURE TRAINING

OC **Lt Tony Graham**
SSgt **SSgt Lee Rickard**

For adventure training this year, Wilmersdorf Tp went to Kiel in North East Germany for a week's sailing course. It was meant to be a troop bonding exercise but this didn't go quite as planned because when we arrived, we were split up into different groups apart from **Sig Cormack** and **Cpl Barber** who managed to remain together.

For the first day of the course we stayed on the area to practise basic sailing skills such as steering and learning about the boat itself. We had to learn different types of knots as we would need to know these to be able to work on the boat. We also had to practise man over board drills in case someone went for an unplanned swim. Having learnt the basics we were unleashed onto the water. Each day we sailed to a different harbour along the German and Danish coasts. Whereas every other night we stayed in the harbours, on one night we anchored and stayed just off of the coast of Denmark, allowing us to sample the local cuisine and beverages!

Most days we were up by 0630hrs and set sail by 0800hrs. The days were long as we didn't usually arrive at a harbour until about 0500 – 0600hrs. Time went quickly, but when you're out in the sun all day, it tires you out. We were lucky and had nice weather for the trip, so we made the most of it by sun bathing when not steering or learning new lessons. Over all it was a really good trip and well worth doing. Even **Sig Daugreilh** enjoyed the week, despite being keen and spending €100 on the first day on sailing kit which he never used!

231 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj MC Cornell**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Linton**

The Sqn has taken the opportunity to let its hair down over the last couple of months with some expertly delivered adventurous training in Garmisch and a well attended summer fete that could not even be spoilt by some pretty bad weather that hindered the set up and dampened the day.

Welcome to **2Lt 'Philippa' Marsden** who joins the Sqn from her Tp Commanders course in Blandford and has been fortunate enough to deploy immediately to the Falkland Islands. Welcome also to **WO2(YofS) Tharby** who joins us from 102 Log Bde.

With 'welcomes', inevitably come 'goodbyes' and the Sqn says cheerio to **WO2(YofS) 'Ian' Fawcett** who leaves on promotion to WO1 and is moving North to Sennelager to join the BOWTAG team. The Sqn is staring down the barrel of a major turn-around of manpower over the next 4 weeks. Sqn Comd and 2IC are amongst those leaving for pastures new being replaced by **Maj 'Phil' Muir** and **Capt 'Dale' Taft** so the future belongs to them.

However, the future is busy with preparations for an early 2009 deployment to Afghanistan and a full ARRC autumn exercise period. Watch this space.

ELMPT STATION SUMMER FETE 2008 - *by SSgt S Harrison*

It was back in March that I was given the task to plan and produce the Elmpt Station Summer Fete. After a lot of body swerving, sloping shoulders, production of sick chits, JPA leave applications and blatant running away, it was my privilege to organise such a prestigious event. At first glance the planning process for a fete seemed not too challenging, but a quick phone call from the RSM and swift delivery of the paperwork he had produced for the summer fete that he had organised in Cyprus, soon had the committee (and Greenpeace's 'Save the Trees' division) cringing with anticipation. After sifting through the reams of paperwork, it was eventually time to put our plan for the fete into action. Three key things were immediately identified as being critical to a successful fete. We needed a location, a date and some money. You may be thinking that these are pretty basic requests? Pick a field, pick a day and approach the people with the purse strings for the cash. Not quite so simple, as it turned out. The date issue was resolved fairly quickly (after about 6 weeks of political wrangling!) and soon after we were given our budget to work with (that took about 10 weeks) and then finally there was the huge issue of the location. This was eventually resolved after about 3 months and 4 different location considerations, about 6 days prior to the day of the event!

The build phase of the fete took a total of 3 days and went pretty smoothly with the guys only having to chase the lightweight marquees across the field a couple of times in the strong winds. Mentioning the winds brings us nicely onto the subject of the weather! Daily downpours and gusting winds were not uncommon on the days leading up to the fete. OC 231 Sig Sqn, **Maj Mark Cornell**, could often be seen standing in the middle of the field, hands on hips gazing skyward trying in vain to predict the forecast for the forthcoming Sunday. Eventually giving way to mystical sun dances, improvised weather stations and the classic finger held aloft in the air, the OC decided to take a more technical approach and call the Met Office. And the man from the Met Office said it would be a great day – so it was full steam ahead.

The day of the fete arrived and the glorious sunshine saw people arriving in their droves. There were loads of traditional 'fete type' stands supplied by the Sqns; everything was on offer, face painting, inflatable rides, tombola, bucking bronco, bouncy castles, the list goes on. Even the AAC pulled out the stops and brought in the Gazelle helicopter for some 'Top Gun' photo opportunities. **Sgt 'Si' Burns** had the almighty task of running the main arena events and trying to keep our contracted compère in check. The main arena saw some excellent entertainment in the form of an Elmpt mini-Falcons rugby match, the Chain of Command fancy dress relay race, the marching band of the Rifles and of course the Hit Squad! Who found many victims during the day including **WO2(SSM) Lee Linton** and of course **Maj 'Chopsey' Cornell**, both of whom made excellent impressions of something very wet and covered in custard pies!

EXERCISE GARMISCH BACKSTOP - *by Sig Christopher Dowle*

The countryside surrounding Garmisch is absolutely amazing and was an excellent place to hold an adventure training exercise.

We found a really good pitch for rock climbing in Bad Heil Klettergarten. It had climbs that catered for a range of experience from beginners right through to the most experienced climbers. It was my first time instructing rock climbing and I loved every minute of it. The exercise was the brainchild of the OC Sqn, **Maj Cornell** who had visited the area on a number of previous occasions with his family and decided it would be ideal for a Sqn camp – he was right. However the thanks for the organisation definitely belong to **Capt Archibald** and **WO2 Lee Linton** whose hard work during an already busy time was apparent.

The troops put a lot of effort into the week and had a lot of fun while taking part in the 3 events: Kayaking, hill walking and my personal favourite, climbing. There were many memorable performances but 3 deserve special note: **Sig Rehm** who with his 3m legs performed particularly well at climbing, **Sig Megan Spilsbury** who thought she was on a beach holiday and slightly over cooked herself in the sun and finally **Cpl Howells**, who forgot that Kayaking is supposed to take place on the surface of the water and not under it! At the weekend we had some spare time, so **SSgt McCallum** and I climbed the Hoch Imst Mutterkopf Mountain in Austria, which is 2400m high. The view from half way up the mountain was spectacular and also quite unnerving, but I managed to overcome my fear and made it to the top.

Overall it was an excellent adventure training exercise and all those who took part look forward to the next one. Special thanks go out to the chef – **Cpl 'Geordie' Morton** and his lads for the awesome food and **Sig Stanton** who provided the evening entertainment for the first week.

232 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj AJ Lawson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Revell**

Since the last edition, the Sqn deployed to Caerwent for Ex ARRCADE DEPLOYEX. From our side, the months of planning in Sqn Opereations came to fruition in that exercise. Everyone worked immensely hard in the run-up and on the exercise itself. Morale was surprisingly high considering our location. Maybe it had something to do with the tuck shop...?

The Sqn's main effort then shifted to Ascot Day, which ended up being even better than last years. Again, it was a huge success – well done to all involved.

Finally, the Squadron wishes to congratulate newly-promoted **Sgt Pickles**, **Sgt Smith**, **Cpl Berry** and **LCpl Condron**

ASCOT DAY - *by Lt Wilmore*

7 Sig Regt's ASCOT DAY, held at Krefeld Rhennbann, is a highlight of the yearly calendar where the members of the Regt get to put on a social day at the races for the wider community. It is a day of sophisticated fun and this year was no exception. 232 Sig Sqn took the lead on organising this event and in the

hands of **SSgt Dave Pope** and **Sgt Chris Burr**, it was taken to new heights of style and good taste. The Sqn provided some slick drill in the form of a flag parade and pike men (and women!), with everyone's skills kept sharp by Public Duties veteran, **Sgt Karl Flannagan**. The Band of the Army Air Corps also provided an excellent bit of atmosphere with their parade before the races began as well as playing in the Bandstand and at another parade at the prize-giving ceremony.

As the day progressed, money was won and lost to the accompaniment of cheers and groans but the combination of excellent weather, good food and great entertainment meant that all who attended had a superb day. The Regt sponsored 1400m race was won by the horse **Trekulap**, one of the strong favourites.The success of this event was down to the hard work that was put in by the people who set up the day and were on duty on the site leading up to and during the races. Huge thanks go to every single person involved. And next year, we will make sure there is jam to go with afternoon tea.

The CO with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place Jockeys in the 7th Signal Regiment 1400m and the three trainers

DELTA TROOP - *by Lt Connelly*

Fresh from the successful deployment of the Regt's brand new REACHER medium on ARRCADE DEPLOYEX in glamorous Caerwent (well done **Sgt Ade Falinski** and **LCpl Danny Lannon**) the Tp returned to barracks to get stuck in to a busy calendar of events. **Sig Barker** and **Sig Shoebridge** competed in a plethora of swimming events, from inter-sqn to BA(G) and beyond and **Sig Taylor** is now a demi-god after his stunning victory in the boxing ring in front of the entire Regt.

Let's not forget another worthy sport; sailing. Yes, the Tp Comd has a sailing qualification and she is not afraid to use it. The Tp Comd (not named for fear of a 'crating' – and she has edited the Regt's contribution this edition, so there is no catching her out) along with **SSgt(YofS) 'Gervais' Port**, **Cpl 'Michael' Knight**, **Sig Ant Brissett** and **Sig 'Rainman' Harrison** undertook a week of racing as part of the Corps Regatta in Kiel. There were tears and tantrums, but the men dried their eyes and impressed everyone with their whoops of delight whenever the boat heeled over 45 degrees.

So taken with this fact was **Sig Brissett**, that when he was told that the boat could even go more than 90 degrees and still 'right' itself, he schemed to test this for himself. Every time the boat heeled over near 40 degrees, he pretended to ignore the skipper's advice to get the boat more upright and would do the exact opposite, while he gleefully shouted: "Sixty Degrees!" Not even **Sig Harrison** dangling over the side of a thrashing boat as he determinedly hung on to the boom could dampen the adventurous spirit of anyone on yacht *Gannet*.

A big well done to the dastardly 4 who all attained their Competent Crew qualification and came away with lots of stories to tell. And are already planning to go on another sailing trip!

All that is left to say is: farewell to **Cpl Wilson**, **LCpl Lee** and **Sig Barker** who leave us for their new postings. Congratulations to **Sig Hardy** on his recent marriage, and good luck to **Sgt Smith**, **LCpl Condron** and **Sig Harvey** on their recent deployment.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Fradley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) N Elliott**

LAD

OC	**Capt D Tolley**
ASM	**WO1 J Rookes**

A busy period for the LAD has seen soldiers attached to ARRC Support Battalion on exercise back in the UK, MATT training exercises in Sennelager and an Equipment Care Inspection sandwiched in between the ASM, **WO1 'Rocky' Rookes'** numerous leaving functions (6 and counting). The highlight of this 'leave-a-thon' was a Regimental style dinner attended by all ranks from within the LAD and their partners. An excellent evening organised by **Cpl 'Jase' Townsend** saw us say farewell in style to both **'Rocky'** and his wife **Jen.**

REGIMENTAL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE DEPARTMENT

OC	**Maj M Joy**
RAOWO	**WO2 M Burn**

EXERCISE ARRCADE ANZAC – TURKISH DELIGHT
- by SSgt Stuart Gee AGC (SPS)

Having served in the British Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, for 3 years, I got to know quite a bit about the Gallipoli Campaign. On leaving the Embassy, I was posted to 7 Sig Regt in Elmpt (the old RAF Bruggen) as FSA and was surprised when in April, I was told we had to go to ANZAC Cove for a dawn service. This service is held all over the world on 25 April to commemorate the many thousands on both sides who died between 25 April 1915 and the withdrawal of ANZAC and Commonwealth troops over 8 months later.

I decided that this would be a great excuse to utilise my experience in Turkey so I started the ball rolling for a battlefield study. After enough begging, I was given £10,000, enough for 20 people to deploy after pulling in a few favours with contacts in country in order to get a few discounts.

After announcing the plan to the Regt, the bun fight started as to who would go. On 8 June 08 all the planning was over and 18 members of the Regt (the RSM had pulled out at the last minute and I was already in country) flew from Cologne to Istanbul on a red eye flight. On arrival and after locating some geographically embarrassed luggage, I met up with everyone at the airport and we hopped on to a bus for a 6 hr journey to the Gallipoli Peninsula.

After a quick shake out and a brief from me on the following day, we were met by our Turkish contact and treated to a well needed traditional Turkish meal. A few sociable events later and everyone retired to their luxurious 2* (at most) accommodation. Very basic but clean enough and I had managed to secure the best room with the sea view for myself and **Cpl Tony Brown**. The following morning was taken up by a tour of the main Turkish defences and some of the more important points of the southern tip of the Peninsula including Cape Helles, the main area where British and French Forces landed.

Whilst visiting the main Turkish monument at Abide **LCpls Nicky Reid** and **Washington Machingauta** found themselves very popular with a large group of Turkish school children, who seem to have believed they were pop stars. That afternoon, and to the horror of a few of the group, we were dropped off at one end of Gully Ravine and trekked 2 hrs through some pretty tough terrain in about 35 degrees.

Day 2 saw us visiting some of the high ground to understand the lay of the land a bit better. We were shown just how small an amount of ground the ANZAC and Commonwealth forces managed to wrestle from the grip of the tenacious Turks, including of course ANZAC Cove. In the 8 months of the land based part of the campaign, the Turks only lost a few kms of ground and never lost any major tactical advantage. The afternoon ended with a swim near to ANZAC Cove which saw most of us get spiked by sea urchins when we got out but it was worth it to cool off as the mercury was reaching the mid thirties yet again.

Wednesday, the final day of the tour proper, saw us visiting some of the more prominent cemeteries followed by a visit to the Naval museum and then the archaeological site of the city of Troy. **Pte Jezzard** was sure she would see **Brad Pitt** but then again she did think the Australian flag on a t-shirt was a Union Jack with some nice white stars for decoration much to the amusement of **Maj Rawlinson** and the rest of us. Thursday morning we returned to Istanbul, where everyone had the opportunity to visit some of the great sights of the city such as the Blue Mosque and finally the Grand Bazaar to haggle hard for souvenirs, trinkets and tat. The following evening most of the party departed leaving only 8 of us in Istanbul for the weekend but that is another story altogether.

Whilst there, I eventually gave my fiancée her engagement ring and talk turned to how people proposed or were proposed to. **Pte Jezzard** won the originality prize hands down by declaring, when asked by **Capt Oosterveen**, that she was proposed to during a rising sunset; you can't write material like that.

The final thing we decided to do on the Sunday was all go for a Turkish bath. According to my fiancée, the massage will get rid of all of your aches and pains; I beg to differ. I felt as though I had gone 12 rounds with a gorilla and ended up with bruises covering my entire back and up my neck. I walked out a broken man and had to pay for the privilege; not an experience I will be repeating. Everyone else seemed to be fine, so of course I claimed I had been treated rougher than them.

All in all a fantastic trip which all those attending would recommend to everyone. If anyone gets the opportunity to visit this part of the world they should not hesitate; they will not be disappointed.

TRAINING WING

OC	**Capt M Angove**
SSM	**WO2 B Randerson**

WOODLAND FLIGHT 3 - *by 2Lt Brinkworth*

On 7 July 2008, 7 Sig Regt commenced a 2 week summer Battle Camp at Haltern training area. The exercising troops totalled approximately 70 during the first week and almost twice that during the second week due to the appearance of 1 Div HQ & Sig Regt. The Battle Camp was intended to remind and refresh the troops of 7 Sig Regt who will deploy to Afghanistan in February 2009 of some basic battle skills and also to allow them the opportunity to fire on some more advanced ranges.

Participants attended the Battle Camp for 4 days, where they spent 2 days on a multitude of battle lessons including contact drills, BCD, leadership, searching enemy dead, the 5 Cs, sect battle drills and vehicle recovery. The second 2 days consisted of a package that led the soldier from the APWT right through to pairs live fire and manoeuvre, with various sect in defence shoots and pistol ranges. Evenings were not wasted, with fire and manoeuvre battle lessons, orienteering exercises and various pre-deployment videos to keep everyone entertained.

Although it was stressed throughout that the Battle Camp was not designed to be a thrashing, it was nonetheless testing for many of those exercising. This was particularly so for many of the junior ranks who were given the opportunity to test and develop their leadership ability through sect command appointments during battle lessons and shoots.

However, the Battle Camp was not aimed solely at the junior ranks, and the ranges saw many senior NCOs and Officers honing their skills. In particular, the battle between the QM, **Maj McNaught** and the RQMS, **WO2 Watkins** to gauge whose soldiering skills where the sharpest, was fought keenly; the QM was grinning for the remainder of the evening. Each week concluded with a monstrous BBQ provided by the Regimental chefs and a DS versus exercising troops Rounders tournament, during which the DS clearly had the upper hand.

In summary, the Battle Camp was a great success, as was noted during the visit by COS ARRC. It has laid the foundations for the subsequent Battle Camp in October for which preparation has already begun and which hopes to develop and further the ranges and lessons learned for all involved.

NIJMEGEN MARCHES 2008 - *by Lt L Bell*

On Sunday 13 July 2008, 12 members of 7 Sig Regt travelled to Nijmegen to participate in 'The Four Days' (De Vierdaagse), a 100 mile marching event involving civilians and military teams from around the world. After arriving at Camp Huemensoord, the team ventured into Nijmegen city centre to soak up some of the fantastic atmosphere and live music.

At 0530hrs on Tuesday, the team set out on the first of four 25 mile legs at quite an impressive pace. Approximately 3km down the road from Camp Huemensoord, the military teams met up with over 45,000 civilian participants, slowing things down considerably. Marching through the local towns was an amazing experience as local civilians lined the route in their thousands, offering sweets, drinks, music and encouragement. There were 3 rest stops each day, where food, water and somewhere to sit were provided. After the first day the team started to feel the wear on their feet, although several team members still managed to make it into town for a few beverages.

By Day 3, many members of the team were beginning to complain of various aches and tight muscles. Up until this point, the vast majority of the route had been completely flat but this changed completely on Day 3 with the introduction of some interesting hills. The hills weren't so much of a problem on the way up but the blisters really started to hurt on the way back down! After quite an arduous Day 4, the entire 7 Sig Regt team made it across the finish line with plenty of time to spare. The team were awarded their hard earned medals by **Lt Bell**, apart from **Capt Oosterveen** who received a different medal to recognise that it was the second time he had completed the event.

After a short rest the entire British military contingent (around 800 soldiers) formed up in 5 ranks and marched 5km into Nijmegen centre, led by the band of the Army Air Corps, to mark the 80th anniversary of British participation in the event. The route into the centre was lined with huge crowds of people all offering their encouragement. Having marched 100 miles up to this point, many people were really feeling the pain from their feet but the atmosphere seemed to drown this out. Everyone who took part thoroughly enjoyed the event, but it's hard to say who will consider doing it again until all the foot pain goes away!

It has been as busy as ever for the premier Sqn in the Regt. Thankfully, after the blood sweat and tears of organising the Bruggen 10, Ascot Day fell to one of the other sqns, while we relaxed with tea and toast. So this is what it is like to be a 'normal' sqn. It was a bit boring really, so we decided to set up an amazing boxing extravaganza as part of the Comd's Cup! Article to follow in the next edition as we are all now going to hit the pool after tea and toast.

ARMY RUGBY UNION (WOMEN) NEW ZEALAND TOUR
- by Sgt Dawn Bailey

Over the last 11 years, Royal Signals have achieved 6 selections for the Army Rugby Union (Women) Team. The selection process takes place each year in an open trial period in Aldershot. One of the main elements, aside from previous knowledge and experience of the game, is the individual's commitment to Corps Rugby. The Royal Signals Ladies side have suffered tremendously with the weight of op tours and exercises and have generally not received the support or results from advertising Corps-wide to reach its full potential. To be selected to represent the Army from Royal Signals is an achievement and is without doubt testament to Units' support and the individual's continued commitment to the sport.

On 3 May, **LCpl Claire Loftus**, **Cpl Emma Gilbert** and **Sgt Dawn Bailey** all achieved squad selection for the annual Army v Navy event at Twickenham. The team shot to victory with a 75 –0 win for the Army and **Sgt Bailey** found herself on the score sheet for the first time. Following this success, on 15 May, all 3 players travelled with the Army squad to embark on a 3 week tour of New

Zealand. The competition for a place was as fierce as any trial, as the Army squad carried 35 personnel on the tour. Once again all were selected for the tour matches. The Canterbury development team put out a national strength invitational side and destroyed the Army's defences in minutes; a 56 – 0 'welcome' to New Zealand was graciously accepted. From Christchurch we travelled to Wellington and on to Palmeston North, where we were hosted by the NZ Army. We returned the favour by defeating them in a superb display resulting in a close fought battle ending 10 – 8. **LCpl Loftus** showed everyone one of the reasons she was been named Army Players' Player of the Season by securing the winning try. Onwards and upwards to Auckland, where the Army team secured another victorious result of 20 – 10 against the NZ Navy. The experience and the continued selection of our fine Corps players ensured an outstanding contribution to Ladies Elite Rugby and this can only serve as a glamorous, yet real show of potential athletic achievement for all those interested in pursuing sport in the Army to the highest level.

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT
CORSHAM

CO **Lt Col SL Copley**
RSM **WO1(RSM) D Rayson**

VIEW FROM RHQ - *by Maj Alex Senneck*

Since the last edition, the Regt has been exceptionally busy with the preparation and execution of the Colonel-in-Chief's visit, Reformation Day celebrations and the deployment on Battle Camp. Collective thanks go to the 2IC Regt for the drive behind each event, the G4 engine for the behind the scenes enabling (G4 doesn't just happen) and the all the Sqns for the commitment and enthusiasm shown throughout.

By the time the next edition goes to print, there will have been much turn over in RHQ. We say a fond farewell to the CO, 2IC, Asst Operations Officer, Tech Adjt and Regimental Foreman and extend a warm welcome to **Maj Granville Yeomans** (Operations Officer), **Capt Taff Jones** (Asst Operations Officer), **Maj Rich Craig** (ECM (FP) Operations Officer), **Maj Paul Smith** (Regtl 2IC) but most importantly to the new CO, **Lt Col SL Copley**. All existing members of the Regt hope they have an enjoyable and rewarding tour with 10 Sig Regt

Spot the Chopper

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

SHQ

OC **Maj G Pardew**
SSM **WO2(SSM) M Morgan**

The 'Mechs' have managed to maintain excellent motivation amid a myriad of task over this busy reporting period. In between operational surges and mission rehearsal exercises, 241 Sig Sqn has ably supported a high profile visit by our Colonel-in-Chief, undertaken a Reformation Parade and completed a successful 2 week Regimental Battle Camp in Lydd. Well done to all!

LIMA TROOP - *by LCpl Kieren Johnson*

OC **Capt A P Manley**
SSgt **SSgt S Reeves**

In recent months the 'weiners' have had a few hellos and goodbyes. Firstly with the departure of **SSgt Pope** who made a break for freedom into CPO changing midway through his tour with **SSgt Steve Reeves** who is happy to leave a career in 'meching' behind to pursue a career in paper work. Also joining the swap train is **LCpl Al Darragh** who had just enough time to unpack his MFO boxes to check for damage only to reseal them and post them back to the Emerald Isle.

OP HERRICK SURGE TEAM

Mid-May Lima Tp deployed to Camp Bastion, Afghanistan for a 7 week surge. The team, led by **Sgt Ben McFaul** consisted of **Cpl Matt Dawson, Cpl Lane, LCpl Dave Best, LCpl Dave Cracknell, LCpl Al Darragh** and **LCpl Gary Simpson**. We were kept extremely busy while we were out there thanks to the CPO Planners, as well as some extra tasks given to us by the resident Instl Techs from 16 Sig Regt.

REGIMENTAL BATTLE CAMP – EXERCISE BRUNO BANNER

Corsham is known for its bright lights and high morale. Each member of Lima Tp always deploys with a smile and a song in their hearts but even the Lima Tp 'weiners' struggled to smile with the upcoming Battle Camp deployment to Lydd! If the Pennines is the backbone of England then Lydd is truly the backend. However it was a well run Battle Camp; highlights included great food, easy PT sessions and plenty of downtime for the boys. The 2 week range package was a welcome change to the 'Corshamites' especially for **LCpl 'Charlie' Brown** whose love for tents before, during and after the camp was more than visible. Another honourable mention goes to **Sig Dwayne Martin's** one and only PT lesson which resulted in a sand injury!

KILO TROOP

OC **Capt SLR Gray**
SSgt **SSgt M Stowell**

In mid May most of the Tp deployed on the Sqn Leadership Camp in Kent where everyone took part in leadership development training. A special mention goes to **LCpl 'Nobby' Noble** who showed "leadership from the front" by entertaining us all with his rendition of "That loving feeling" at the karaoke night.

The Tp is currently supporting Op TELIC as part of the operations cycle. In early June, a 7 man surge team deployed for 6 weeks, under the expert eye of **Sgt Steve Mesmer** with **Cpl Dave Keen** as 2IC. The team, including first time deployments for **Sigs Roads, Sykes** and **Eaton** and return tours for **LCpls Watt** and **Barr** (243 Sig Sqn), completed a number of tasks at the Kuwait Support Facility (KSF), working alongside Eagle Tp from 219 Sig Sqn, 2 Sig Regt. The surge went very well; a number of buildings have now been connected to the network and work on the communications infrastructure has progressed rapidly, even in spite of the famous Kuwait sandstorms! The Tp played an

important role during the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal** to 10 Sig Regt in early July, with a few members of the Tp involved. The OC, **Capt Simon Gray** was kept busy as the ADC to HRH for the visit, **Cpl 'Mikey' Kervell**, the Sqn's resident "Local Hero" was selected to brief on the Sqn Instl Tech capability and demonstrate some of the kit used on operations and lastly **LCpl 'Cookie' Cook** was presented his Operational Service Medal (OSM) for Afghanistan. The following day along with past and present members and families of the regiment we celebrated the 6th anniversary of the 10 Sig Regt Reformation Day.

LCpl Cook receives his OSM for Op HERRICK from HRH The Princess Royal

Lastly the Troop would like to say a fond farewell to **LCpls Greg Mesmer, Lewi Lewis** and **Sig 'Cindy' Crawford** who have departed the Royal Signals for life in civvie street, all the best!

HOTEL TROOP

OC **Capt J Perring**
SSgt **SSgt M Carr**

We would like to welcome into the Tp: **Sgt 'Lee' Green** from 2 Sig Regt and **LCpl 'Rick' Childs** from 30 Sig Regt. We bid a fond farewell to **Sgt 'Rod' Rouchey** who is posted to 233 Sig Sqn. Finally, we wish a warm hello to **LCpl 'Hoggy' Hodson** in Baghdad and **LCpl 'Seta' Raikoso** and **Sig 'Danny' Lewis** in the Falkland Islands.

CPO PROJECT TEAM KOSOVO 30 JUNE – 07 JULY 08

A short jaunt to Slim Lines was undertaken by members of Hotel Tp to complete a Fibre installation. On loan from Lima Tp led by **SSgt Reeves**, the team also consisted of **Cpl 'Ozzy' Osborne, LCpl 'Jack' Gooding, LCpl 'Jenny' Sheridan** and **Sig 'Gilly' Gillespie**. On completion of the task and after a short trip to KFOR, a top up of the tan was completed before returning to Corsham.

3 CDO BRIGADE MRX SALISBURY PLAIN TRAINING AREA (SPTA) 7 – 31 JULY 08

Whilst maintaining a fully functioning and alert NARO team led aptly by **Cpl 'Jacko' Jackson**, Hotel Tp remains on UK exercises. Therefore the 3 Cdo Bde MRX fell on the ever busy and fully deployable Hotel Tp, led diligently by **Sgt 'Lee' Green** with a cast that puts Hollywood to shame. We were tasked with providing the fibre backbones and feeds to over 200 users on Westdown Camp alone. The build also consisted of smaller builds across SPTA which brought the final number of users to a respectable total of 300. The final site was located in Celini village, Sennybridge Training Area.

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Owen Finnie**
SSM **WO2 Billy Lilburn**

The Sqn has been poised on standby over the NI Parade Season 2008 whilst also playing a major role in support of the 10 Sig Regt **HRH** visit, Reformation Day Parade and Battle Camp Exercise. In addition, members of the Sqn have been participating in adventure training activities and supporting community engagement activities in NI. We would like to say farewell and all the best to **Capt Pete Emsen** who is posted to Germany. The Sqn would also like to congratulate him on his GOC NI commendation for the work he led at the end of Op BANNER and during the reformation of 233 Sig Sqn.

ALPHA TROOP - *by Cpl Moorhead*

OC **Capt Jim Skimmins**
SNCO **SSgt Dale King**

Ex JIMMY ADVENTURE started on Monday 2 June, bright and early, with a drive down to Newtownards Sailing Club for the choice of either dinghy sailing, water skiing or wind surfing. Once Ts had decided what they wanted to do for the morning, off we went to get our wet suits – safe to say, some fitted better than others! **SSgt Hickley** provided the instruction for the wind surfing and all who tried it were successful. The dinghy sailors on the other hand had a different set up with **LCpl Ryan Gray** and **Sig Stu Dalzell** engaging in a spot of pirate play. **Cpl Dave Moorhead** got about a mile from the dock and was unable to return, resulting in him having to jump ship and swim back with dinghy in tow. The activities broke for lunch allowing us all to do a quick swap around for the afternoon. **SSgt Dale King** arrived with the minibus and quickly got involved in the activities with gusto, borrowing **LCpl Rob Adcock's** camera for some picture taking in the power boat, while simultaneously pulling the water skiers. It was only later in the day that he discovered he had left the camera aboard the boat which was now at anchor some way from the dock. He had to go out to the power boat in a small dinghy to great cheers and laughter from the Sqn – a fine day all round with sunburn for many. The second day saw us all head to the Mourne Mountains for mountain biking, starting with an arduous trek up the mountain before the buzz of descending the other side. We made it down to the reservoir safely, despite **LCpl Gray** attempting to ride down an almost sheer hill face with **Cpl Moorhead** hitting rocks and splitting his helmet open. Most took a leaf out of **SSgt Sean Renforth's** book and took it gently. We then rode into Newcastle for ice-cream and a well earned beer. The package culminated in a great BBQ at Ballykinler that evening with everyone enjoying the pub games laid on.

Ex JIMMY ADVENTURE – Troops in Sunny Northeren Ireland

BRAVO TROOP - *by Sig Burns*

OC **Capt Rick Gorman**
SNCO **SSgt Arnie Renforth**

On Tuesday 24 June all available soldiers from 233 Sig Sqn deployed to Ballykinler Ranges for the day. The purpose was for everyone to pass their APWT, BCDT and CBRN MATTs and also to shoot on the pistol range. We all arrived at work after collecting our rifles at around 0730hrs; we then packed all our kit into the minibus and got ready to go. We arrived at Ballykinler at around 0900hrs, where we got changed and were split into 2 groups. One group stayed at the firing range and completed their APWT while the other group went away to do everyone's 'favourite', CBRN. The APWT went very well with everyone passing first time apart for **Sgt 'Mo' Morris,** who had to take it again.

The top score to beat was achieved by the Sqn OC, **Maj Finnie**. Meanwhile over at the CBRN, we got our suits on and went into the chamber. We all had to do one drill each and the Immediate Action drill as well. Everything went well and no one felt the effects of the CS gas. This must have annoyed **Cpl 'Ski' Milevsky** who decided to pull **Cpl Jordan's** respirator off just before we left the chamber, leaving him feeling the effects of the CS for a while after; just what he needed right before his APWT! The next part of the day was the BCDT MATT. This consisted of BLS Skills with **Sgt Good** and a lesson in all different types of injuries, which was given by **Cpl Milevsky** and **Cpl 'Daz' Broderick.**

SUPPORT TROOP

OC **Sgt Pullen**

On 26 June 2008, **Cpl Johnson** and **Cpl Milevsky** organised 233 Sig Sqn's summer function, based on a 'Western' theme. It was held in the Royal British Legion in Lisburn. It was a fantastic night with many eye-catching costumes on display. Sp Bn chefs provided a tasty BBQ, which was enjoyed by all especially after a few beers. There were various DJs and guest singers on the night – some good, some not so good! The raffle saw the following cowboys win prizes, **SSgt FofS(IS) 'Ian' Waterworth** won the George Foreman grill (he needs it for his midnight snacks in the mess), **Cpl Milevsky** won the IPod shuffle (fix!), **SSgt 'Sharpshooter' King** won the surround system and **Sig 'Lawsonator' Lawson** won the money tree prize. The prize for best fancy dress was decided with a 'dance off' between **Cpl 'Apache' Potts** and **WO2 'The Sheriff' Lilburn** towards the end of the night**. Cpl Potts** was finally declared the winner after performing various weird dance moves cumulating in leapfrogging over a bale of hay. The SSM still thinks he was the best dressed and the dance off was a set up! It was a fantastic function which was well organised and supported which left many nursing a sore head the following day.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Glenis Maloney**
SSM **WO2 John Manley**

OPERATIONS SUPPORT TROOP

OC **Lt AP Foot**
SNCO **SSgt Powell**

- by Cpl 'Gucci' Lawrence

The month started with the whole Tp deploying to RHQ in Corsham for a week in preparation for the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal** and the Regimental families' day on the Saturday. The week was packed with erecting tents and drill in preparation for the parade on the families' day.

The bulk of the month was taken up by the Regimental Battle Camp, Ex BRUNO BANNER. Phase 1 saw us pass all the normal weapons tests such as weapon handling and APWT but it also introduced other shoots, which some of the other members of the Tp had not encountered. **Sig Tony 'Lucky' Luckman** managed to cut the back of his head with his weapon foresight when on the 2 mile tab on the fire team assessment. The next phase of the exercise we moved onto was the FTX. This was a number of challenging ranges that pushed us to our limits. The final and most challenging of the ranges was the pl house. A lovely 12 hr experience, which saw us come under multiple attacks over the period.

This and the added joy of the biggest disco smoke machine I have ever seen, pumping out smoke which filled the whole of the house. One of the highlights of the day was the casualty extraction from the very top of the house to the ground floor and the 100m sprint with casualty in tow, to the helicopter landing zone. But in the end we managed to fight off the Taliban and make it back to camp safely; this marked the end of the exercise.

The only other thing left to do was to fight it out for the CO's Cup in the march and shoot competition, which was worth double points. The competition comprised 2 loops of an assault course, speed march, stretcher race and finally another speed march to the end where we had a falling plate shoot. The Sqn was to compete against ECM (FP) Sqn who had a strong team. As long as we could keep in sight of ECM we would hopefully win the Cup. The nerves were building as the other Sqn teams went before us. News came back that if we worked at it we could win it, everything was to play for!

The team was going well with an outstanding performance by **WO2 John Manley**. Not helped by some interesting weapon handling by **Lt Ady Foot**, we had a poor shoot and had to settle for 3rd in the competition and 2nd overall in the CO's cup competition. Given that we don't have the time to specifically train for the Cup events, we're very happy with our final position!

We would like to congratulate **Sgt Roy Ward** and **Cpl Gav Nicholson** on their recent promotion to Sgt. We would like to welcome **LCpl Arnold**, who joins us on attachment from 233 Sig Sqn and **Cpl Warren Evans** who joins us after a busy tour at 14 Sig Regt.

Sgt Roy Ward gives his orders on the Battle Camp Section in Defence range

600 SIGNAL TROOP

OC **Capt D G Ware**
SSgt **SSgt S Pengelly**

The Tp would like to welcome their new OC, **Capt Daz (Pikey) Ware** arriving on promotion from 12 Mech Bde. Also welcome to **WO2(FofS) Chelsea Hughes** arriving from RSIT, **SSgt Steve Pengelly** on arrival from the badminton/squash courts, sorry Ops Support Tp in Wilton, **Cpl Daz Day** arriving from 21 Sig Regt, **LH Harris**, **LCpls Barnett**, **Laura Williams** and **Dave Russell** on attachment to the 506 Comms base.

After various Tp members deployed on various taskings on Op HERRICK, the rest of the Tp were left preparing for the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal**, carrying out various tasks for the Regimental Reformation Day and battle camp. The lads and lasses of the Tp had a well deserved BBQ, celebrating 600 Tp's 15th anniversary.

This was a time for everyone to relax and to show off their skills at rounders or in the case of **SSgt Gringo Inns** and **Mr Alun Griffiths** how not to catch a ball. This was kindly organised by **Sgt Al Royston**. We would like to send our thanks out to Open Networks who kindly sponsored the event.

The Tp bids a big farewell to **Capt Dave Petty** on posting to hotter climes in Saudi and **WO2(FofS) Nicholson** who is posted to 35 Sig Regt. We would like to congratulate **Cpl Jimmy Nye** on been selected for promotion and congratulations go out to **Cpl Dave Hand** on his marriage to **Ella**.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Alun Crapper**
SSM **WO2 Kev East**

The Sqn has just started to take stock after a busy exercise and visit period which also saw the end of an era for the Sqn OC, **Maj Jez Toze**, to whom we wish all the best at 2 Sig Regt. He had the finale he deserved, a mixture of beer and cam nets! We therefore duly welcome new OC **Maj Alun Crapper** who is joined by a new 2IC in the shape of **Capt Talitha Kelly** who replaces **Capt Nige Clay** who leaves us to join 216 Sig Sqn. We wish them both all the luck in the world for their new roles. The Sqn now looks forward to a fairly relaxing leave period before exercise in September and the winter ceremonial season in October/November.

1 TROOP - *by Sgt Clarke*

OC **Capt Emma Cameron**
SSgt **SSgt Kenny Macpherson**

The latest 10 Sig Regt Battle Camp started for 251 on the 6th week of continuous Sqn and Regimental activities following directly on from Reformation day, **HRH The Princess Royal** and Master of Signals visits in Corsham. Once all the Sqns had arrived over a 2 day period at Sir John Moore Barracks near Folkestone, the RSM began with the standards and the usual dos and don'ts, followed on by a brief from the QM's Staff about how the J4 chain were going to make the next 2 weeks as painless as possible for all.

The main outline for the exercise were then given by OC 233, **Maj Finnie**, which consisted of how the Regt are re-rolling into Rear Link Detachments and that we need to have our skills up to that of a Teeth Arm. The following 2 weeks consisted of Live Firing and other concurrent activities relevant to our basic soldering skills. To facilitate more integration as a Regt, all the personnel were split up, away from their parent Sqns and into Sects and Tps renamed as Pls.

The Sects started off as the standard 8 man size but as the days went on, injuries and double hatting of Sect Comds into Pl command groups meant some mixing and matching was required to make up numbers when working as fire teams on the ranges. The average daily routine consisted of early morning PT, live firing, an evening meal and weapon cleaning followed by evening PT. By the start of the second week, the early morning PT sessions were dropped much to the relief of those who could get a lie in.

However, those sharing rooms with RD personnel did not really get this privilege due to been woken up early by their eagerness to get on the ranges. Once the different Live Firing scenarios were complete, nearing the end of the second week, all the best personnel were poached to form a single Sect for each Sqn ready to begin the CO's Cup Competition which 251 duly retained.

The exercise was drawn to a close with the Officers and SNCOs dining out the CO and the Juniors having a BBQ in the rain courtesy of a cash injection from the QM. Once all the weapons were collected and accommodation was handed back the following day, members of the Sqn could look forward to spending a weekend with their families for the first time in 7 weeks and carry on with bringing Project TYNDALE into service and catching up with their day to day jobs in Aldershot.

Those taking part in the range package were impressed with the scenarios they were given and some were surprised looking back, that most of the usual needless messing around was nonexistent and they had been able to concentrate on making the most of the lessons learnt. There were no ponchos in muddy harbour areas firing blanks at other pls, just modern day tactics and procedures which are used on a daily basis on operations. Now that the majority of the Corps have got at least a TELIC or HERRICK tour under their belt, we could appreciate what we were practising is part and parcel of modern day operations away from the comforts of Kuwait or Kabul.

2 TROOP - *by LCpl Robinson*

OC **Capt James McClean**
SSgt **SSgt Baggy Bagstaff**

On Tuesday 3 July, 251 Sig Sqn personnel deployed to Corsham to take part in the Regt's Reformation parade and the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal**. The week consists of some drill, fun stands and Tug of War. Everyone was really keen to get stuck into shining there boots and getting ready for there first practice parade with the RSM.

Maj Jez Toze meets the Colonel-in-Chief, HRH The Princess Royal

Cpl 'Pep' O'Neil took up his position in the Regimental MT, where he played cards all week. **LCpl Looker** kept the whole room awake with his snoring, while most of the lads were at the point of 'bashering up' out on the grass at 21 Sig Regt. It is rumoured that **Sig Adam Beckley** managed to get served with out being IDd – well done!

The fun day on 7 July started off a bright sunny morning. The stands were set up by 1400hrs. 1 Tp had a football stand, 2 Tp had a horse racing stand and 638(L) Tp had a bowling stand called Guard Alley. Just as the stands were about to open, a large black cloud descended over Corsham but fortunately the rain was kept at bay until we were all a little too drunk to care about the weather.

251 Sig Sqn Tug-Of-War Team

638 TROOP - *by LCpl Newton*

OC	**Lt James Snelgrove**
SSgt	**Sgt Phil Brown**

During several dates in July, a team from 638 (L) Sig Tp along with elements of 2 Tp were deployed on ceremonial duties to Buckingham Palace to provide a car calling service for foreign diplomats and ambassadors attending the Queens Garden Parties. The members of the Sqn included **WO2(SSM) East**, **SSgt 'Baggy' Bagstaff**, **Sgt 'Phil' Brown**, **Cpl 'Amanda' Giltrow**, **Cpl 'Becky' Burnell**, **LCpl 'Jimmy' Proud**, **LCpl 'Robbo' Robinson**, **LCpl 'Cadre' Burns** and **LCpl 'Lydia' Newton**, who were to parade inside the Palace in Number 1 dress. Parading in Wellington Barracks to order the chauffeur driven cars to collect their respective VIPs from the palace gates were: **Cpl 'Smudge' Smith**, **Cpl 'Tom' Hallums**, **LCpl 'Nick' Harmer**, **LCpl 'Mat' Crook** and last but not least **Sig 'ASBO' Hadlow**. After getting kitted out in our Number 1 dress and fitting our covert Airwave radios, we marched into the side gates of Buckingham palace, reserved for VIP guests.

We then took up our positions for the day, this included 2 people standing at the side gates to meet the diplomatic cars arriving and 2 people situated inside the palace with a loud speaker system connected to Wellington Barracks, in order to call the cars forward. The remaining 2 people were rolling relief and were able to wander around the palace gardens, mingling with guests and spotting VIPs including, **Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP** and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner **Sir Ian Blair** to name but a couple. If you were lucky enough to get close to the Royal tea tent you could get a glimpse of members of the Royal Family.

For most people the highlight of the day appeared to be when the food was being served. The food included posh cucumber sandwiches, mini strawberry tarts, salmon and cream cheese and chocolate cake squares with the royal crest on top! As you can imagine everyone enjoyed this part of the day! After all the sights of the garden had been enjoyed, guests started to depart whereupon our main job began. We started calling cars forward to the Palace on the request of the VIPs with the use of our radios and the loud speaker system. Thankfully everything went smoothly and the VIPs appeared very happy with our promptness on delivering their cars to the gate. This concluded our summer ceremonial season. We all look forward to the winter season! We also say a fond farewell to our boss **James Snelgrove** and congratulate him on his marriage and wish him all the best in Germany.

ELECTRONIC COUNTER MEASURES (FORCE PROTECTION) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj BM Bingham MBE**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Kenny**

ECM(FP) Sqn continues it's high operational tempo, with at least 31 personnel deployed at any one time to provide vital Force Protection support. ECM (FP) Tp (Afghanistan) continue to provide ECM (FP) advice, training and maintenance support to 16 AA Bde, with detachments in Camp Bastion, Lashkar Gah, Kandahar Airfield and Kabul, while also regularly visiting all the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). ECM (FP) Tp (Iraq) maintain a significant presence in Iraq, supporting 7 Armd Bde. Based in the COB, they provide support to Baghdad, Talil, Shaibah, Kuwaiti Support Facility, Umm Qasr and within Basra City, including the Military Training Teams. The Sqn deployed at the end of June to RHQ in Corsham to prepare for the Royal visit and the Regt Reformation day. Both of these event were very successful. The Sqn also walked away with the CO's Cup Tug-O-War competition, not losing any ends.

We then deployed to Napier Barracks in Folkestone to take part in the Battle Camp. Again the Sqn had a successful time and we won the CO's Cup Patrol Competition. Our team led by **Sgt Lee Nicol** flew around the course, completing the assault course, stretcher race and tab in 14 mins 50 secs and then moved on to the falling plate, knocking all the plates down and handing back 50 rounds.

EXERCISE MARBLE TOR – GIBRALTAR - *by Cpl Dickinson*

40 Sig Regt (V) deployed on Ex Marble Tor for 2 weeks in Gibraltar taking with them 9 members of ECM (FP) Sqn. The exercise was the perfect way for regular soldiers to work with members of the TA at basic soldiering level. On arrival in Gibraltar, all the exercising troops were broken down into 2 pls, Tosca Pl and Jabal Pl. The exercise was to be conducted in 2 separate phases, a communications phase and a field phase. A sect competition was also to be held over the duration of the exercise.

The communications phase involved training all trades on using HF and VHF radio. This incorporated basic voice procedure, antennas and propagation and sending secure data traffic. For most of the ECM (FP) Sqn they had never operated the various radio systems before but grasped the systems with ease, mainly due to the instruction from **WO2(YofS) Rudd**. The main reason we were in Gibraltar was to utilise the unique tunnels built into the rock for fighting in a tunnel environment. This was a new aspect to infantry soldiering to us all. For the duration of the exercise phase, 4 members of the Sqn were used as permanent enemy. This involved staying inside the Rock's tunnel for hours alone in the pitch black. **CSgt Rodriguez** Gib Regt enhanced any apprehension by delighting **LCpl 'Yax' Yaxley** with tales of ghosts and experiences by other exercising troops inside the Rock. The new techniques learned were well put into practice with a 2 hr clearance patrol and fight through in which **Cpl 'Johnny' Fraser** fought through no less than 5 enemy positions.

The culmination of all the military training was a dawn attack on the FIBUA village which was cleared swiftly, mainly because all the soldiers were still on the adrenalin rush from the tunnel phase!

LCpl Blackwood and LCpl Yaxley clearing the FIBUA village on Gibraltar

The eventual prize for best sect which went to 1 Sect Jabal Pl led by myself **Cpl Dickinson**. In between the 2 phases, the troops were taken around Gibraltar to learn about the history surrounding the famous rock, mainly focusing on the British occupation and WW2. This included tours of the WW2 tunnels and around the many naval batteries on the Rock. Gibraltar has some wonderful sights and is surrounded in military history and the best things about the rock were the views from the top and of course the world famous apes. **Cpl 'Tilly' Tillman** got quite friendly with a few of these apes and was chased up the road while all the soldiers were completing the 2.7km Rock Race. Ex MARBLE TOR was a great experience that was enjoyed by both Regular and Territorial soldiers and hopefully I will be fortunate to take part in again.

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD

CO	**Lt Col J Langley**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) L McGrail**

1 OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj JD Morrice CD**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) AG Doe**

As ever the summer period sees the biggest turnover of Training Staff and the Sqn would like to bid farewell to **Capt Jonny Markendale** (going, going ….), **WO2(SSM) 'Dinger' Bell**, **SSgt Lucy Mason**, **Sgt Manns** and **Cpl Richie Bastow**. A warm welcome to those who have recently joined us **Capt Chris Anderson**, **WO1 'Torry' Torrington**, **WO2(SSM) Ash Doe**, **Sgt Gary Fisher**, **Cpl Dave Langley** and **Cpl Ian Garbutt**.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE - *by Sig Gaskell*

On Saturday 26 June, 20 Phase 2s from Battleaxe Tp led by **Cpl Richie Bastow** took part in a Sponsored Charity Bike Ride. Our aim was to have at least one bike going at all times for 24hrs to raise as much money as possible for the Army Benevolent Fund and the Royal Signals Association (RSA). The ride started at 0900hrs and was to finish at 0900hrs the following day. We all knew what we had to do and so we prepared ourselves for a long 24 hrs. There were 4 teams of 5 situated around the camp. My team was positioned outside the main doors of the George III bar, where we cycled non-stop until 1900hrs through the heat of the day, which for Blandford was unusual. We took it in turns to ride; 1 hr on and 4 hrs off, so that we had a good rest to re-hydrate and at the same time spend time with, and (of course) collect money for the charities from, the many RSA members who had travelled to Blandford for the weekend. During the evening we re-located indoors to carry on the ride and watched DVDs to help keep us awake. We had 10 bikes going indoors constantly and the shifts changed to 2 hrs on and 4 hrs off so we could get as much rest as possible between shifts. We ended the cycle ride outside the Colours Restaurant, where people could see us finish. When 0900hrs came we were relieved to get off the bikes as our legs were like jelly and we just wanted to sleep, but there were smiles all round knowing we had raised £704 for 2 two very good causes.

Sig Stubbs, Chapman, Maddams and Georgiou

ADVENTURE TRAINING - *by Sig Godden*

On Friday 20 June, 1 Sqn went adventurous training in Weymouth organised by **Cpl 'Spanner' Gaston**. On arrival, tents were laid out for us to put up and while this was happening the NCOs were preparing an evening meal. Once camp was built, we all got together and had a game of cricket followed by BBQ food – in a tent mind, as it was raining!

The following day we were up nice and early to go to Lulworth Cove for canoeing and bike riding led by **Cpl Potter**. I was partnered with **Sig 'Chicken' Curry** for the canoeing, which was great fun as we all got soaking wet and capsized ourselves and the others a lot! The bike riding proved eventful with **Sig 'Jacko' Jackson** coming off his bike and breaking his collarbone. An ambulance was called for but as we were in the middle of nowhere, they sent an air ambulance, a 4 x 4 ambulance as well as the normal ambulance – with all 3 arriving at the same time! After **Sig Jackson** had been to the hospital **Cpl Potter** drove him back to camp in his car; however on the way back, high on morphine, he projectile vomited inside **Cpl Potter's** shiny car!

The last day consisted of a costal walk up and down hills from Lulworth to near Weymouth. The weather for it was brilliant, everyone enjoyed it and we finished off with a nice pub lunch. All in all it was an excellent and fun weekend.

SQUADRON SUMMER FUNCTION - *by Sig Gawley*

The summer function was a casino based theme night held to allow the troops to let off steam and relax with their comrades in a social environment – the night proved to be just that! Alcohol, gambling and idiotic dancing by the chain of command all contributed to what was a very entertaining night.Roulette, Craps and Texas Hold-em were the preferred choices of game to baffle the wits of the inexperienced punters, while the seasoned gamblers within the Tp jumped on this opportunity to exploit their knowledge and add to their vast chip amounts. As the night went on, play relaxed and the numbers dropped exponentially as chip leaders fought for vital chips before the final tallies were taken. Some great prizes were on offer for the raffle with the main prize of a TV/DVD combo going to the overall chip leader **Sig 'Baldrick' Davis**, but all this was just the calm before the storm!

The biggest surprise and most entertaining aspect of the night was the dance-off now being dubbed 'The Battle of the Bosses',

where the new and old Tp OCs locked horns and slaughtered some songs with dancing that would make even Timmy Mallet blush! **Capt 'John Travolta' Anderson** impressed with his dancing skills but was completely outclassed by the 70s disco dancing produced by **Capt 'Jiff Jobs' Markendale**.

All in all the night was a success and a very enjoyable experience which I'm sure all the troops were glad to participate in!

EXERCISE OUSTON WANDERER - *by Sig Holdsworth*

Ex OUSTON WANDERER was an escape and evasion exercise put together by **Cpl 'Swanny' Swanson**. Unlike others, I was not looking forward to it mainly due to the 'unknown factor' but I can now say that I am very glad I was nominated.

We were dropped off at an insecure location so we had to move fast. The NCOs took this time to let off steam…on us, with a mile and a half of PT just warming us up for the weekend! We finally got to a 'Safe Location', were given some food and then set off one patrol at a time. As more patrols were set free, there were the usual rumours and whispers that there was a hunter force out to get us! And this was soon confirmed as we met the first agent who pointed us in the right direction or what we thought was the right direction! Before we knew it 15 to 20 hunters came running out of nowhere, screaming and shouting, and we quickly realised there was nowhere to run. We were then put into a holding area and at first light there was an attack on the holding area and we were rescued by friendly agents. We had to keep up with them and get clear of the area to a Bergen cache. Each patrol was handed a Bergen, which we were told contained everything we needed to escape from the area and evade capture, so with our first grid reference and our sketch maps we set off!

We didn't know what to expect at first but we soon realised what was going on after a couple patrols were caught before the first RV. Our patrol played it smart, out thought and outran the NCOs, leaving them for dust. One patrol even hid up a tree and the NCOs were stunned and unaware where they had gone, which was surprising as the patrol nearly fell out of the tree they were laughing so hard! The hunter force must have had enough as they all gathered at one bridge that they guessed we had to cross and waited. As I sneaked through, there they were! We ran like hell but the hunters caught the member of the patrol carrying the Bergen otherwise they would have had no chance. Looked like **Cpl Potter** hadn't been doing much PT recently! As night got close every patrol met at an RV and were handed a sandbag containing carrots, potatoes, parsnips and onions to make a stew but halfway through cooking our scoff, along came the hunter force to wreck the party and make up for us laughing at them earlier. As we got near to a night time RV, the hunters had a nice surprise for us! Bang! Flare after flare after schermuley went up turning the night to day. Everyone scattered in different directions, which turned out to be a bad idea as our patrol got split up. **Sig Harrington** and I made it to the RV but the other half of our patrol was nowhere to be seen! They were picked up an hour later by the OC Sqn. Once re-united and given our next RV we had a chance to get a bit of sleep. We had 2 more RVs in the morning with the final one being at about 1030hrs where we were de briefed on the whole exercise and given some much wanted hot food before the journey back to camp.

THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE - *by Sig Davies*

At 0430hrs on 12 July, 3 teams (2 male and 1 female) left Blandford for Scotland to try and complete the 3 Peaks Challenge in 24 hrs in aid of 'Help for Heroes'. The lucky 7 on the female team were: **Capt Godfrey**, **SSgt Mason**, **Cpl Phillippo**, **Sig Allen**, **Sig Davies**, **Sig Hutchinson** and **Sig Long**. The admin party was **SSgt Harmer** and **Cpl Wright** who we bullied into cooking us rat pack scoff and brews every time we got back to the minibus.

Five mins out of the front gate, **Sig Allen** was asleep and stayed that way pretty much the whole way to Scotland! Due to traffic, we got to Ben Nevis at 1935hrs, de-bussed and scarpered! **Capt Godfrey** and **Sig 'Redbull' Hutchinson** set a good pace which we maintained the whole way up and to the shock of those doing Lanyard, **Capt 'Godders' Godfrey** even broke into a sweat! Morale was kept up by rating the blokes coming back down out of 10, a snowball fight, **SSgt Mason's** unbelievable burping and **Capt Godfrey** singing her own version of 90s songs! A quick photo at the summit, a few jelly babies and then it was straight back down at a rapid pace. We were overtaken by 1 male team on the descent, half of which was in the dark and got back to the minibus at 0025hrs, a respectable time of 4 hrs 50 mins.

After the horrendous drive to Scafell Pike in the cramped and stinking minibus, the team set off up at 0700hrs and made very good progress; finding the climb easier as our legs became accustomed. This time we actually had a view from the top for the photo, a few more sweets before descending, all in a time of 3 hrs 50 mins. The last part was the drive to Snowdon which took ages. **SSgt Harmer** tried to make up time as the minibus driver before 2 middle-aged women drivers (who couldn't reverse) stopped us for 15 mins. During the drive someone put on some 90s dance and we had a rave-up in the minibus (**Capt Godfrey**, we have videos!)

We arrived at Snowdon with 3 hrs left and the team smashed out the first few flat km before a cheeky climb. **Sig Long** vowed never ever to climb a mountain again but just like for the last 2 peaks, the team dug in its heels and made the summit in 1hr 30 mins. This time we descended at a run knowing we were against the clock and luckily we just made it in at 23 hrs 58 mins. Knackered but happy the team went to Capel Curig camp for a shower followed by a well deserved Chinese in Betws-y-coed.

The Three Peaks team on top of Snowdon

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj L Roddy**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Peace**

EXERCISE JERSEY CHALLENGE - *by Sig Foster*

Ex JERSEY CHALLENGE was a 48.1 mile continuous walk around Jersey. It is an annual event organised by Itex and the Rotary Club De La Manche and is one of the largest fund raising events on the island. The exercise was organised by **Cpl Amie Burt** and **Cpl Natasha Morris** who thought it would be a great opportunity to get young soldiers involved.

The event occurred on Saturday 21 June, starting at 0300hrs at Elizabeth Harbour Ferry terminal with 1200 walkers! We had 12 checkpoints (CPs) to pass through where local businesses gave out water, snacks and encouragement. Even though it was early morning, the fresh sea air soon woke us all up as we walked along the coast to the CP1. No one could have predicted what was ahead as **Cpl Burt** was keeping the route a secret! The cliff paths were hard and the hills consisted of many, many steps which seemed to last forever! The 5.2 mile walk from CP8 to CP9 across St Queens bay seemed to last an eternity but everyone was thankful for the sand to give our feet a break from the hills. With over half the island completed everyone was motivated and determined to complete the remaining 20 miles around the beautiful island. At the 40 mile point everyone was in pain and spirits seem to dampen until we reached ghost hill, realising that we couldn't physically walk down it. Some of the group started to run down, wishing for it to end and everyone followed suit with energy dug from the depths! With one more stretch to complete, we wanted to walk over the finishing line as a group. We started together and certainly wanted to finish together – as a team! We walked over the finish line at 2300hrs after walking for 20 hrs, suffering gruelling pain but having viewed beautiful beaches and coastlines. Many thanks go to our admin team consisting of **Cpl Cutler** and **Sig Downing**, their support was priceless!

RSA WEEKEND – UNVEILING OF THE REGIMENTAL PICTURE

This year's RSA Weekend saw the unveiling of the new 11 Sig Regt picture.

The 11 Signal Regiment Painting

The picture is a limited edition, with only 300 being produced. It reflects the transformation of a soldier in training through to his deployment on operations with his field unit. The original was hand painted by Kevin Lyle. The Master of Signals took pleasure in opening the curtains, to reveal the picture and the original now hangs proudly in RHQ, whilst prints are available to purchase from the PRI shop.

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj MA Bosworth**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) G Padfield**

EXERCISE WINDSOR WALK - *by Sig Kirk*

Ex WINDSOR WALK was put together by **Cpl S Blake** and **David Allan** who works at the WRVS and it involved a VIP tour of the Castle in places that the general public were not allowed. Thirty Phase 2 soldiers, all smartly dressed (that was a first!) got a close up show of "Changing of the Guard". It lasted an hour, went without a glitch and we were all impressed. After the ceremony the public were allowed to get close to the Guard and it wasn't long until dozens of children were climbing all over them! The visit then moved to the Queen's Courtyard, where we got a good look at some of the colossal array of armour, decorated with jewels and rich metals. The walls were covered with weapons, pieces of armour, battle standard from historic events and even King Henry VIII's hunting shotguns! We then moved onto the public part of the Castle and got to see many treasures that only few could dream about; including a solid gold, life size tiger's head with crystal teeth and diamond eyes that was taken in the Indian war and the cloak of Napoleon Bonaparte taken from the Emperor's carriage after the Victory at Waterloo. Everywhere was a treasure trove of historical items, ranging from the musket ball that killed Lord Nelson at Trafalgar to diamond-hilted swords; the Coronation Cup, a pure ivory throne, the armour of Henry the VIII and even Queen Mary's dolls house! When the tour of the Castle was over the Phase 2 soldiers were allowed 2 hrs in the town to explore before the journey back to camp.

SWANAGE HALF MARATHON - *by Sig Tann*

On Saturday 26 July, 40 brave and bold members of 3 Sqn descended on Swanage for their annual Half Marathon. There was an air of anticipation on the bus as we made our way there as for most participants, it was the first half marathon they had taken part in. We arrived in Swanage around 0900hrs, an hour before the start as we had to stock up on water and write the emergency contact details on our numbers – hopefully they wouldn't be needed.

The sun was shining and the sky was clear as we made our way to the starting line. It was interesting to see the variety of people who had turned out for the event, from locals who were raising money for charity to visitors, from the super fit to the not so super fit. Everyone was mixing together in a friendly and excited atmosphere. At precisely 1000hrs, the race started and there was a lot of darting and diving to get off the start line and onto the road. As the initial crowd thinned out, it was obvious the traffic on the road was going to be a problem; a few near misses were had along the way!

As the race progressed it became painfully apparent how hilly Swanage was. The water stops were a blessing, especially the sponges, they definitely helped us get around without flaking out, which unfortunately wasn't the case for everyone. As I came down the final straight and over the line, apart from being exhausted and relieved, there was a real sense of achievement which will stay with me all for a very long time.

Congratulations to **Sig Tejkumar Rai** for being the first from 3 Sqn to cross the finish line and a big thanks to Swanage for the trophies that are going to be a reminder of the day for years to come.

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) HAVERFORDWEST

CO **Lt Col TJ Carmichael**
RSM **WO1(RSM) G Topps**

VISIT BY HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL - *by Sig Tough*

On 24 July 14 Sig Regt (EW) were honoured by the visit of **HRH The Princess Royal.** The purpose of the visit was for **HRH** to present medals to soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq and to see the unique role of the Regt and the capabilities we provide on operational tours.

HRH arrived by helicopter and was then escorted round stands set up by the Sqns to show there role within the Regt and the kit they worked with. The gym staff and the chefs also produces stands.

SSgt(YofS(EW)) Rimmer briefs HRH while the Master and CO look on

Once **HRH** had finished her tour of the stands, it was time for the parade. The Regt and on-lookers were already formed up and waiting. As soon as **HRH** had taken her place, the parade began with a Royal Salute. **HRH** then presented every solider who has deployed with 237, KBL ICS and other trawls with the Afghanistan medal and had a brief chat with every individual. It was a proud moment for the Regt, the individuals and their families. The families and guests were kept entertained by the brilliant music of the Corps Band.

LCpl Turner receives his HERRICK Medal from Her Royal Highness

The parade went without a hitch and was swiftly followed by the Regt moving into full swing to get the Regimental photo done in the allotted time. Prior planning by the RSM made the whole task run smoothly. With help of a photo company, the Regt managed to base the photo on the roman numerals XIV, using the Sqn that receiving medals in desert combats to mark out the XIV and then filling in the gaps with the rest in combat 95s.

After the photo the chosen few were then able to take there families into the Officers Mess to meet **HRH**.

HQ SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Palmer**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Collins**

REGIMENTAL FAMILIES' DAY - *by Cpl Gwennap*

After a very successful Royal Visit by **HRH The Princess Royal**, the Regt went full steam in to the preparation for the Families' Open Day. With various events planed such as falconry, archery, 'Brawdy's got Talent' and much more. The soldiers of the different sqns went in to overdrive to make the day the best event for many a year. Even the threat of the heavens opening did not deter the CO, **Lt Col Carmichael** and **RSM 'Big' Gaz Topps** from decreeing that the show would go on.

The day came and the rain held off, to the great relief of us all. A party atmosphere ensued with refreshments and food supplied by the Army catering team from the main kitchen, under the watchful eye of **Cpl Scotty Philips**. The CO and RSM led the festivities by competing in the pancake making and tossing competition to win the coveted crown of 'Brawdy tosser of the year' – despite a number of "Stunt Tosses" over the shoulder and through the legs it ended in a dead heat. Everyone joined in with the events apart from the guard dog attack display; most people were happy just to watch that one.

As the afternoon went on, the **QM (G) Maj Jeff Williams**, the event organiser **WO2 RQMS (G) Andy Fisher** and his right hand man HQ Sqn SSM, **Mark Collins** started to relax as all had gone without incident. Apart from the 2IC HQ Sqn, **Capt Alex Stanger** putting one of my arrows through my ballistic catch net and into a Hangar Wall (nice one – just as well I did the risk assesment). At the end of the day when all the kit was packed away, everyone who came to the event was very impressed by the professionalism of the guys and girls running the stalls and the quality of the events on show. A fun day as had by all.

224 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Roberts** Int Corps
SSM **WO2 G Shuck**

As ever, the Sqn has seen many personalities come and go in the last few months. New arrivals include **Cpl O'Connor**, **LCpl Nind** and **JT Perkins** who we gratefully receive to bolster our numbers. We say goodbye to our Ops Officer, **Capt D Winfield** who hasn't travelled very far down the corridor to the SO3 Projects chair in JSSW(D). His replacement comes in the slight form of **Capt W Howard** who has enthusiastically taken the reigns. **WO2 Hide**, our Sqn Int WO has gone on to 14 Sig Regt as a newly promoted WO1. In his place we say hello to **WO2 Berry**. Our final goodbye goes to **Cpl Wood** who moves on to far greater and more dangerous things. We wish him good luck!

This period has seen a particularly busy time for 224 Sig Sqn. To date it has seen the implementation of a new training program, a trade exercise and a series of military skills exercises.

SQUADRON PHOTOGRAPH

On 30 May 08, members of 224 Sig Sqn gathered at Lincoln Castle for a photograph. The Sqn was extremely lucky with the weather and after several attempts, it was decided that the backdrop of the Cathedral would be used. After the photograph, the Sqn was treated to a free tour of the museum. The Magna Carta and the prison cells being most thought provoking. Lincoln has a tremendous history, and this was explored in several 'historic' public houses for the rest of the afternoon and evening. Next time the Sqn is out, fancy dress will be optional; this way we might avoid the salmon slacks at half mast!

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Crowther**
SSM **WO2 P Hounsell**

226 IN AFGHANISTAN OP HERRICK 8

The members of 226 Sig Sqn (EW) on Op HERRICK 8 exhaled an enormous breath as we tipped over the halfway mark and faced down hill to the end of the tour in September. The main aim of this part of the tour has been R&R. Many a smiling face has temporally stopped by our dust village in Camp Bastion, before donning clean desert combats and sandy helmets. While they are here, we are enthralled as they regale their stories of woe, wonder and whatever! We believe that the single members of our team tell us the stories to see what reaction they get. If we are rooted to the spot with mouth agape, then this is the net they will cast at home to catch a fine young lady. If we laugh in their faces then a quick rethink will probably be needed.

There is the one small problem with R&R though – you have to come back! The smiling, skipping creature which boarded the C130 has gone and in his place is a chap who has eaten lots of good food from Mum, lots of good beer from the local tavern and far too much money spent on clothes which will be long out of fashion before we return home. But fear not, when they return, we the Bastion Echelon conduct a training package to put them back into the mood for the job at hand.

Every single member of the away team is putting in a huge effort; the hours are long but rewarding, even those stuck in some of the less lavish of sites – **Sgt Mick Allan** and **Sig Pete Arnett** are working from a less than homely place. It's an old communications site which has most certainly seen better days, though **Sgt Allan** insists that it is better that some parts of his native Scotland! They are often visited by a number of grumpy snakes who all have mischief on the mind given the plentiful presence of nice fat mice.

On the other extreme is FOB Price, which is often called FOB Nice (the clues in the name), which was headed up by **SSgt Chris Andrews**. In the end it took a large portion of TNT to blow him out of there. The scratches from his fingernails are imbedded on the doorframe. It has every welfare amenity available, helping those who reside there to make their tour a little more enjoyable.

Another of the sites which we inhabit is in Kajaki; this is quite the most picturesque part of Afghanistan. The tops of the 2 hills, on which our chaps work, look over the Kajaki Dam; this is the focus point of the spectacular reservoir. Of course its job is not to look good but to power the turbines which supply the electricity for the local people.

The Kajaki detachment is headed up by **Chief Tech Gregor Anderson** and his 2IC, **LCpl Mathew Baker**. From the hilltop where Chief lives and works, it is 1400m downhill to the FOB where the meetings are held, where the food and fuel is issued and where the post comes into. So once or twice a day, Chief puts on his full kit and walks the 1400m down and then back up and believe me when I say it is uphill all the way. So if you are wondering why the Kajaki boys are so thin, it's because they walk up the hill with food and fuel almost every day in heat which is a trifle on the warm side.

226 Sig Sqn on patrol in Helmand province

EXERCISE GRIFFIN KNOWLEDGE - *by 2Lt Bilney*

Ex GRIFFIN KNOWLEDGE was a battlefield tour to Normandy run by HQ Theatre Troops for young officers from all cap badges within the Army. The tour focused on the battle fought by the British 3rd Div on D-Day and the subsequent attempts by the Allied forces to capture the city of Caen. When looking at the advance of the 3rd Div, the aim was to cover the ground in a similar time to the troops on 6 June 1944. This idea made everyone consider the sheer enormity of the task placed upon the soldiers on the first day of the invasion. The information provided by the syndicate leaders and the Birmingham University lecturer opened the eyes of all the young officers to the use of 'old school' tactics' used by the British in the final stages of WW2. As modern day leaders of soldiers, we viewed each 'position' with modern tactics in mind and the sheer bravery and determination of the soldiers in 1944 quickly became evident. The tour concluded with a Service of Remembrance looking onto the graves of over a thousand military personnel, a sobering action considering today's operational commitments. The battlefield tour was a good learning experience, and an excellent way for Young Officers to integrate across the Corps'.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj SO Cole**
SSM **WO2 S Fairclough**

THE WELSH 1000 METRE PEAK RACE 2008 - *by LCpl Morris*

Every year in early June the Gorphwysfa Mountaineering Club holds this 22 mile peak race. The race begins at Aber, a small village on the coast of North Wales and it crosses the 3 main mountain ranges of Snowdonia; first the Carneddau, then the Glydderau and then on to the Snowdon Horseshoe where it finishes appropriately on Snowdon's impressive summit. The accumulated ascent for the day is estimated by the organizers to be at about 8000ft. Although a civilian competition they have a separate class for Service personnel due to the large number of entries from service teams wishing to compete.
Our team of 4 comprised **LCpl Morris**, **Cpl Chris Tarr, Cpl Paddy McDowell** and **LCpl John Britton**.

At 0730hrs on Saturday 7 June, all the service competitors gathered at the start point eager to get moving and after an initial kit check the official fired his gun and set us on our way. The 4 of us started at a reasonably fast jogging pace and put a sizeable gap between ourselves and the rest of the teams as we followed the tarmac back roads out of Aber and headed towards our first mountain ascent. After about a mile **John Britton** was the first to start suffering from the inevitable tabbing shin splints but after some verbal "encouragement", which included rather coarse language, the pain seemed to vanish rather quickly. As we had been unable to recce this leg due to weather problems, the route

we were taking to the first checkpoint had been given to us by a local civilian, who insisted that this was by far the best route to take and so as there was already a visible gap between us and the others, confidence was high.

We kept a fast pace up for over an hour but no one seemed to be struggling in the now hot weather. As we approached the summit of Carneddau we joined a worn path where to our surprise we met other competitors, who we "assumed" were from a different class of entry as no-one had overtaken us on our 'best' route. This illusion didn't last long as we started to recognize faces from the start line back at Aber. It turned out that the route we had been given for the first leg wasn't only a steeper ascent but also longer!

When this reality if this kicked in, I started to hear grinding and growling noises from behind me. I turned round expecting to see some sort of wild animal and was surprised to find it was just **Paddy** grinding his teeth – let's hope he never meets our local guide again.

The Team piling on the pace on one of the climbs

Putting thoughts of sabotage out of our heads, we made a short stop at the checkpoint to refuel. By now visibility was terrible and the good old Garmin GPS came in very handy. Obviously now we were back in the pack, plodding along wasn't an option and every flat or downhill section was a green light for us to start jogging while the uphills were getting steeper and legs heavier.

We headed for lower ground and better visibility because below the mist it was a very hot day with clear skies. We identified a checkpoint in the distance, thanks to the marshals wearing high visibility vests. We rejoined a tarmac road and then went west onto an extremely steep hill. It was at this point that the first of the Fell runners started to overtake us. There is something unwholesome about people who can run up a mountain that normal people would refuse to go up without an escalator. By the time we reached the summit of Glydderau, **Chrissy Tarr** had decided that a Fell runner club is obviously a good place to meet attractive women as many overtook us over the next 30 mins.

Concentrating on the course, what goes up must come back down and the steep downhill sections were beginning to take its toll on our knees. Despite this the **John Britton** jogged down the mountain on numerous occasions picking up more and more speed and unable to stop. At this stage, with our unplanned detour at the beginning, we had covered about 23 miles and were hitting the wall, legs were heavy and cramp was setting in.

Although the civilian spectators who were coming down the mountain shouted encouragement, all 4 of us were getting tired and the only thing that kept us motivated was the knowledge that we only had 2 checkpoints left. We arrived at the last one on Snowdon's summit just over 7½ hrs after we had started in the following order **Chris**, **Paddy**, **John** and I which earned us a 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th places respectively out of approximately 80 entrants in the Services class and a respectable 4th place in the team list. Out of 80 competitors who started only half made the finish.

Thinking the ordeal was over we rested, only to discover to our horror that the Snowdon train that normally takes competitors back down wasn't running, so we had to walk all the way back down to our car at Pen Y Pass car park. Congratulations to **Capt Turnbull** who won the individual event in a lightning fast time of 5 hrs 43 mins 10 secs and the team event winners 101 Bn REME who won with an aggregate time of 20 hrs14 mins 13secs.

Thank you to **WO2 Mark Morgan** who entered us and booked our accommodation at Capel Curig in advance. Because of this we weren't sleeping in cars unlike some service competitors! To my knowledge we were the only regular Signals Regt in the competition. If you compete in events such as the Lanyard Trophy then enter a team for next year's race. It is a very well organized and run event and would be good practice before the Lanyard. Next year's competition details will be out in December, so I hope to see you there!

245 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Aitken**
SSM	**WO2 A Minorczyk**

REGIMENTAL ADVENTURE TRAINING WEEK

On 30 June the Regt undertook regimental adventure training. The first day started pleasantly with the sun peaking through the clouds and everyone seemed very eager to get on with the day in hand. With the transport loaded and everyone separated into their groups, we made our way to our different activities for the day which included land yachting, rock climbing, walking, clay pigeon shooting and surf kayaking. All of these had been chosen to bring people out of their comfort zone to overcome personal fears. My first activity for the day was land yachting.

We were all extremely ignorant as to what was involved but soon it was clear. Sit and fly! We had a fantastic time shooting up and down Newgale beach. Rock climbing was a chance for me to use my rock climbing expertise to help teach people how to climb, the techniques involved and to offer re-assurance to those with no previous experience.

Unfortunately during the walking phase, the weather didn't hold out and rained continuously but we trekked on with heads high and walked 10 miles in and around the Tenby area through very pleasant countryside. Then onto the Shotgun period; 'Watch and Shoot' we all shouted as I stood to at the clay stand and quickly missed my first 4 clays. Nevertheless, it was a very good day and was made great fun compared with our normally strict ways on the ranges. Surf kayaking was as much fun as it was exhausting. Even the fittest amongst us tired as we sprinted through the water allday chasing our kayaks, after falling off on every wave. By the end of the day a number of people were actually able to catch 2 or even 3 waves in a row – myself not being one!

In my view, overall, adventure training was an absolute success, testing everyone to the limit in at least some areas. We were able to socialise, which enabled the 3 sqns, 237, 226 and the mighty 245 to have the chance to get to know one another better, strengthening the Regt and raising morale amongst us all.

OP VALERO - *by Lt Goslin*

We arrived in a hot and sunny Kosovo in the last few days of May not knowing whether we were here for 30 or 60 days and to be honest, not really caring. The weather was great, Kosovo seemed pretty peaceful, not to mention the fact that we were missing RSIT, all the preparation for the Royal Visit and 2 working weekends back in the Regt! The first few days were spent in tents in Peninsular lines waiting for our vehicles to turn up and

occupying ourselves with last minute trade training and acclimatisation PT but already the inexperience of some of our team was beginning to show. **LCpl 'Trigger' Martin** had forgotten his trainers but managed to remember his climbing shoes! Apparently someone mentioned adventure training? But apart from a few minor hiccups everything started well.

A few days later we were moved in to Camp Novo Sello, a French camp in the north, where everybody lived in air conditioned rooms and the EW Command Post set up was in a tent outside the 2 RIFLES BG lines. The facilities on the camp were excellent and most evenings after our unbelievable 4 course meals in the "Restaurant France" we would retire to the cafe for a relaxing time trying to work out which tea was closest to what we Brits understand as tea.

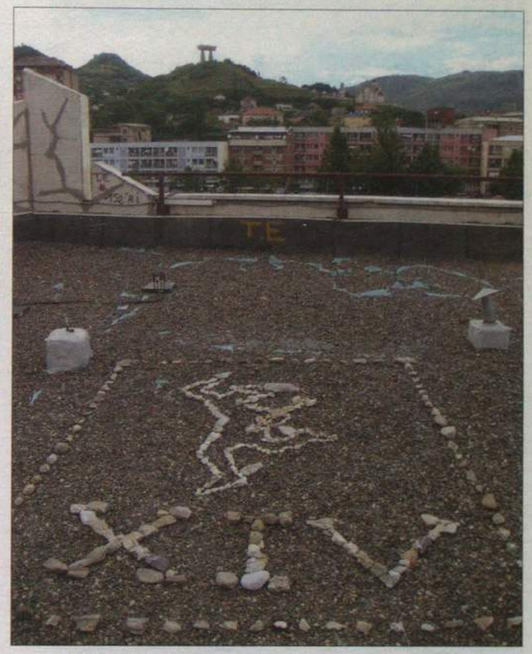
It rapidly became clear that the BG didn't have a clue what our capability was so **SSgt(YofS(EW)) Seaton** embarked on a mission to educate the BG on how to use us and a few days later the taskings were coming in thick and fast.

SSgt Doherty and LCpl Boag above Suvo Grlo

Throughout the tour our operators and linguists were accompanying infantry framework patrols, VCPs and CTRs as well as manning static sensors on the outskirts and the centre of Mitrovica and in the middle of a forest in support of a BG anti-smuggling operation. Even I got out on patrol, with **Cpl Gallon** providing communications for French patrols in Mitrovica back to the sensor on top of Camp Concession, a high rise building being used as a French coy base in the city centre. Because we were just 100m from the Austerliz Bridge in the city centre, we were also tasked with looking out for crowds or demonstrations forming in the city, especially around 15 June when the constitution of Kosovo as an independent nation came into effect.

LCpl Stacey, between posing for photos and bragging about his black ops patrols, was very excited to have spotted a large crowd forming by a church and very nearly reported it back to the BG until **Sgt Morgan** pointed out it was 1100hrs on a Sunday!

Throughout the tour very little happened in Kosovo, so we can only assume that the BG did a great "peacekeeping job". The EW detachment worked extremely hard out in Kosovo and achieved as much as could have been achieved and much more than was expected, given how peaceful the country is. It was an excellent experience and gave the 14 Sig Regt (EW) SLE a great run out. The younger members of the team learnt more in that 40 days than they had in the rest of their careers to date and that includes the Tp OC. Working so closely with the other arms of the BG and other nations was an excellent experience and has started 245 Sig Sqn (EW)'s Pre-deployment training with a bang.



14 Sig Regt make their mark on top of Camp Concession in the centre of Mitrovica

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT
ELMPT

CO	**Lt Col J Hodges**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

At the time of writing the Regt is in a state of mourning following the tragic death of **Sig Wayne Bland** whilst on operations in Afghanistan. With just a week of the tour remaining his Saxon vehicle was rammed by a suicide bomber whilst on patrol in Kabul. Sig Bland was providing top cover at the time and despite the valiant attempts of his colleagues to keep him alive, he later died of his injuries in hospital. Although the grief and sense of loss that the entire Regt is feeling is acute, this cannot compare to the pain his family must be going through. Our thoughts and prayers are with his mother **Maureen** and the rest of his family at this intensely difficult time. The Regt have now completed their hand-over to 22 Sig Regt and have returned to Elmpt Station. After their well deserved post-tour leave, they will return at the end of September as we are reconstituted in time to allow us to reconstitute for the ARRC exercise season. We would like to thank all the soldiers and their families for the commitment and strength they have shown throughout this hard but massively productive deployment. This includes those based back in Germany who provided support to the ARRC and to the deployed elements of the unit over the last few months. A special thanks goes to the soldiers from 7 and 33 Sig Regts, 216 Sig Sqn and ARRC Support Bn who became part of the Regt for the duration of the tour and did their parent units proud. Below we take a look at what some of the soldiers from the Regt have been up to over the past couple of months, both in Afghanistan and at home.

WELCOME HOME - *by Lt Johns*

16 Sig Regt returned home to a heroes' welcome. They were greeted by family and colleagues at their barracks on Elmpt Station as **WO1(RSM) Sheard** marched the Regt from the

coaches to the waiting crowd. The children of the deployed soldiers waved flags and had made a "Welcome Home" banner to hang along the parade route. They were accompanied by bagpipes played by **Sig Motherwell**. As they were given leave to fall out by the CO, **Lt Col Hodges**, they were joyously greeted by the crowd of over 300 well-wishers. Looking lean, tanned and healthy, the arriving soldiers were all glad to be back in familiar surroundings.

"I can't believe it has been 6 months," said **2Lt Tom Collins** who was based in Kandahar as OC Deployable Tp working for the Canadians. "Most of the tour flew by but the last few weeks really began to drag," he added. **LCpl Melvin** was employed as a technician maintaining the various communications equipment in the South of Afghanistan. It had been her first operational tour and she said "It's good to be back. I'm really looking forward to catching up with my family and friends and getting my post-tour leave."

The Regt have spent the last 6 months working in locations all over Afghanistan. They were providing the vital communications necessary to assist coalition operations against the Taliban. From Helmand Province to Kabul, the Regt's soldiers have been conducting a wide variety of roles including expanding the communications infrastructure at several key locations and providing elements of force protection.

KABUL SUPPORT UNIT

GEN SIR RICHARD DANNETT KGB CBE MC ADC Gen VISIT *- by Sgt Pierrepont*

"**Sgt Pierrepont**, OC here, stand your guys by for a VIP task, 3 x CMVs for 2 days, I will let you know more as I discover it".

When the OC told me that I was to provide a team of 6 drivers to drive "somebody fairly important" around Kabul, I had no idea that 2 days later I would be briefed that my team and I would be picking up CGS himself, **Gen Sir Richard Dannett**. We were no strangers to driving VIPs and had already driven some fairly "Big Hitters" during our tour, but for a Royal Signals MT to be honoured with the responsibility of driving CGS; this was going to be our biggest challenge yet. On Day 1, CGS arrived on time and in some style, stepping off the aircraft, meeting the team and insisting on greeting each of us with a smile and a handshake and with that, it was off on our 2 day task. One of the perks of driving someone important is that there is often the occasional benefit attached and as CGS was staying at the British Embassy on the first night of his visit, so did we and a night in "Bling House" was to be our reward. Silk sheets, air-conditioning, butler service, Turkish delight on the pillow…OK not quite, but it was rather nice nonetheless.

A visit to HQ ISAF was the first item on the next day's programme and after an early start we delivered CGS to the ceremony to mark the change of command between the outgoing and incoming Comds ISAF. This was followed by office calls around the HQ and onto some of the numerous "Green Zone" locations and Kabul satellite sites, before calling it a day and returning to Camp Souter to meet the soldiers, have supper and later to be driven back to the Airport for his return trip. Before leaving, CGS thanked each of us for "protecting" him during his visit and wished us all the very best for the remainder of our tour. From a personal perspective, this has been a major highlight of my career as a Royal Signals Driver and I know the team were all very proud of the part they played in a job well done in very testing circumstances.

DEPLOYABLE TROOP, KANDAHAR AIR FIELD *- by 2Lt Collins*

As the tour draws to a close I have taken a moment to reflect on all the time spent not only in Afghanistan but in Deployable Tp itself. The Tp was formed back in October 2007 and straight away, I could see that I had a good team around me. We quickly set about bonding and embarked on a number of activities to bring us together. As soon as we hit the ground in February 2008, it was fast and furious; with various flights needed to the 4 corners of Regional Command South (RC(S)) and the KAF based elements of the Tp needing to find the nearest coffee shop and fast food joint. Before long the Tp had set the scene for an enjoyable and productive tour. In Tarin Kowt, **Cpl Crawford** made sure that his team were invited to every BBQ the Aussies could muster and in Qalat, **Sgt Melia** had introduced a series of physical challenges to test the US and Romanian forces on their sandbagging prowess. Meanwhile in Shorabak, **Cpl Meik** was liaising with the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and advising them on communications issues (and for a Tech, he didn't do too badly) and over in Lashkar Gah **Cpl Hickman** set himself up for daily 5 hr gym sessions. Back in KAF, **Cpl Cheeseman** had taken every opportunity to sample the multitude of international food varieties such as Pizza Hut, Burger King and also Subway…in the same day!

Being involved in a TRILAT Sqn comprising of British, Canadian and Dutch Forces has been an interesting experience. We have all learnt a great deal about how each of the nations work and it has definitely given all of us an experience to remember….even if that is winning the SAT range shooting competition.

As for me, my tour as the Tp Comd of Deployable Tp has been fantastic. I have seen a number of changes in each of the guys and have learnt a great deal about the challenges of tp command…..anything that can happen, will happen! And now we draw to a close and await the arrival of **Lt Howie** and the Tp from 22 Sig Regt. I hand over the responsibilities of Deployable Tp in a great position and with fond memories. I wish the in-coming Regt a safe and enjoyable tour and head back to Elmpt Station where the onslaught of the ARRCADE exercises awaits us.

FOB ROBINSON, LASHKAR GAH *- by Sig Stannard*

The start of the month saw a visit from **AVM Allen**, along with the COs of both 16 and 7 Sig Regt. This allowed **Sgt Shambrook** to switch into panic mode since he was in charge of the briefings as the OC was away on R&R. In preparation for the visits all the equipment had to be cleaned to perfection and presentations about all the different items put together. The VSATs and Talons were cleaned and prepared by the Operators, while the OVERTASK and SPECTRE cabins were sorted by the Technicians and IS Engineers. All in all everything seemed to go very well.

Life in Lashkar Gah has mostly been dominated by water and fuel shortages which have meant that all non essential pieces of kit were turned off for long periods, including the air conditioning in our tents. This created some difficulties for those who were on night shift as sleeping during the day was hard but we were fortunate that most of the air conditioning units had to be kept on in the Det due to the equipment needing to be kept cool. With everyone back from R &R, morale is high as the end is in sight and we are all now looking forward to flying to Cyprus for decompression and then going back for some well earned POTL.

FOB PRICE, GARESK – HICS SIGNAL TROOP *- by LCpl Hands*

Having only just arrived at the Regt a few months ago, I quickly completed OPTAG before arriving in Kandahar in July, very much looking forward to the experience of my first tour. I spent my first week at Camp Bastion before being sent to FOB Price, where I was made to feel very welcome by the Tp there. On arrival, I was briefed on all the details of the camp and shown around by **Sgt Jolliffe** while **Cpl Paddon** was responsible for showing me all the equipment that I'd be using, so I could learn a bit of my trade during the month I was in theatre. The Tp has mostly been preparing their HO/TO ready for the arrival of 22 Sig Regt in 2 weeks time but it has not all been hard work.

This month has seen the running of the Dancon March which is a 23km march around camp organised by the Danish BG. Basically, it is a loaded march of 11 laps of the perimeter and all who took part from the Tp successfully completed it and received their medals later that day. We have also been part of a work party to help build a swimming pool area and volleyball court, to give people something fun to do in downtime or even as a Tp activity which is good for morale! Everyone is looking forward to going home for POTL having come towards the end of the tour, the chuff charts are looking good and holidays are being booked – it really isn't long now!

"IT'S NOT FLYING IT'S FALLING WITH STYLE" *- by Capt Harris*

This summer 14 soldiers from 16 Sig Regt took the long journey down to Bavaria to do some paragliding. We met early at the Regt MT to get onto the transport which would take us to the ATG Drei Muhlen Lodge based at Wertach in Bavaria Our first impressions of the lodge were apprehensive as many thought we were in the wrong place since it was such a lovely building. We soon made ourselves at home and waited for the opening brief. During that, it became apparent that we were all in store for a challenging, long and physical 10 days and right we were. On the first day we were all issued our paragliding gear and shown how to look for any damages to the kit. Everyone was definitely paying attention to this, bearing in mind most hadn't volunteered for the course and the majority of these had, let's say, "an aversion to heights". Once the group became familiar with the equipment the next step was the soon to be the dreaded training slope.

The slope consisted of West and South facing hills with the South being the steepest. We spent 2 tiring days running down and hiking back up the West slope, with many hilarious moments such as people being dragged face first down the slope or using their faces as landing gear. Luckily the West slope is of a fair gradient and very difficult to walk away injured from. Once the instructors had seen that all the students could launch and get airborne (or "airtime" to us), they decided that it was time to move onto the more challenging South slope. This was good news for some and grave news for others. With paragliding, we found the weather to be the overriding factor and on the day we all were looking forward to hitting the South slope it turned sour and so the ever efficient instructors had plenty of theory for us, which was presented in the age old way of "Death by PowerPoint".

Once the day was clear, we headed out to the training slope again, where it was obvious who was keen and who had doubts by the speed people were walking on the hike in. The South slope provided the biggest physical challenge and also the most comic relief. Not getting airborne on the West slope was not so much of a tragedy as it was on the South slope. You had to dodge straying cows on the launch, as **Cfn Simanjuntac** found out the hard way. He provided the most entertaining moment on the whole course when he decided to fly head on into a Bavarian cow who was not very pleased. During the course of the day

Capt Harris about to get airbourne

even those who had displayed the most worries were launching and landing with ease, although there remained enough mistakes to have us in fits of laughter throughout the day. Once all the theory was completed and the instructors were satisfied with our competency at controlling the wing, it was decided that weather permitting, we would take on the final challenge of the Elementary Pilot course – The Buchingburg.

Once we arrived at Buching and saw how high the mountain was, we lost a few of the more confident students to the ranks of the "adverse to heights" group. When we arrived for the first time with full intent to launch, it was plain to see that it would take some nerve to jump of the top of such a high mountain, putting complete faith in the piece of fabric laid out behind you. After the 10 minute ski-lift to the top, curiosity as to who would go first overcame the nerves which were still there. **Lt Johns** led the way followed closely by the more enthusiastic students. The most disappointing thing was that shortly after everyone had made the flight down to the landing area, the weather changed again ruling out any further launches that day. On the following day we awoke to perfect conditions for a full day's flying but by the time we reached Buchingburg, the wind was not moving in the direction we needed. We were just about to call it a day when the wind changed. We managed one more flight and it was easy to see that the confidence had grown massively by the smoother manoeuvres that were being done in the air.

The only problem was that we had no time left to fly as we had to hand in our equipment back at the lodge and head back to the Regt the next morning. All in all it has to be said we enjoyed our time at Drie Muhlen Lodge and offer sincere thanks to the Lodge manager and all of the instructors there.

21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT) COLERNE

CO **Lt Col DA Craft**
RSM **WO1(RSM) A McBean**

RHQ

Throughout an ever busy period, there has also been a large turnaround of personalities within the RHQ. So we say a fond farewell to the old Regt 2IC **Maj Chris Laycock**, who is now holding the careers of all Royal Signals operators in his hands at Glasgow (please look after 21 Sig Regt, Chris); **Maj Elisabeth Roberts**, who leaves to complete the only job more time consuming than an Adjt… being a Mother! Finally, both **WO1(RSM) Steve Mayell** and **Maj Sally Morris** (RAO), who are both transitioning into becoming civilians, good luck to all! Out with the old and in with the new, welcome to the new Regt 2IC, **Maj Katy Caie** from 2 Sig Bde and the world of staff, the new Adjt, **Capt Eddie M-P** (Name far too long for *The Wire*), **WO1 (RSM) McBean** and **Maj Martin Casey** on his 3rd RAO appointment. He must really love the job! Regimentally we are still extremely busy, maintaining 2 enduring operational deployments supporting both TELIC and HERRICK, as well as preparing to host the Lanyard Trophy competition 2008, watch this space to see how that one goes in the next addition of *The Wire*!

HEADQUARTER SQUADRON

OC **Maj G Johnston**
SSM **WO2 M Pollock**

Halfway through the year and the pace is unabated here in HQ Sqn. The MRX for 3 Cdo Bde is over; the HQ personnel did a

sterling job supporting them. At the same time we have seen even more new arrivals with the new QM, **Maj Rod Cowan** coming straight from 16 AA Bde on HERRICK – we all wondered why he ran everywhere crouched low. The Sqn's focus has been on this years Lanyard Trophy and the CO's Challenge which took place in July, more on that below.

As we move into the latter half of this year, it is hard to see any gap in the pace at all but the Regt is on maximum leave period as we speak, which has given the OC time catch up on his work as he is always away in Spain at his villa (very cheap with mates' rates available!).

CO'S CHALLENGE – EXERCISE ENDURANCE BEAUFIGHTER – A COMPETITOR'S VIEW

With an early start and a road trip to the Brecons ahead of us, teams from each Sqn set out ready to compete in the CO's Challenge. Upon arriving at the start point everyone was given their routes, a safety brief and some "high energy" death packs with sausage rolls to help power everyone across the hills. HQ Sqn was first out of the gates followed by 244 Sqn then 220 Sqn. By Check Point (CP) 1, 244 had already closed in on the HQ team and by CP 3 it looked liked they may have been good to take the lead until some creative navigation from **Cpl Chris Day** helped propel the HQ team back into a strong lead.

By CP 7, the HQ team were still looking good until some rogue navigation left them in some rough terrain helplessly watching the 244 team go screaming past on a track below. As morale dropped faster, the hills got steeper as we approached the final CP where teams were met with a brew and some well deserved hot scoff but strangely enough there was still no sign of the 220 team.

All in all, the route was hard but good and everyone learnt from the experience.

EXERCISE ENDURANCE BEAUFIGHTER – A QM'S DEPARTMENT PERSPECTIVE

First, the QM's Dept would like to thank the QM, **Capt Kev Simmons** for volunteering us into this and then going on leave! He missed all the fun anyway – honest!

On 8 July 2008, the QM's Dept embarked on the mission to provide support at the finishing line of the CO's Challenge in the Brecon Beacons. It consisted of a number of teams tabbing about 16 – 20 miles with weight in the fastest time. Once we arrived in the Brecons, we were met by dozens of willing volunteers to help build a couple of tents and a cookhouse.

Day 1, in search for morale, we all decided to deploy up into the hills (as it wasn't raining) and set up the only 18 x 24 required for the finishing line. After about an hour the 18 x 24 was in place and the Communications Detachment was set up, so the next question was what to do next? Having already spotted the local shops earlier, we all deserved a couple of beers to wash away the boredom of sitting on a hill up the Beacons. All went well until the next morning when we all (like a well trained alarm clock) arose in unison at 0600hrs sharp. Unfortunately **Cpl Leanne Eveleigh**, who was wearing pink pyjamas, seemed a little startled when the SSM, **WO2 Mark Pollock** popped his head in the tent – it's a long story.

Day 2 in the continuing search for morale, we woke up in the Beacons with the rain hammering down. No surprise there then but when told by the powers that be that they wanted another 18 x 24 tent erected, it takes a special kind of person to dig deep and find a silver lining. That was **Cpl Steve Turner**, who came up with the idea of puddle sliding (you might find the footage on YouTube). A great idea at first until the hypothermia kicks in.

Day 3 in the search for even more morale, all the teams had finished there jaunt across the hills and it was time for the Dept to pack up and go home. Thanks again to the ISM team who allowed the QM's to erect their 18 x 24 for them and then dismantle it because they couldn't be bothered. Oh and thanks to the QM for organising such a wonderful week out of camp for the Dept!

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B Bryan**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) B Baynham**

BATTLEFIELD STUDY TO ARNHEM - *Sgt Holly Glen*

On 1 June 08, 12 people from 21 Sig Regt departed to Arnhem on a 4 day Battlefield Study of Op MARKET GARDEN which had been organised by **Maj Bee Bryan** and **WO2(YofS) Pat Patrick** from 220 Sig Sqn The group was split into pairs and from each pair had to research a different part of the Op. Prior to deploying the group visited the Joint Service Command and Staff College library in Shrivenham to conduct further research on the given subjects.

Group 1 **Cpl Fay Taylor** and **Pte Victoria Pimm**
DZ X-RAY.
Group 2 **Sgt Ritchie Everleigh** and **Sig Michelle Dougan**
The German Reaction
Group 3 **WO2(RQMS) Andy Paling** and **Cpl Steve Lawrence**
Operational Decision Making
Group4: **Sgt Holly Glen** and **Sig G Hill**
Browning and Urban Ops
Group 5: **Sgt Tommo Thomas** and **Cpl Chris Day**
Frost Bridge

The aim of the visit was to develop Regimental personnel in the skills of research, analysis and presentation.

Day 1 was a visit to the Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek; the Div HQ of **Gen Urquart** to collect more information for our chosen topics and to recce the locations for our presentations. The museum showed footage of the actual battle with an interactive scale model of how far the soldiers had to tab to reach their objective. As you walked into the museum you had a chance to watch footage of the actual battle. There was a model in front which lit up areas in which the footage was talking about, so you actually got a feel for how the Op took place and how far the soldiers had to travel by foot to reach their objective. **Sig G Hill** did a recce for his stand only to find that St Elizabeth's Hospital was actually now a building site! The day ended with a Mexican meal and one or two cocktails.

The CO and the RSM on their tandem

Day 2 was presentation day. The first thing that we had to do was to pick up our secret mode of transport for the day. The OC, **Maj Bryan** dropped us all off in the comfortable, air-conditioned minibus where **WO2(YofS) Patrick** was waiting with the said transport. Seven Tandem Bicycles! Each pair was given a bike including the CO of the Regt, **Lt Col Craft** and **WO1(RSM) McBean**. If we were going to suffer sore backsides, then it was only fair that everyone did – and oh, were they sore!

We peddled from stand to stand for approximately 25km following the progression of Op MARKET GARDEN. Starting off on the Drop Zone, through to the German reaction and how they coped, all the way to the battle of Frost Bridge. It somehow felt surreal that on the ground we stood on receiving the presentations, these actual events had happened.

Day 3 was a visit to the Arnhem Cemetery, where all of the fallen heroes were buried. There were not only British soldiers but Polish as well. At the entrance was a book with the names of the soldiers that were buried and the group took the opportunity to look for family names and pay their respects to the headstones. Walking around, there was a real sense of calm. The majority of the headstones had names and regiments in which the soldiers served but there were also headstones with no name. To think that these soldiers gave up their lives for us and still nobody knows their name. To me that was the most poignant part of the trip.

The group at Arnhem Cemetery

EXERCISE RED SCORPION - *by Sig Latimer*

The scenario for Ex RED SCORPION was based on the need to evacuate non-combatant UK personnel from the fictional island of PODLY, due to rapidly spreading anarchy. It was as part of the Joint Helicopter Force's response that 220 Sig Sqn mobilised and moved to PODLY providing 4 evacuation points across the island, Warcop in the North, Aldershot and Bramley in the South East and Davidstow in the South West. As well as the challenge of maintaining communications over the large area, there was also the challenge of interacting with the CIVPOP and a 'live' insurgent enemy to deal with, the Costellian's led by the infamous **Taff Al Baynham** (played by 220 Sig Sqn SSM **WO2 Baynham**).

At 1600hrs 11 July 08, the packets deployed from the APOD at the PODLY capital, Colerne. Immediately the guys were on their guard, maintaining communications on the move, and stopping every 2 hrs to set up the PSC 506 to provide a LOCSTAT back to main. At Davidstow, it seemed that the COSTELLIANS knew we were coming and had intimidated the range warden into not providing the trg area key. A 2 hr tactical hunt in the dark at 0100hrs for the key to access our designated location began – it turned out the warden was fine, he was just an ex-Royal Marine who enjoyed burying things.

The weather was clear and dry but that didn't stop **Sig 'Dogger' Wardley**, getting completely drenched while taking cover in a flooded trench on a clearance patrol, nor **Cpl 'OB' O'Brien** falling into a large rabbit hole. Eventually we gained access and set about getting our long range HF links in-and-working, desperately trying to remember our training about the FCS, droopy-diploes and antenna lengths.

Sgt Cant embarked on a comprehensive defence plan which included digging in an OP, setting booby traps and trip flares and countless QRF rehearsals. It paid off when **FofS Quinn** and his associates, acting as enemy, attempted to harass and attack our site. They were spotted, challenged, chased down, ambushed and encircled within seconds. The enemy were dastardly in their deeds with **Al Baynham's** henchman, **LCpl Beech**, known as '**Chemical Malcolm**' claiming to have poisoned food sources at all of PODLY's TESCO stores, thereby ensuring the troops stayed on ORP.

The exercise was well planned and even included heli-taskings at each location simulating the evacuation of UK PAX but in reality giving everybody the opportunity to practise the specialist role of the Regt, Ground to Air (G2A) communications and Rigger Marshalling Skills. The 10 days on the ground were challenging in so many ways but also very rewarding. We maintained communications, defended our sites, interacted with the exercise CIVPOP and developed skills at every level from the junior Sig up to the Sqn Operations team. Bring on RED SCORPION 2!

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Hale**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M McMullen**

The past few months have witnessed a period of real change in the Sqn. At the start of June, a new (3rd one in 3 months!) Sqn OC arrived and we would like to welcome **Maj Peter Hale** and say a fond farewell to **Maj Chris Laycock**. **Maj Laycock** did a great job of looking after the Sqn after the early departure of **Maj Ian Blower** which continued his theme of doing anything but the Regt 2ICs job. We also have a new Sqn SSM with the arrival of **WO2(SSM) Mark McMullan** from the Training Wing.

We would like to say goodbye to both the Sqn YofS, **WO2 David Martin-Woodgate**, who is off to the sunnier climes of Italy and the stand-in FofS, **SSgt Rob Godfrey**, who had to return to HQ Sqn at some point. We would all like to thank them for all of their hard work in the Sqn and especially the preparation and participation on recent exercises. Departures inevitably mean arrivals and we would like to welcome the new YofS, **WO2 Tommy Tucker** and the new FofS, **SSgt Jacko Jackson**, both of whom were well and truly thrown into the deep-end on the MRX.

We have also seen a welcome influx in SNCOs arriving in the Sqn and we would like to wish a warm welcome to **Sgts Dinsdale**, **Tinsley** and **Harris**. We would also like to wish a fond farewell to **SSgt Steve Brown** who departs us to return to his spiritual home.

MILITARY READINESS EXERCISE 9 (MRX 9)

The major event for 244 Sig Sqn in July was being given the task of providing the ICS for 3 Cdo Bde's MRX 9 which took place over the period of 21 – 31 July 08. The aim of the exercise was to prepare 3 Cdo Bde for its role as Task Force Helmand (TFH) on Op HERRICK 9. The exercise consisted of two parts: a Command Post Exercise (CPX) followed by a Field Training Exercise (FTX) based on Salisbury Plain and Sennebridge training areas. For the Sqn however this was only part of the story for the provision of communications to the exercise involved an extensive ICS build and recovery phase meaning that the exercise was over 3 weeks for the majority of the personnel.

Cpl Varley living the dream

The exercise was a major challenge for the Sqn which was being used out of its traditional Air Support role. Despite this, the exercise was a success in both overall terms and from a more parochial Sqn perspective, although this did result in an extremely steep learning curve for all. The provision of communications to the exercise involved the coordination of personnel from 11 Sig Bde, 10 Sig Regt, 22 Sig Regt (248 Gurkha Sig Sqn) and 3 Cdo Bde and we would like to thank all personnel who assisted the Sqn. The exercise was made all the more challenging by the recent changeover of some of the key Sqn personnel.

The MRX proved a good chance for some of the guys from the Sqn to interact with BG personnel and see some of the new equipment that is being used in both the operational theatres. It should be noted that some people interacted more closely than others and **Sgt Ensor's** role play with a low flying Typhoon was especially impressive. The end of the exercise has entailed a well earned break with the majority of the Sqn breaking for a period of leave. This is has been a long time in coming and much needed before we look forward to next round of exercises and commitments in September.

BATTLE CAMP - *by Cpl Ben Wildman*

From the sedate confines of Azimghur Barracks, 244 Sig Sqn deployed on Ex RED FIST. This week long ex was conducted within Copehill Down village SPTA and covered OBUA defensive and offensive operations. Once the Sqn had moved into their Pl House, the activities got underway. First up was a round robin of events ranging from throwing petrol bombs to negotiating the Urban Obstacle Course. It was at this point the first casualty was taken. **LCpl Wagstaff** was attempting the 'illusion jump' under the illusion he would make it. This resulted in a swollen ankle and a large amount of ribbing.

During the day build up training on the offensive elements of OBUA commenced. As you would expect lots of time was allocated to the rehearsal of entry and room clearance at sect level. This allowed **Lt Bodger** to look at individuals for the command appointments, as well as quickening the drills of the lads in preparation for later in the week. Once Wednesday arrived, the ex scenario kicked in and saw the Pl move to an alternate location. Here **Lt Bodger** issued orders and we then deployed to a harbour location on the outskirts of the village. The normal recce patrols ensued before the inevitable final assault began early Friday morning. Three buildings were the objective and the initial breech went well apart from people falling off ladders. Regenerating enemy made things interesting as a buckshee building was thrown in but the assault finished well with no casualties taken. For many of the Sqn members it was their first OBUA package and certainly went down well. It also acted as a good shake out in preparation for the Regimental battle camp in the not to distant future.

Cpl Brendan Ward with us on the Ex LONG LOOK exchange, doing it Australian style!

OPERATIONS

In addition to the MRX the Sqn has continued its steady state support to Ops HERRICK and TELIC. The constant rotation of personnel in both theatres ensures that the vast majority of Sqn personnel who serve in the Sqn get to go on at least one operational tour during their posting to 244 Sig Sqn.

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22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD

CO **Lt Col ND Fraser**
RSM **WO1(RSM) J Pritchard**

22 Sig Regt remain as busy as ever with the deployment on Op HERRICK high on the list of current commitments. The half of the Regt that remain behind will continue to fly the flag with ongoing exercise commitments in the UK and the Stafford Based Element will strive to maintain the high standards already set by previous performances and all are looking forward to the upcoming months.

The Regt has however lost and gained some key personalities. The new Regimental 2IC, **Maj Russ Edwards**, has arrived in post and we extend our warmest welcome to him. **Maj Karl Jeeves** leaves us for greener pastures and we wish him the best of luck as we welcome in the new OC 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn, **Maj Toby Courage** – stand by 248 Sqn! 222 Sig Sqn has lost the OC who played a key role in the move from Salisbury, **Maj Colin Alexander** and we wish him and his family the very best for the future. The New OC 222, **Maj Ian Rodger** has already taken up his new post and is deployed with his Sqn on operations. The new QM(A) is in house as well and we extend a warm welcome to **Maj Gerry Knight**. 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn has also lost their illustrious 2IC, now **Maj Ratna Pun**, we would like to extend our thanks for the work he has put into the Gurkha community here in Stafford and wish him all the best for the future. He has been replaced by **Capt Laxman Pun** who has already taken up post and seems to have settled in well. **Capt Lal Gurung** leaves us for Blandford with lasting memories and we wish him the very best of luck as we welcome in his replacement, **Capt Lokbahadur Gurung** as OC Lima Tp.

CENTRAL SKILL AT ARMS MEETING 2008 - *by Lt Wilson*

Members of the elite shooting team display their silver

On 17 June 2008, an 8 man team of elite shooters made their way to represent the newest Regt in the Army, 22 Sig Regt, to win some silver ware and put the Regt on the map. The road to being able to compete in the CENTSAM was littered with hurdles and obstacles. During the CORPSOSC, where a good score was needed to qualify for CENTSAM, it seemed it could not get any worse. Whilst we were all lying down in puddles soaked to the bone with the searing cold pounding down on our backs, watching as a full blown blizzard was playing havoc with our points of aim, it was the unrelenting passion and dedication to the cause that allowed us to pull through. In the end, all the sweat and tears paid off, the team ultimately won the CORPSOSC putting us in a good position to enter CENTSAM but more importantly, it helped to ease the nerves which would no doubt be put to test further.

On arrival to the Army Training Regt Pirbright, everybody's attention switched from detachment maintenance back in barracks to training for 'The Big One'; the massively desired 'Army 100' badge. The team, under great direction and organisation from **Cpl Dambar**, managed to get some good practice shooting in all the relevant matches. Everybody's point of aim for every range and position was finalised and all were becoming ever more confident.

Unfortunately, because we were hugely stretched back in MOD Stafford, the team had to return to camp to conduct RSIT, which stole 6 valuable days. The team were apprehensive on returning to Pirbright, all feeling that the time missed would ultimately have a detrimental effect. To make things worse there was now huge competition for lanes at each range which meant that a whole day waiting just to shoot one match was common place. A couple of days before the competition started **Lt Wilson** turned up on completion of the JOTAC course in Warminster, thus making the team of elite shooters complete. Unfortunately, there was only one day of shooting set aside before the TA competition began and due to being so late in the day there was no zeroing range set-up. Not accepting having a non-zeroed rifle, **Lt Wilson** managed to negotiate a single lane for one shoot. It seemed his rifle was zeroed (enough) and quoting **Cpl Dambar**: "chin up Saheb!".

On the morning of the competition, the nervousness due to a severe lack of shooting practice was clear. The team went straight into the thick of it shooting 3 matches which provided the weight of almost half the points available. If any of the days of the competition week was important, it was this one. The first shoot was the Henry White Head which was preceded by a 1km run wearing full kit. Later in the day was the Association Match which separated the 'marksmen' from the 'marksboys'. Monday saw the lads shoot in the Attack Match and the Gun Match. So after the initial 2 days, the scores started filtering through. Seventy per cent of the team were safely in the top 50 – so all good so far. Tuesday was a make or break day; shooting 3 matches: the Fleeting Encounter Match, the Defence Match and the Urban Contact Match. The Fleeting Encounter always posing a problem for the inexperienced among the team with this year being no different. The Defence Match being tricky having to shoot 100, 200 and 300m after running 100m whilst wearing a respirator, by now steamed up! The Urban Contact remaining the overall favourite, this fact was proved once again with all being awarded some excellent scores.

On Wednesday the team matches were shot and was a day 22 Sig Regt held their heads up proud and high. The team shot the Para Match, Combat Snap and Team Attack Matches. The team pulled out overall 1st place in both the Para and Snap with a nail bitingly close finish in the Team Attack but unfortunately lost out and gained a 2nd. It was a huge feat for a newly formed team considering the immense competition. The main opposition were the teams from the RGR and Rifles, not to mention 30 Sig Regt, who were consistently snapping at our heels at every opportunity throughout.

On Wednesday night there was a huge parade where the Top 100 shots were announced and the unheard of happened; every single member of the 22 Sig Regt team made it through and very comfortably! At the top of the 100 was **LCpl Chij** with an amazing 7th place – a big well done to him! However, the big stars were **Cpl Bhesraj** and **Sig Jiwan**, both first time shooters, coming 31st and 32nd respectively; they'll be ones to watch through the years!

Thursday saw Stage 2 commence where the Top 100 shooters fight it out to see who is awarded the Queen's Medal. The winner ended up being **Maj Cottrell** of PWRR; congratulations to him! Friday's shoot was the Inter-Service Competition Match to fight for the Methuen Cup, which decides the pecking order amongst the Regts. It was a bad day for the Corps and saw us only come in 3rd, the RGR picking up 1st. A massive 'Well Done' to all 8 competitors who all achieved the Army 100 badge and brought some magnificent trophies and cups home to fill the Regimental Silver Cabinet. This year it really was an excellent result because all the best shooters Army wide were available this year to compete, so every shooter had to work extra hard just to stay in contention. Wear your badges with pride lads – super work!

EXERCISE HOPTON KUSH - *by 2Lt Si Pierson*

Ex HOPTON KUSH was a battle camp run over 5 days in Catterick. The objectives of the exercise set out putting members of 22 Sig Regt through a battle camp as pre-deployment training for their deployment to Afghanistan and subsequently to sharpen some rusty green skills following previous OPTAG training. The battle camp consisted of a series of live ranges (Grouping and Zeroing, IBSR and Sect Defence including GPMG firing) as well as training in the role of QRF and guard in a Forward Operating Base (FOB) where the Regt set up a variety of communications links including TACSAT, J1/J4 and Bowman VHF/HF.

LCpl Flintoft looking for the ON button on the TACSAT

The week started in an unusually sunny Catterick. **Lt Elliot Moore** and **2Lt Si Pierson** headed up a team of 15 GURTAM soldiers who were there to provide the OPFOR for the exercise. The Regt was split between 2 FOBs and were told to mount daily patrols into their respective AOs. The job of the OPFOR was to create a realistic environment for the troops on the ground; running scenarios which they would be likely to encounter on the upcoming deployment. The tempo of these scenarios was dictated by the reactions of the troops on the ground to the earlier serials. For example, initial reactions to civilians were relatively aggressive and this had a knock on effect resulting in a more aggressive stance of local civilians towards the troops in later scenarios.

After some early teething problems, the troops demonstrated some very good skills when dealing with low level scenarios. Being provided with enough BATSIMs to level a small house, the OPFOR were later to wreak havoc on members of the Regt on patrols throughout the week. Scenarios included convoy ambush, IED finds, VBIEDs and shoots on the FOBs. Of particular note was **Maj Ian Rodgers** in his calm manor when dealing with a local dignitary visit to his FOB where he actually employed a

"guard of honour" and opening ceremony of the FOB, much to the delight of **LCpl Ghanendra** who was posing as the dignitary! On the whole and certainly towards the end of the week, as the intelligence picture escalated resulting in more complex situations, the troops demonstrated they had understood everything taught to them in the previous OPTAG training, in particular their reaction to IED finds whilst on patrol.

The range package ran concurrently with the OPFOR scenarios was also deemed a success. The range was run in a professional and slick manner by **WO2 Rob Fogg** and his extensive training team. The Sect Defence range with GPMG firing was considered the highlight of the package and the Regt was really put through its paces with a very dynamic and exhausting IBSR range run by **SSgt Col Brotherston.**

Practising section battle drills on the section defence range

Of particular note on the exercise was the inclusion of Battlefield Casualty Simulators for 2 days provided by "Amputees in Action". These real life amputees provided invaluable training value to the OPFOR and their presence was a complete surprise to the majority of the Regt. This allowed the scenarios employed to be much more complex and gave the commanders on the ground a lot more to consider, as well as honing the individual first aid skills of the troops involved. A big thank you goes to **Sgt Daz Hardy** for his relentless hard work in looking after the 3 casualties (including reapplication of their makeup!) and in giving valuable input in debriefs of the treatment of the casualties following the incidents.

Getting to grips with ultra realistic casualties

By the end of the week though tired and weary from inclement weather, members of 22 Sig Regt seemed rearing for more! A good start all round!

TRAILWALKER UK 2008 - *by Maj Steve Abram*

The next time the CO approaches me after PT and asks "…. are you carrying any injuries at the moment?", I'll consider quickly adopting a subtle limp, rather than immediately replying "…absolutely fine Sir, why do you ask?"

It was at such a moment in January that it dawned on me that I had just been invited to join the Regimental Team to run in this year's Trailwalker challenge. With the initial concept of forming a gentleman's team to attempt the 100km trek in under 30 hrs, the proposal struck me as both a unique challenge and a great opportunity to further improve my general fitness. Having 248 Sig Sqn under command of the Regt and also my own band of determined Gurkhas forming A Tp of 217 Sig Sqn, it seemed entirely appropriate that we should 'do our bit'. Under the team management of **Maj Karl Jeeves** (outgoing OC 248), I joined **Lt Col Neil Fraser** and **David Chandler**, a former civilian friend of **Karl's**, under the banner of 'Team Twenty Two'.

Within a week of saying 'yes' the flyers, entry forms and registration paperwork flooded in, followed by sponsor forms and a DVD explaining what it was all about. There was no turning back. We all hit the roads and tracks and began a few months of extra PT! It soon became apparent that a new goal of completing within 14 hrs had become more than just a rumour across Beacon Barracks. Though depending on the mood and who you asked during CO's PT, this target seemed to fluctuate between 12 and 16hrs – the pressure was on and I have to admit that as a Trailwalker 'virgin', second thoughts were starting to set in.

The team finally assembled at 2100hrs the night before the race and following a brief chat with **Brig Pope** the gauntlet was finally thrown down. Completing in anything slower than 14 hrs 23 mins would incur professional shame from which 3 of the team would struggle to recover. So, 14 hrs and 13 mins after starting out, Team Twenty Two crossed the finish line at Brighton Racecourse; reputations just about intact. The Highs: The 'Oxfam Girls' corralled for the team by **Lt Moore** at Check Point 5, **SSgt Man** getting a face-full of the contents of one of the CO's blisters at Check Point 7 and medals on the podium from the incoming OC 248. The Lows: The hunt for Check Point 9, the last leg from 10 to the finish and the painful recovery.

We achieved our objective, completing the event as a team with a gentle jog across the line to finish 12th out of some 490 teams. At the last count we have raised roughly £2500 in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Oxfam. Team Twenty Two would like to thank all those from across the Corps, BAE Systems, KPMG, Attiva UK and our friends and families for their sponsorship and support in this endeavour. Particular thanks must go to our support team, **Cpl Ashfield** and **Sig Joseph**, for being in the right place at the right time throughout the day (shame about the flag) and to all from 248 and 217 Sig Sqns who spurred us on through CPs 5 to 7. Same again next year? If I do, I'll go a little easier on the painkillers during the day and politely decline the chillies with my curry at the finish! This was a massive achievement for us all and if you are seeking something to test your physical and mental stamina I strongly recommend it – and all in aid of a good cause as well!

217 SIGNAL SQUADRON PAINTBALLING
- by Sig David Gillespie

On Thursday 31 July 2008, 217 Sqn participated in Ex LICHFIELD TAKEDOWN. This was a day out for the Sqn to enable the troops to work outside of the military sphere, build on teamwork and in the process raise morale. The event took place at the National Paintball Fields with 2 x 15 man teams. There were 7 games of paintball with the last game being "last man standing" to enable participants to expend any of their remaining paintballs. Last man standing was **Sig Dhanesh** with **Sig Langley** taking the full force of both teams' paintballs and gaining some horrific battle bruises which he kindly showed the Sqn later in graphic detail! Two people who won awards from the instructors for the day who were deemed to have stood out were **Sig Wakenshaw** and **Sig Bhim** who showed immense courage under fire, so congratulations goes to them. The day was a complete success with members of 22 Sig Regt showing a presence in the local community and bonding relationships for future events.

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT
BRAMCOTE

CO **Lt Col C Ford**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Morris**

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj E Dallyn**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Robinson**

It is true to say that it has been a truly manic 15 weeks for the Sqn. Having returned refreshed and motivated after well earned post Afghanistan POTL, the Sqn immediately began reconstituting in order to take on the high readiness taskings of JTFHQ 1, EE Tp and SLE.

It is to the credit of the soldiers at every level that not only have we managed to achieve this very demanding set of timelines but we also managed to have some fun along the way. In between all the STA courses, PDT, MATTs and exercises we managed to get people away for the Morrison Cup, Race the Sun, Napal Cup to name just a couple of the team events. In addition there were a number of Army and above level representatives; **Sig Wide Wade** took 4 wickets for the Army at the Army/Navy Game, **Sig Nidal Maosa** is not only the Army 400m champion but also represented the Army at Tennis and **Sig McGrath** played Army level squash. Our thoughts and best wishes go to **LCpl Jarman**, who is currently recovering from a very badly broken wrist, which she injured whilst training with the GB Bobsleigh Squad.

After this already manic period, for 256 Sig Sqn and especially Charlie Tp the pace is only set to increase.

EXERCISE SWAN CONNECTION

With 256 Sig Sqn imminently taking on the R1 high readiness role from 250 Sig Sqn, it was all hands to the pump for Ex SWAN CONNECTION. This was the final confirmatory exercise for the Sqn. It began with a very early wake up call in on 21 July. The troops arrived bright eyed carrying the world's biggest bag of SOP kit ever. After the initial madness and manifest, we were ready to head into the field, well the windbreaks, where the fun really began.

After the rapid 36 hr set up of tent city, Charlie Tp were ready to get into their daily routine and testing of the communication systems began. **Cpl Edmondson** decided to test the reaction of the crew by "apparently" testing the emergency stop button. For the next few days the Tp had to chase many little gremlins around the system with the help of CSST. After the systems were all working well, it was lesson time with **YofS Reed** being instructed on the use of push-to-talk technology. Now with the daily dress state changing by the hour it was time for a much needed SOP kit check, conducted by **SSM Wobbo Robinson** and **SQMS 'Thomo' Thompson**. Whilst many had no issues with this, **Sig 'Nadal' Maosa** spent some time explaining to the SQMS about how he intended to go for a walk to find a mine prodder if the situation ever arose and with **Sgt 'Paddy' Briggs**, who wondered where all his kit actually had vanished to. Despite the heat and lack of sleep endured by most morale was always kept high by **LCpl Connerty**, who on an hourly basis amused us with regular battles of brains and common sense – a Tech in every sense!

The final challenge for the Tp was to engineer Sonata over Cormorant, with elements of 18 UKSF Sig Regt deployed, the testing began. **LCpl 'Will' Hanvey** deployed down to DSF in London and for 2 days spent a lot of time chasing men wearing black nasty for answers. While ground was gained, this new venture is to be explored further in the future.

Everything finally dropped in just in time for **Brig Thackray's** readiness inspection, a swift walk around and a brief chat with the Tp. The Sqn got the seal of approval and are now ready to roll out of the doors on R1 starting in August.

Maj Dallyn briefs the Commander outside the Joint Task Force HQ

Finally Charlie Tp would like to bid farewell to the following personnel: **Sgt 'Mad Paddy' Briggs** off to ISM 30 Sig Regt, **Cpl 'Richie' James**, **Cpl 'Sarah' Harvey** to Civ Div Australia and **LCpl 'Scouse' Herbert** to Blandford IS Cl 3

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Balsdon**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Hodgkinson**

As the Regt began reconstituting after Op HERRICK 7 and POTL, Sp Sqn continued to provide the support the Sqns required for them to take on their assigned high readiness tasks. Sadly Sp Sqn had to say goodbye to a number of soldiers, who had to move due to the reconstitution and we wish them all the best for the future in their new Sqns.

Since the major regimental changes, Sp Sqn has managed to run a MATT week away from camp and a week Adventurous Training at Penhale (all evidence will be in the next issue of *The Wire*). However the main effort for the Sqn before summer leave was to organise the Regimental Open Day.

…and so the build begins

Look at me helping!

The RSM ordered good old fashioned training area weather for the event but this did not dampen the spirits of either the public or the soldiers. The Regt hosted over 3000 visitors and raised well over £5000 during the day. The Regt donated £3000 to the Lord Mayor of Nuneaton appeal and another £1500 was donated to the other Regimental charities. The Sqn are now going on well earned leave to recharge their batteries for the remainder of the year's tasks.

30 Sig Regt Shooting Team after winning the AOSC again!

30 SIGNAL REGIMENT SHOOTING TEAM HAT TRICK
- by Cpl Sachin Thapa

This year saw 30 Sig Regt winning the highly contested Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) for the 3rd year in a row. The team, comprising of **WO2 Bharat Shrestha**, **Sgt Devprakash Gurung**, **Cpl Sachin Thapa**, **Sig Balbahadur** and **Sig Narayan Rai**, together with 3 individual shooters, **Maj Yamkumar Gurung** (Gurkha Maj QG Signals), **Capt Nirmal Gurung** and **Cpl Lilasing Gurung** swept all aside to win an astounding 17 trophies in a single event and secure the Championship. The Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC), formerly known as the Central Skill at Arms Meeting, is one of the major annual shooting disciplines. It was held this year at Bisley, Pirbright and the Ash Ranges complex over the period 06 – 10 July 08.

The competition unfolded with heavy rain and strong winds that demanded high levels of personal administration (to keep weapon sights clean) and skill (to compensate for irregular winds and inclement weather) throughout. Scores were subsequently inconsistent with the final day seeing a fierce battle between the defending champions 30 Sig Regt, 22 Sig Regt and 36 Engr Regt. Some excellent performances eventually secured success for 30 Sig Regt with **Maj Yamkumar Gurung** and **Sgt Devprakash Gurung** being selected in the Army 8 to represent the Army in the Inter-Services Shooting Competition. In addition, all team members secured places in the Army One Hundred; their individual positions are as follows:

Capt Nirmal Gurung receiving Unit Championship Trophy 2008 from Brig RW Dennis OBE ADC, Deputy President and Chairman of the Army Rifle Association

INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS

3rd	**WO2 Bharat Shrestha**
5th	**Maj Yamkumar Gurung**
9th	**Sgt Devprakash Gurung**
14th	**Cpl Sachin Thapa**
17th	**Sig Balbahadur Gurung**
23rd	**Capt Nirmal Gurung**
27th	**Sig Narayan Rai** (first timer)
34th	**Cpl Lilasing Gurung**

The overall AOSC top five team positions were:

Team positions

1st	30 Sig Regt	309 points
2nd	22 Sig Regt	281 points
3rd	36 Engr Regt	267 points
4th	3 RIFLES	262 points
5th	2 RGR	250 points

The shooting team would like to thank the CO, **Lt Col CA Ford** for his interest and support which was and is vital to our continued success.

The shooting team proudly shows off its silverware with Lt Col C A Ford, CO 30 Sig Regt

TRAILWALKER (UK) 2008 SET TO RAISE OVER £1M AGAIN!
- by Capt Prembahadur Ale

TRAILWALKER is an annual sponsored 100km 'walk' and is organised by Queen's Gurkha Signals and Oxfam GB to raise money in support of education and welfare projects in Nepal run by the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and Oxfam projects in more than 80 of the world's poorest countries. The event that began as a training exercise in 1981 for members of the Queen's Gurkha Signals stationed in Hong Kong has now grown into the single biggest fundraiser for these worthwhile charities. This year the event was held over the weekend 19/20 July 2008 and 502 teams of 4 participated in the endurance challenge along the South Downs Way starting on Saturday morning. The first team to cross the finish line, with 'big smiles', was the team from Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regt, in 10 hrs 15 mins and 34 secs. The Queen's Gurkha Sig Regt Teams A and B came 2nd and 3rd respectively. It has been a resounding success again due to hard work and dedication of soldiers, volunteers and support teams alike. It will take some time to discover how much money has been raised but early indication suggests that it will be over £1 million – special thanks must go to the State Street, a financial Investment Company, who has given £100,000 this year again!

32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT GLASGOW

CO	**Lt Col HA Jenkins**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Wilson**

61 (CITY OF EDINBURGH) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJ Lindsay**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) J Poulson**

This has been another rollercoaster of emotions for the Capital Sqn as we have competed in endurance races, paraded through the city and received some sad news.

SSgt Gordon Campbell our PSI(T) is currently on a short tour in Baghdad with the electronics lab at CEXC. He recently met **Gen Petraeus** who thanked him for his hard work and long hours and presented him with a coin. Well done, and keep your head down for the rest of the tour!

SSgt Gordon Campbell with Gen Petraeus

CALEDONIAN CHALLENGE 13 – 15 JUNE 2008

It was that time of year again. We'd all sworn we would never race 54 miles of the West Highland Way again in less than 24 hrs and here we were on the start line covered in a swarm of midges.

Capt Gaw and SSM Poulson at Checkpoint 1

Whilst the rest of the Sqn deployed along the route providing essential safety communications and support to the 1300 people taking part, 9 hardy members of the Sqn taped up their feet and started eating bananas like they were going out of fashion in preparation for the race. The route starts outside Fort William and follows the West Highland Way for 54 miles to the top end of Loch Lomond. The first 12 miles are fairly steady with the first test coming with the ascent out of Kinlochleven. Following the old water pipes from the aluminium factory you seem to keep on going up until you reach the top of the Devil's Staircase and start your descent into the magnificent Glencoe.

Despite some dubious mileage signs put up by the Scouts, the route from Glencoe through to Tyndrum is fairly flat and some good time can be made up on it. The next and quite possibly the worst challenge were the hills at the back of Crianlarich after you leave CP4. With head torches glinting in the dark and only lighting the next 10m or so of your route through the woods, the path seems to be eternally rising. You pray that every corner you come to will lead you to a flat section or a slight descent but it just keeps on going up and up!

The piper at the finish tent has never been such a welcome sight as you slip on the trodden ferns down the hill to the awaiting rigid raiders to take you over the loch. Many thanks to our support team of **SSgt Taylor**, **Sgt Traynor**, **LCpl Sinclair** and **LCpl Willis** who kept us fed and watered throughout and watched us slowly deteriorate through the night. With a wee way to go to keep up with the CO (who finished in 15 hrs 13 mins) our results were:

LCpl J Rickett	16 hrs 15 mins
WO2 (SSM) Poulson	18 hrs 25 mins
SSgt A Cook	18 hrs 26 mins
Capt G Gaw	19 hrs 15 mins
2Lt C Hardwick	20 hrs 10 mins
Cfn S Maclennan	20 hrs 23 mins
Sig S Addicott	Retired CP4
Sig A Fullbrook	Retired CP4
Sig D Wren	Retired CP4

TA 100 PARADE 26 JULY 2008

At the end of July, the Sqn had the privilege of marching up Edinburgh's Royal Mile from the Palace of Holyroodhouse to the City Chambers to celebrate the centenary of the TA. After a spot of practice drill at the TA Centre, we set off nice and early in order to secure a parking space in Holyrood Park. Arriving at about 1115hrs, we were told that we weren't needed until 1145hrs and even then we would have to wait for the Jazz Festival to move out of the way before we could start our march.

Formed up in the courtyard of the Palace we were dismayed but somewhat proud to discover that we were the only TA unit on parade! A poor show by the rest of the units in Edinburgh but it did mean that the GOC had a sea of his old cap badges in front of him. Marching behind a pipe band from The Pipers' Trail, we immediately grew 6 inches taller as the band struck up and we marched from the Palace gates through crowds of tourists and well wishers. It was a once in a lifetime experience, applause rippled along the route and friends and family cheered us on. We even managed to keep in step, until the eyes right and it all went

a bit messy. Once at the City Chambers we formed up in Parliament Square where the GOC led the pipers with a rendition of Flowers of Scotland. A fantastic and proud day for the Capital Squadron!

CAPTAIN PETER CAMPBELL

It is with great sadness that we must report the death of our PSAO, **Capt Peter Campbell**. He died suddenly at home on Tuesday 5 August 08. Capt Peter Campbell was the indefatigable backbone of the Sqn. His loyalty, commitment and pride were unquestionable. Extraordinarily passionate about his work, he would always go the extra mile to ensure that everything he was involved with was completed to the highest standard. Well respected by everyone in the unit, he could be relied upon to assist the newest recruit right through to advising senior officers, utilising over 40 years of military experience. He was a great character that will be sorely missed by all in the Sqn.

33rd SIGNAL REGIMENT MANCHESTER

CO **Lt Col PS Cubbin**
RSM **WO1(RSM) D Icke**

42(CITY OF MANCHESTER) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj AJ Quinn**
SSM **WO2 K Westall**

TA IOO CELEBRATIONS

As part of the TA 100 celebration events, **Her Majesty the Queen** visited Manchester at the end of March to meet TA and Regular soldiers in the Manchester URBIS Centre. The purpose of the visit was to provide **Her Majesty** with the opportunity to meet and talk to Regular and TA soldiers from across the North West of England who had served their country recently on operational tours. The 42 Sig Sqn contingent was represented by the Sqn SPSI, **SSgt Dean Wilkinson,** and **Cpl Stuart Green**. **SSgt Wikinson** was posted in to the Sqn following a year's deployment in Afghanistan with 7 Sig Regt and **Cpl Green** completed a tour in Iraq on Op TELIC 6 in Basra with 12 Mech Bde Sig Sqn (228).

SSgt Dean Wilkinson and Cpl Stuart Green meet Her Majesty the Queen flanked by the Regt Yeoman, WO2 Tim Parkins and the CO, Lt Col Pete Cubbing

LORD LIEUTENANT'S AWARD – WO2(SSM) WESTALL

In his first year of office, Greater Manchester Lord Lieutenant, **Col Warren Smith**, presented his Lord Lieutenant's awards. The Sqn SSM, **WO2 Kevin Westall**, was foremost amongst the recipients having been flown back from an operational tour in Afghanistan especially for the presentation and who received his award resplendent in his smartly pressed desert combat kit at the function rooms in Manchester University UOTC. The citation was read by the Chief Executive of RFCA NW & Isle of Man, **Col Gerry Wells-Cole.**

The citation read: "He is an excellent role model for soldiers, providing firm leadership and setting high standards. He relishes responsibility and pressure and is highly respected by all ranks. He has revitalised recruiting efforts through his unfailing enthusiasm, zeal and energy. He has helped the Sqn to raise over £16,000 for charity by taking part in sponsored walks across England. In all areas of his duties he as been a shining example to all and thoroughly deserves the award of the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate as a formal recognition of his outstanding efforts".

SSM Westall guests at the ceremony were his wife **Helen**, son **Thomas**, mother, **Catherine** and the Sqn OC and PSAO, **Maj Andy Quinn** and **Capt Gerry Whelan**.

WO2 Kevin Westall receiving the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate from the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Col Warren Smith, accompanied by the Sqn OC, Maj Andy Quinn

ART IN TANZANIA - *by Sig Elaine Gibbs*

Earlier this year I travelled to Tanzania to help with a charity called 'Art in Tanzania' which I discovered while looking on the Internet for volunteer work and travel abroad. They are based at 4 locations in Tanzania and Zanzibar and help to improve the education of the local people, both children and adults, as well as promoting African Arts to a wider audience. The organisation runs entirely on donations and any money made from volunteers coming to stay.

Before this 3 month expedition I had never ventured anywhere like Africa before, preferring to stick to Western culture and my home comforts whilst on holiday, so I had no idea what to expect. As I stepped off the plane the difference in culture was immediate.

Travelling to the volunteer house, we passed by the centre of Dar Es Salaam; my nearest city and the old capital of Tanzania before Dodoma. There were few metalled roads and most were bumpy and more like dirt tracks, which we later found out caused lots of trouble during rainy periods.

Later that evening, we all attended our welcome party, where we had dinner and tried some African beer (of which I was not a fan). After dinner we were entertained by a live band with drums and dancers that were more like gymnasts! It was an amazing introduction to the culture and we all got up to dance at some point.

After a couple of days to settle in, we were off on safari to Ruaha National Park. It was unbelievably beautiful and very green – which was somewhat unexpected when you think of African safaris. We saw all the usual animals including hippos. lions, giraffes, zebras, impala, baboons and got charged by an enormous elephant but luckily he got bored and didn't keep up the chase for long.

Once we had returned from safari we were allocated to the different volunteer projects. I was working in a school called 'One Nursery' which had 3 classes with children between the ages of 2 and 10. We would play games or learn new words using actions or go outside and play sport and sing songs.

The best lesson involved us making lots of blue play dough and letting the kids make whatever they wanted from it. They had never done anything like this before and seemed to enjoy it enormously.

After a week of sightseeing in Zanzibar, we returned to the mainland and then took a 10 hr bus trip to Arusha; a smaller town near the base of Mt Meru. My volunteer project here was to teach adults, who were already fluent in English, how to become teachers. This still involved teaching some English, as their grammar needed some work but we also had to teach them ways of teaching children that would be stimulating and successful.

During my time in Arusha I also attempted to climb Mt Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. I made it up to 5150m – the Hans Meyer cave – but the constant cold and altitude sickness prevented me from reaching the summit.

However, I am sure I will return some day to finish it but next time I will definitely take some boots that fit properly as I have still got some injuries months later!

One of our final excursions was to spend some time living with a Masai tribe near Lake Manyara. The Masai welcomed us into their bomas (huts) and the children especially were very friendly.

Sig Elaine Gibbs with one of her Tanzanian classes and their African teacher

However you could not miss the fact that everyone was constantly filthy and the children were covered in flies. It was certainly an eye-opener to see people voluntarily living in these conditions.

Shortly after leaving the Masai camp, we travelled back to Dar Es Salaam and after saying goodbyes there we headed back to (very cold) Manchester.

EXERCISE NORTHERN PENNINE RAMBLER
29 JULY – 05 AUGUST 08

Ex NORTHERN PENNINE RAMBLER was an 8 day long distance walk, traversing the Pennine Way from Edale at its southern start to Keld in North Yorkshire, a distance of 120 miles.

The object of the exercise was two-fold. First to develop officer and soldier leadership, navigational skills and team work in a mentally demanding long distance trail and second to raise money for the 'Help for Heroes' charity fund which helps to pay for care and facilities to support wounded service personnel at Selley Oak Hospital and Headley Court.

Due to time constraints for TA soldiers, it was decided to walk half of the Pennine Way this year and then complete the walk next year, starting where we left off at Keld and carrying on to the end at the Scottish border.

The Sqn has established a tradition of long distance charity walks and over the last 6 years has carried out 3 coast-to-coast walks: from St Bees in Cumberland to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire, the route of Hadrian's Wall and completed the Offa's Dyke walk north to south along the English-Welsh border and this year tackled the Pennine Way, a total distance of around 1000 miles.

This year's walk was a great success with our very own 'Mr Adventure Training ', **Capt Glen Martin** leading the 8 male and female walking team in fine style. One minor mishap was a sprained ankle suffered by **Sig Lydia Byrne**. However, this only caused her to miss one of the 8 legs and she completed the majority of the walk.

The PSAO, **Capt Gerry Whelan**, had to be issued with extra batteries for his pace maker, especially on the gruelling first leg from Edale to Crowden, where the extended climb up Kinder Scout got the lungs going but he was there at the end to prove that you cannot keep an old dog down for long.

This Sqn will have raised £4000 pounds on this year's walk for the 'Help for Heroes' fund when all the sponsorship money is collected in. This money will be presented to the Manchester branch of SSAFA at a suitable venue later in the year.

OPERATIONS

The Sqn currently has 5 soldiers on Op HERRICK in Afghanistan serving on attachment with 16 Sig Regt. **WO2(SSM) Kevin Westall**, **Sgt Sue Heaps**, **Sgt Hazel Trotman**, **Cpl Martyn Porter** and **Sig Michael Welch** deployed in October 07 and are due back to de-mobilise through Chilwell in September this year.

As they return, 3 other members of the Sqn, **Sgt Paul Duffin**, **Cpl Emma Warburton** and **Sig Ian Frost** are deploying to Cyprus on Op TOSCA for a 6 month tour serving with United Nations Forces in Nicosia.

All members of the Sqn wish them a successful and fulfilling tour and an eventual safe return to their families.

CONGRATULATIONS

Finally, the OC Sqn, **Maj Andy Quinn**, was selected to attend the 3 week TA Staff Officers Course in Canada during July and all members of the Sqn join in congratulating him for successfully passing this most demanding course.

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) MIDDLESBOROUGH

CO **Lt Col MJ Finch**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Tench**

REGIMENTAL RECRUITING TEAM - *by Capt Daren Newton*

Last year our recruiting team managed to recruit almost 20% of the Regt's strength. This equated to 101 recruits of which 36 have completed their Common Military Syllabus (Recruit). This is some achievement when you consider that this was done with only 4 recruiters.

Sadly we must say farewell to 2 of them as they deploy on Op TOSCA. **SSgt Tracey Downs** and **LCpl Paul Liddle** are both off to sunnier climates and their recruiting talents will be sorely missed. Welcome to **SSgt Mark Brooksbank** and **Sgt Graham Belt**, who I am sure will be able to keep the recruits coming through the door. I hope they will not grow as tired of the interesting questions that recruiters are asked such as:

"Do you get paid in the Army?"

"Have you killed someone?"

"Have you ever been killed?"

"Is that TV screwed down?"

Recruiting can sometimes be seen as a bit of a swan but is actually hard work and takes a great deal of self confidence. Territorial recruiters are now trained by their local Brigade Recruiting and Advisory Teams (BRATs) and must be able to advise the public on Regular Army job vacancies as well as their own Territorial Units. If you've got the "patter" and like to engage with the general public go and see your Regimental Operations Support Officer (ROSO) and ask him about becoming a Regimental Recruiter.

Capt Daren Newton and Sig James Bryceson recruiting the Chair of Middlesbrough

EXERCISE REDCAR ROW - *by Capt Daren Newton*

On 06 July 08 an 8 man team from HQ Sqn and 90(NR) Sig Sqn commenced a 100km row in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund. The aim of the day was to complete the distance in 8 hrs but the team excelled and actually completed 118km in the allotted time. The event took place at The Corus (British Steel to those older readers) Gala at Redcar Rugby Club and was combined with a Regimental recruiting stand. Over £1000 pounds was raised and the cheque will be presented to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle on 14 August 08.

Capt Daz Newton, SSgt Gaz Williams, Sig Danny Kay, SSgt Mo Morrison, SSgt Dave Walker, WO2 Ross Thubron, Capt Pete Griffiths and Capt Ian Flannery

Worthy of a special mention were the Adjt, **Capt Ian Flannery** who completed the furthest distance and **Sig Danny Kay** who came straight off his 2 week recruit training course and onto the event. **SSgt Mo Morrison** achieved the best grimace award for the day (and that was before he started) whilst **SSgt(FofS) Dave Walker** used his Brambles Farm charm to raise over £360 in sponsorship.

Well done to all those who took part and thank you to the Training Major, **Maj Guy Benson** for turning up and giving us some well needed support.

49 (WEST RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Jenny Bowes**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Mark Alexander**

EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH - *by 2Lt Vandenberg*

Ex EXECUTIVE STRETCH is an annual event organised to give young executives a taste of the Services, to gather support for reservist employees in their firms and to develop team building skills. This June it was the turn of 15 Bde to run the exercise and they turned to 34 Sig Regt to be the lead Regt. This enabled the Training Major, **Maj Guy Benson**, to be completely in his element for weeks!

Maj Benson and **Lt Dave Seaton** plotted and planned, had meetings with other Units in the area and even turned purple with their liaisons with the Navy and RAF. Command tasks were acquired, adapted and honed into appropriate activities for the unsuspecting young executives. We arrived at our dress rehearsal in late May. For some poor folk on Catterick training area, sleeping out with their command tasks, this involved being attacked in the dead of night by some neighbouring infantry troops with a passion for vigilance! The CO, **Lt Col Mark Finch**, walked around and seemed happy with what he saw. Meanwhile, many more than 100 executives were still sending their attendance returns to the Training Major. They must have heard how good this was going to be. Without the heart to say we were fully subscribed, we accepted them all!

Our executives arrived at Wathgill Camp, Catterick, that Thursday afternoon/evening in early June to our 'Theatre Reception Centre'. They booked in, received an issue of CS95, ORP, Bergen and made the bumbling transition from their colourful civilian work clothes into British DPM plus coloured bibs. The

executives were briefed that the "Reserve Forces were stretched and needed the help of anyone who could pass the 'selection' that was to take place over the next 72 hours". After the briefing, the executives were transported to Bellerby Camp where they received top quality lessons on the 24hr ration pack, basher building and command tasks performed by **SSgt Hector Heathcote**, **SSgt(FofS) Read**, **SSgt Eve Eden** and **Sgt Neil Cansfield**. Mother Nature decided it couldn't possibly be an exercise unless the heavens opened and our young executives promptly became familiar with 'Gary Gortex'. After an all-too-brief sleep, a trusty bugler from the 34 Sig Regt Band came to sound reveille at 0500hrs. Once the executives had made it out of their bashers, the 10 syndicate mentors, including **Lt Kat Mee**, got their syndicates through personal administration minus the power shower they were used to and together, they boarded the Bedfords to Catterick Training Area. Here, each supporting Regt had prepared a command task – some more like the instructions from **Lt Dave Seaton** than others! Never the less, we were stood by!

Our executives had been briefed by **SSgt(FofS) Dave Walker** and **SSgt Mark Brookesbank** on knots and cantilevers at Bellerby and they had also received a lesson on the command tools. The 10 tasks they faced on Friday included mental as well as physical challenges. They varied in difficulty and pace but they definitely all required team work and some leadership! **2Lt Rebecca Vandenberg** was ably assisted by **SSgt Frank Mason** and **LCpl Tony Seymour** on their radioactive task. Our executives began to comment on how they were gelling together as the day progressed. They had heard a little about the civilian and TA careers of the service men and women on each command task and some of their employers came to watch them tackle a task or two as well. By 1800hrs most of them were cammed up, worn out and hungry. 34 Sig Regt Band and chefs, played and BBQd until our executives were satisfied. A few jollies later they were back in the forestry block of Bellaby and then once again, the bugler sounded reveille. Saturday morning dawned and they were disorientated, muddy and still in DPM – poor souls!

So to reward our executives for their fine efforts, we laid on a champagne breakfast. Aren't we nice! Sorry, I forgot to mention we ran them through the steeplechase at Catterick first! I'm sure that upon reflection they all loved it. Some of them even loved it at the time. Back to business however, the exercise came to a safe and successful conclusion on Saturday afternoon. The executives were reunited with their jeans, handbags and cars, and made their journeys home. They took some very valuable insights with them too, not only about the Reserve Forces but also leadership and teamwork in an environment with different pressures to those they would normally experience at work. Mission accomplished.

CONGRATULATIONS

The Sqn would like to extend their congratulations to **Cpl Claire Norton** and **Sgt 'Kitch' Kitching** on the latest edition to the **Norton-Kitching** household, a little brother for big brother **Charlie**.

OP TOSCA GOODBYES

OP TOSCA is almost upon us and we would like to wish all the best, (and avoid sun-stroke if you can!) to **Lt Kat Mee**, **WO2(SSM) Mark Alexander**, **LCpl Mark Clarkson** and **LCpl Neil Varley**.

50 (NORTHUMBRIAN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

A/OC **Capt Dave Carr**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Carole Phillips**

EXERCISE NORTHERN ALPINE BREEZE - *by SSgt(FofS) Read*

On 5 July, 12 members of the Regt got together for Ex NORTHERN ALPINE BREEZE. The aim of the expedition was to conduct Kayak Foundation and Summer Mountain Proficiency courses in Bavaria. Most would see through **SSgt (FofS) Steve Read**'s plan as just another excuse to be out of the office and sat in a kayak....again! The expedition began with the drive to Elmpt Station for a couple of nights and all the lectures linked to the courses. With these out of the way, it was a clear run down to Wertach and Drei Muhlen lodge for 10 days of training.

Some of the team ready for their first dip

The paddlers felt that they were rather swiftly 'tipped' out of their comfort zone! With the basics come the safety drills that were practised so many times that we were starting to think that we were bats, from spending so much time upside down. Local water conservationists were concerned that the water level on Lake Rottach went down 2 inches because **Sig Roy Gleeson** drank so much of the water! **Sig Sarah Orton** mastered T-rescues, as did **Sig Liam Noble**, although the water 'burnt' (?) his nose!

LCpl Julie Wilkinson was gently reminded that her activity for the day was mountaineering not cross channel swimming, while she was greasing up with issue sun tan cream. **SSgt Kev Patterson** was taken out of his comfort zone when confronted with an electric fence. He described the encounter as a "vertical challenge" for his rather short legs. Day 2 of the course was an attack on the Grunhorn Ridge. **SSgt Mark Grover** took the word 'attack' literally and on sighting the ropes and handrails on the rather narrow ridge, adopted the prone position and crawled several hundred metres to keep his profile low to avoid sky lining.

Out on the hills

All this hard work could not go without a bit of R&R, although **Sig Orton** didn't think so when she saw the size of the chairlift to get up to the giant bobsleigh run. She was about to bail out until **Sgt Micky Jemmett** grabbed her by the arm and dragged her on, only to get his arm squeezed – she is actually scared of heights. When we arrived on the top of the ride, we knew she thought that it was all worth while as she disappeared, screaming into the trees on the bobsleigh. It wasn't a very good day for weather as it was pouring down as **Sig James Bryson** found out when his windscreen flew off so that when he reached the bottom, he may as well have been swimming in the Alpsee as he was soaking

wet. The afternoon saw a cultural visit to Innsbruck, **SSgt Read** was convinced it was OK to use the Euroshell card at the toll booth on the way off the autobahn, to be met by the police at a check point with a €240 fine! For not using it before using the autobahn... doh!

90 (NORTH RIDING) SIGNAL SQUADRON

A/OC	**Capt Brad Hogg**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Ian Evans**

EXERCISE SUMMER BREEZE
- Sig Liam Noble and SSM Heather Taylor

Ex SUMMER BREEZE was the annual Regimental Adventure Training weekend which took place in and around the Halton Training Camp Lancaster area and the Yorkshire 3 Peaks. Activities included Mountain Biking, Kayaking, Climbing and Hill Walking. On Saturday morning we went mountain biking and had been separated into 2 groups, the strong and the not so strong! We all found it fun and demanding despite the weather. We had stayed on the edge of Lancaster and cycled on the sea front. As we were riding a group went past in a minibus and laughed as we were soaked and they were dry. We had also heard one of the others from the other cycling group, **Sig Duffy,** had fallen off her bike! Fortunately there were no serious injuries. In the afternoon we went kayaking and found it fun and demanding. I have kayaked before but the others were new to it so I was separated from them while they learned how to go forwards and backwards. Once they had learnt to do that, we had a game of basketball in the kayaks which was great, but then I capsized and panicked because I took on water, however I managed to recover.

Later on in the afternoon we hit the climbing walls, which was great as the majority of us climbed the hardest part of the wall. We had conquered nearly all of the ascents, however the one I had found hardest was when I had to pull myself up using only my arms before I could use my feet (need to work on my chin ups I guess). Saturday night we went into town and had a great night as the Regt had gelled due to the day's activities. On Sunday morning we had sports. This took the form of a game of football where we had been split into 4 teams to form a league. As the game began there was a goal from **Sgt Dave Graham**, who went and dived into the river to fulfil a promise he had made if he was to score! Shortly afterwards he scored again. This time he asked his team mates to jump in with him and ran for the lake with them: he dived in and turned round to see his team mates still on the pitch! Total respect to **SSM Heather Taylor** and **Capt Neal Dixon** and members of the Regular Staff at 34 Sig Regt for organising a fantastic weekend. Special mention has to be made of **SSgt Andy Pritchard** who travelled hundreds of miles to provide his MLT skills and **Sgt Spike Milligan** who came on loan from 32 Sig Regt to instruct on mountain biking.

Sigs Yates and Gray scaling the climbing wall

35th (SOUTH MIDLAND) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) COVENTRY

CO	**Lt Col MG Hanson**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Balmforth**

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

This is an exciting time for the Regt as a number of our officers and soldiers join forces with 22 Sig Regt for their deployment on Op HERRICK 9. There has also been a large turnover of personnel and we say a sad farewell to **Capt Tek**, PSAO of HQ Sqn who has moved to become SO3 USSO in Blandford, **WO2(FofS) Thomson** who has moved to PJHQ, **Capt Bath** the Regt ROSO and **Capt Muhammad** have taken over the Birmingham recruiting office, don't forget your loyalties gentlemen and finally the RAO, **Maj Middler** who departs soon to civilian life. We wish them all and their families all the very best for the future. We welcome **Maj Lannon** as RAO, **Capt Porter** as PSAO HQ, **WO2(FofS) Nicholson** as Regt FofS and **SSgt Evans** as SQMS HQ.

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj P Rodenhurst**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Stowell**

EXERCISE MIDLANDS CHALLENGE TOP TIPS WEEKEND
- by Sig Karen Butler

July saw the start of the annual Ex MIDLANDS CHALLENGE and 35 Sig Regt have been busy recruiting. We put 30 of the finest recruits forward for the ex. This has all been made possible by the hard work of the recruiting staff who often raced against deadlines to get the final few through the selection. The TOP TIPS weekend, which was the brainchild of **WO1(RSM) Balmforth**, was an addition to the initial schedule and proved to be a resounding success. The weekend did 'exactly what it said on the tin' and has given our 30 a huge head start not only for MC, but indeed their Army careers.

On Friday 4 July, 30 raw recruits descend on RHQ for a full kit issue. A special mention should go to **LCpl 'Cookie' Cook** for his personal top tip, "the respirator is to be worn only in a CBRN environment and not in the bedroom" – cue sniggers from recruits. It was then on to 89 Sqn who had kindly offered bed and breakfast to our 30 eager recruits. The females were delighted to find they had pin-ups on the wall of their accommodation, one in particular caught the eye; a certain **SSgt Balmforth** complete with a full head of glossy hair!

The next morning, 30 sleepy eyed recruits stood on parade looking proud as punch finally wearing greens, after a hard night's ironing (which clearly had been a first time for most of them). All in all, it was not a bad effort although a few berets were a source of amusement for the training staff. After the inspection there was a lesson full of top tips about how to wear CEMO and CEFO. With their 36 (collective) years of experience, **WO1(RSM) Balmforth** and **SSgt 'Jeffers' Ford** saw to it that only 18 hrs after kit issue, our 30 Soldiers Under Training (SUTs)s were more than ready to go out into the field for the night. Even though the clouds were black and the rain kept on coming, they were all excitable and eager to get out there.

SUTs being briefed on Ex MIDLAND CHALLENGE Top Tips Weekend

We moved them into location at Swynnerton, where they were given top tips on dining 'al fresco'. Some of the personal administration wouldn't have looked out of place on Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, but they seemed happy enough eating with cutlery covered in mud. Then followed a lesson on making their room for the night. With not a linear set of trees in sight they all proved to be good at improvising and erected some excellent bashas, with the exception of **SSgt Ford** who spent the best part of an hour trying to hammer tent pegs into mud, he came to discover were actually 2 inches above concrete.

Next morning, after washing and breakfast admin were out of the way it was on to personal camouflage and concealment. By this point the group were really bonding well and the nicknames 'tank' and 'scouse' had already been allocated. Again they impressed with how well they took on board the tips, with one of them even doubling as a tree providing cover for his battle buddy.

Time truly flew as they had fun and home time came around without a grumble from any of them. This concluded the Top Tips weekend, which had been packed full of them. They already started to look like soldiers and I have no doubt that come 9 August, we will proudly watch all 30 of them pass off at Winchester and warmly welcome them all into 35 Sig Regt.

58 (STAFFORDSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Capt J Scott**
SSM	**SSgt Elson**

- by Sgt Groundsell

With Summer Camp just around the corner, it is a particularly hectic period of time for everyone here at Newcastle-Under-Lyme. So much so, that **SSgt Aaron James** has decided to 'jump ship' and perfect his computer based (gaming!) skills just down the road in the Training Wing at 22 Sig Regt. We wish **Aaron**, **Tara** and their young family all the very best for the future and hope to see them soon.

However, as we bid farewell to one, we say hello to another, and welcome **Sig 'Murf' Murphy** into the Sqn recruitment team. Along with **Cpl Joy Gilford**, they are ensuring that all bases are covered at various summer shows throughout the Stoke-on-Trent area. Their continued efforts under the wisely guise of **SSgt Dave Purdon** have meant a constant stream of potential recruits passing through our doors. In fact so successful has the recruitment drive been here at Newcastle-Under-Lyme, that HQ Sqn's very own **SSgt Robbie Allen** has been trying to obtain one of the Sqn's 'snazzy' recruitment jackets – with varying degrees of success!

EXERCISE FLYING FALCON 08

The Sqn took part in Ex FLYING FALCON over the period 11 – 13 July 08. This was a communications based ex involving not only 35 Sig Regt but also our 'sister' Ptarmigan Regts of 33 and 34. A good number of both Regular and TA personnel represented the Sqn in what proved to be a very steep learning curve for some of the younger members of the Sqn. Special mentions should go to **LCpl 'Scotty' Knowles** and **Sig Murphy** who as a makeshift Radio Relay crew performed admirably ensuring communications remained solid throughout. Also to **Sgt Kev Hand** whose dedication to manning the Switch was unblemished, even when rumours of a 'Pizza run' were around! All in all the ex was a great success for the Sqn which culminated in the traditional 'egging' of leaving SPSI, **SSgt Aaron James**, which was orchestrated with military precision under the command of **Sgt 'M-G' Munden-Griffiths**.

EXERCISE HIGH KNOT

During the weekend 25 – 27 July, around 30 members of 'The Fighting 58' travelled to Oxfordshire to partake in a weekend of gliding, organised by **Capt 'Biggles' Scott**. For once the weather didn't disappoint and the clear blue skies and high temperatures made for some superb gliding. For the vast majority of those attending, this was their first experience of gliding and most got at least 2 flights over the weekend. A Saturday night BBQ organised by SQMS, **SSgt Andy Elson** and our very own Gordon Ramsay (well the language is the same anyway!) **Pte 'Buddy' Budd** was a perfect complement to the weekend and was enjoyed by all those who attended.

So with not only the Summer Camp to look forward to the Sqn will also be hosting a 'Families Day' on 16 August with the usual mix of bouncy castles, stalls and a Dutch Auction, which organiser **Sgt 'Adge' Lewis** is quick to point out is a mystery item auction and has nothing to do with red lights and Amsterdam! This will also give us the opportunity to bid farewell to those leaving and a hello to those arriving.

It has been a particularly fruitful year for promotions within the Sqn with another bunch of promotions announced recently and so congratulations to the following **Sgt Munden-Griffiths,** and **Cpls Gilford**, **Salter**, **Allison** and **Horsenail**. Well done to all!

89 (WARWICKSHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (V)

OC	**Maj C Moseley**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Barker**

SQUADRON PERSONALITY NEWS

It has been all change at Rugby over the past couple of months. Sadly we say goodbye to **SSgt Lowes** (SPSI) who has been posted to Germany, **Sgt Richardson** (PSI), who has joined the civvy company CEMEX in a managerial role and also leaving the Sqn is **Cpl Gibbs** who has moved to 48 Sig Sqn in the Regt. We wish them all the best in their new postings. Into the Sqn, we welcome **SSgt Knowler** (SPSI), **SSgt Walton** who is returning to the Army as a Territorial soldier and **Sig Holmes** who passed out of ATR Winchester last week. Congratulations go to **Sgt Towers** and **Sgt Carvel** who have been recently promoted.

EXERCISE MERCURY KESTREL

It was a sunny spring morning when members of 35 Sig Regt arrived at Thetford range complex. The day was due to consist of a 'round robin' of 4 military skills stands; bayonet training, foreign weapons handling, grouping and zeroing and a 300m converted gallery range. The day was a great success with everyone involved thoroughly enjoying themselves. I think a lot of people saw a different side to themselves during the bayonet training – having cold baked beans wiped in their faces by **SSgt Knowler** really did the trick of winding them up. The foreign weapons stand was an eye opener for the Regt, as many had never even seen some of the weapons on offer. On the stand were an AK47, MP5, M16, RPK, RPD, Dragonov, RPG (with dummy rounds), to name but a few. The Sunday was due to be a very testing day of competition shooting consisting of a 2 mile march and shoot with CFT weight followed by an APWT.

Unfortunately for some, the March part of the shoot was cancelled due to a power cut at the camp and no warm breakfast available. The shoot did go ahead however and all had a good day, mainly because the sun was shining again (virtually unheard of on a range day). After the shooting, trophies were handed out to the winning team and the best shot of the day **Capt Kinsey** from 95 Sqn.

35 SIGNAL REGIMENT TAKE OVER BIRMINGHAM AFCO

Army recruiting in the West Midlands has two new faces. **Maj Bath** and **Capt Muhammad** are now in charge of Army recruiting at the Birmingham Armed Forces Careers Offices in the Pallasades fresh from their time at 35 Sig Regt.

Maj Bath and Capt Muhammad – the new recruiters at AFCO Birmingham

37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) REDDITCH

CO	**Lt Col JE Sutton**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) DE Cupit**

EXERCISE GLOBAL STUDY 08

Over the period 27 – 29 June, the Regt mounted a battlefield study to Waterloo, Belgium organised by **Maj Richard Bowden**, OC 67 (QOWWY) Sig Sqn.

Prior to deployment, time was set aside to study the battle of Waterloo and its leaders. This included a PowerPoint presentation at Sqn locations, giving the political situation at the time and an overview of the lead up to the battle and the battle itself. A précis of troop strengths was issued, containing the political situation and previous engagements that led to this battle and why Waterloo was chosen. The guide, **Graham Cooper**, was then able to concentrate on the aims of the weekend rather than having to teach the stages of the battle. The preparatory phase was concluded with the showing of the film "Waterloo" on the coach to the battlefield. It should be noted that **2Lt Gareth Evans** had "temporarily misplaced" his passport and a last minute replacement had to be found!

The battlefield study went very well with just a few minor alterations being required. The main problem was driver hours and traffic travelling to and from the battlefield from the UK. On the journey out, serious delays due to traffic build up around London resulted in missing the booked ferry. As the next was fully booked, the group were held up at Dover until 2120hrs resulting in late arrival at the hotel in Waterloo. The hotel was great as they had set out all the keys on a tray so we could just hand them straight out and get to bed. The late arrival had a knock on effect of delaying the availability of transport until midday on Saturday. However, this was mitigated by **Graham Cooper**, who was able to alter the programme to take in the Royal Chapel and Wellington's HQ and museum, both being within easy walking distance of the hotel. This allowed him to set the scene and describe the main allied commanders' styles of command. By the end of the day, the programme was back on schedule, having visited The Panorame, the Lion Mound, Hougemont, La Haie Sainte, Picton's Line and finishing in Plancenoit, where a description of some of the fiercest fighting was topped off with an excellent local meal (including snails for those brave enough).

At Hougemont, the first group study was undertaken and examined some of the leadership aspects of getting a man to fight – other than too much beer! This led to the introduction, and description of the "survival triangle" – training, leadership and camaraderie (TLC). This came up time after time during the study. We were also introduced to the drill for forming square from line and back again, a movement that was crucial in surviving artillery and cavalry attacks (we wouldn't have survived!). The second day on the battlefield went exactly as planned. A visit to Zietens Crossroads gave the opportunity for the second group exercise, where decision making under pressure was examined. The decision to re-enforce Wellington's left flank was decisive in winning the battle and was made despite pressure from his commander to participate in the battle at Plancenoit and possibly the profitable sacking (rape and pillage) of the French supply chain. The importance of situational awareness was fully brought home, as were the advantages of mission command. The battle was then examined from the French perspective, where Napoleon was seen to be a totally different character to Wellington. To understand fully the effects of the ground on the battle, we walked the battlefield from La Belle Alliance up to Mercers Ridge, the route taken on the final push by the French Guard for victory. It was seen that at almost every step, the ground changed and the view of the battlefield altered until they were met by the Allies on the ridge at close quarters and with an element of surprise. This, combined with the discipline and training of the allied troops led to the defeat of the Imperial Guard and the demoralising of the French Army. The group finished in Waterloo by observing a one minute silence in memory of **Pte Joe Whittaker** (4 PARA) late of 67 (QOWWY) Sig Sqn, who was killed in Afghanistan on 24 June 08.

Then back to Blighty via shopping for duty free and Belgium chocolate of course, arriving back at the starting point, RHQ, at just after 2200hrs; knackered but having had a fantastic weekend of study and enjoyment.

EXERCISE RED ARROW 2008 - *Cpl Swingler*

This exercise took place over the period 5 – 16 July 08 at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Members from 37 Sig Regt were tasked to provide technical support, commcen operation and to help install and manage a large scale telephone system.

This year's Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) proved to be one of a kind. For the first time in RIAT's 37 year history the show had to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Heavy rainfall during the 72 hours prior to the start of the weekend led to the cancellation of the air show. RIAT is reputedly the largest military air show with over 200 military aircraft from air arms in Europe, North and South America and Asia making the journey to participate in the event. One of the main attractions was the first European appearance of the F-22A which is capable of outperforming any existing fighter aircraft in both air-to-air and air-to-ground combat. After arriving at RAF Fairford, we were given a guided tour of the airfield by **Maj Fraley** and were pleasantly surprised at the large scale of the arena. We became aware of the importance of our role and that this year a prestigious ceremony was to take place in the presence of **Her Majesty The Queen**. A presentation of new Queen's Colours to both the Royal Air Force in the UK and the Royal Air Force Regt was to take place in front of 5,000 invited guests.

Unfortunately for us we had a lot of outdoor work to complete and the downpour was going strong but morale remained high throughout. And so the hard work began, we were placed in our respective teams of volunteers and given our code names to communicate over our radio net; the theme of movie characters was the chosen theme. The phrase 'Work Hard – Play Harder' was enforced throughout, mainly by **Sig Robinson** with a variety of social opportunities when off duty. After 2 days graft in the rain, the teams were split into relevant trades and became members within the Flight Centre and Show Operations Command. These job requirements presented us with significant opportunities to enhance and practise elements of our trade in demanding situations serving real staff. Working within these departments brought many benefits as we were offered the chance to mix and mingle with the air arms and their crews, and experience a view of all the aircraft at RAF Fairford that would be the envy of any 'Spotter'. The announcement of the cancellation of the air show was a great disappointment, not only for the public but for the teams that had worked around the clock for the last 12 months.Although no air show took place it was a successful exercise and we look forward to helping in 2009.

53 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC	**Maj Marcus Cosgrove**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Steve Webb**

Well, what a month! Both the Sqn and Regt have been very busy seeing various members scatter all over the UK providing support to the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Adventurous Training in North Wales and recruit training in Winchester and Nescliffe. At Regimental level, the Sqn was committed to Ex GLOBAL HAWK, a Regimental communications exercise and the Defence Career Partnership Scheme, an event that introduced the next generation of leaders in industry to the role of the TA; which was championed by our Regt. Our Sqn was kept busy with **Sgt Flaherty**, **Sig Clark** and **Sig Yeo** providing valuable communications expertise on Ex RED ARROW. The SPSI, the PSI(T), **SSgt Paddy Keogh**, **LCpl MacDonald** and **2Lt Lee Clifton** supported the Sandhurst Leadership Challenge in Swynnerton. The adventurous training in North Wales was a challenge for all who took part. Conquering Snowdon was extremely enjoyable followed by the rock-climbing on the Sunday. Lessons were learnt, new nick names awarded and reputations scorned, read on and all will come to light!

We have one further exercise left prior to Camp and this will be used to polish our communications skills and detachment drills. A good turnout and performance on this weekend will ensure that we have the building blocks in place, so that everyone attending will have an outstanding Annual Camp. Another good reason for attending this weekend is that it will be 53 Sig Sqn's opportunity to say goodbye to **Sgt Ollie Neeve**, **SSgt Chris Cowley** and his wife **Helen** as they both move onto 21 Sig Regt in the near future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the SPSI and PSI(T) for their sterling efforts for 53 Sqn on the operations and training side of life and to **Helen** who has supported the Sqn most importantly though the excellent running of the Sqn bar.

EXERCISE GLOBAL HAWK 18 – 20 JULY 08

Ex GLOBAL HAWK saw the entire Regt deploy to Caerwent Training Area, just outside Newport. After a few minor dramas when we couldn't find some of our equipment, we undertook the short drive to arrive under cover of darkness to park up and establish our CP and CST detachments. At this point we were glad that it was a short drive as we had to return to Cardiff to pick the NSTN which had been left behind in the confusion. Once we had everyone and everything, in position at Caerwent, the exercise went very smoothly with our detachments demonstrating their communications skills to the rest of the Regt. The exercise was a learning opportunity for our resident young officers The hardest lesson was how not to fall asleep during those long, quiet night shifts; something that **2Lt Gaz Evans** has yet to fully get to grips with! A lot of the equipment currently deployed by the Regt is quite new to us all and so this exercise provided ample opportunity to get some hands-on experience with it. For those who couldn't be part of the exercise, there will be opportunities to do the same on the drill nights in August. The advantage of the short journey home soon came back to bite us as we were left behind to hand over the various accommodation used on the weekend! All in all, a lot was learned and a large number of lessons were passed on to the Operations Cell at Regt for future consideration. The end result, we demonstrated our ability to deploy our capability as required.

EXERCISE SANDHURST LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE 22 – 25 JULY

The SPSI, the PSI(T), **SSgt Paddy Keogh**, **LCpl MacDonald** and **2Lt Lee Clifton** supported the Sandhurst Leadership Challenge in Swynnerton. This exercise was aimed at graduates in industry in order to increase their awareness of the TA, the benefits it brings to the work place and themselves. This event required a considerable amount of preparation prior to the graduates arriving at Swynnerton, including area recces, command task building, and acting as DS during the exercise. The graduates were split into syndicates and put through a gruelling process similar to that conducted at Officer Selection Board held at Westbury, they had to endure planning exercises, command tasks and engage in scenarios using a civilianised 7 Questions Estimate. Needless to say, by the end of the exercise both the staff and the graduates were mentally and physically exhausted. Well done to our support staff on achieving the aims set out before them, however, **2Lt Clifton** did an excellent job, leading from the front. He managed to mentor his team so that they were deemed to be the best of the course and subsequently won a team Mars bar! **2Lt Clifton**

had the health and safety of his team at the forefront of his mind when he radioed ahead and confirmed, 5 mins late, that they would arrive late due to a possible heat injury to one of the team members. Weak moral fibre and man-flu were other suggestions put forward for the late arrival on the stand.

EXERCISE DRAGONS CHASE

This was a truly awesome Adventurous Training weekend conducted on Snowdon and Capel Curig Training Centre (CCTC) in North Wales. The drive took a life time but was interesting to say the least. **2Lt Clifton** saved the day with a SatNav that also lied like a cheap watch. Eventually we made it, and boy is Capel Curig a brilliant camp. Well equipped and a perfect foot hold in the Snowdon National park, CCTC was more like a holiday camp as opposed to a military camp. After a well earned sleep, we had reveille at some unknown hour and the teams travelled to their respective drop off points and set off to the summit of Mount Everest (AKA Snowdon). On the way up, some of the team began to crack. Try telling **Pte Becky James** that 'the summit is just around the corner' more that 3 times and a sense of humour failure soon sets' in. At the top we exchanged war stories about how we lost good men on route and after a quick pie we made our way back down again. That evening we had a BBQ in the grounds of CCTC and were nearly eaten alive by the flies. Those flies were biters, leaving horrible flesh wounds which would scar for life and they succeeded in reducing grown men to tears. The following day we hit the climbing wall, the team learning how to spot routes and belay for their buddy. It's painful to say that **Sig Johnson** is a better climber the **2Lt Clifton**, who got fined 8 cups of coffee and jam doughnuts for his pitiful performance. In conclusion, this was a very enjoyable weekend and those who took part pushed themselves to new levels and there was a real sense of achievement within the group.

900 TROOP BRECON

900 Tp got a mention in the Welsh Wildlife magazine! The excerpt is reported below:

"Building Bridges

Members of the TA have joined forces with the Gwent Wildlife Trust to build a new bridge at the Silent Valley reserve near Ebbw Vale. **Capt Simon Nash** and his team from the Royal Signals, based at Brecon, have put in many days work to produce a new walking route for reserve visitors. They have built a new flight of steps and a new bridge across the Nant Merdogg stream. The TA used their own transport and equipment – and they brought sufficient manpower to carry the hefty 5m long wooden beams onto the reserve. The bridge now allows walkers to complete a short circular route of the reserve and appreciate this wonderful mature beech woodland lying adjacent to the village of Cwm."

67 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC	**Maj Richard Bowden**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Matt Belamy**

PTE JOE WHITTAKER A MEMBER OF 67 (QOWWY) SIGNAL SQUADRON OCTOBER 2005 – JULY 2007

Joe Whittaker was killed in Afghanistan on 24 June 08 while attached to 2 PARA. **Joe** joined 67(QOWWY) Signal Squadron in October 05. He was an outstanding young soldier and was one of the top recruits of his intake. As a member of the Sqn, he juggled his TA commitments with all his other activities whether it was preparing for his 'A' level exams, which he was doing when he was a recruit with the Sqn, or taking part in his many sporting activities. He will be remembered as a bright, keen and very fit soldier who was one of the top recruits during his basic training. From the word go had ambitions to be a para. He took part in most of the Sqn and Regt exercises. **Joe** revelled in field exercises and military training in general; his enthusiasm was infectious. He was 'a glass half full' type of guy – always the optimist even when conditions were cold and wet he would have a smile on his face. He always attended Sqn PT on a Thursday evening as well as the usual Tuesday drill night and of course, the social events. Joe was energetic and generous and although he was extremely competitive he would help and encourage other members of the Sqn during fitness tests. He could do the Personal Fitness Test (A mile and a half) in less than 8½ mins. When he transferred to 4 PARA in July last year, he left behind many friends in 67 Sig Sqn but he kept in contact, even when he was in Afghanistan. A letter arrived from him on the day that we were informed of his death.

Before he was deployed in May this year, he called into the Sqn on a drill night to tell us when he was going and everyone wished him well. If he had stayed with the Sqn he might well have been a Tp Officer by now. His funeral on 11 July 08 was attended by many members and ex-members of the Sqn along with elements of 2 and 4 PARA and a thousand of his family and friends from school, college and sports clubs around Stratford. He will be greatly missed by all and our hearts go out to his family and friends.

96 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC	**Maj Navindra Gurung**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Adrian Gardner**

MEDAL PARADE - *by SSgt Dunn*

A medal parade took place in Coventry with awards presented by Regimental Hon Col, **Col SJ Cartwright** to commemorate the achievements of the following soldiers:

Op TELIC

Cpl Magee,
LCpl Postlethwaite
Cpl Wingfield

VOLUNTEER RESERVE SERVICES MEDAL (VRSM)

WO2(SSM) Neale
SSgt Dunn
Sgt Forsythe
LCpl Pont

The VRSM was instituted from 1999 to recognise long service by all ranks of the reserve forces, including the TA. The initial award is made after 10 years service with clasps awarded for each subsequent 5 years. The VRSM replaced the medals given by the separate services and the colours of the ribbon incorporate dark blue, red and light blue to recognise the tri-service nature of the award.

Initially I felt that a parade to receive a VRSM was unnecessary; however there comes a time in every TA soldier's career for them to take time to reflect on why they are part of and what they have achieved. Looking around at the highly turned out soldiers, and the families who had come to support us it was clear that the parade was about the bigger picture, valuing the support that soldiers receive and the teamwork involved in being a member of the TA. After almost 12 years in the Sqn, I have found that the TA has enriched my life by offering me amazing opportunities.

Alongside my normal military training this has included the challenge of operational service in Iraq and the subsequent involvement in the country's reconstruction. In addition, I have participated in expeditions to Alaska, Everest and Greenland and have gained a number of adventurous training qualifications which have enabled me to give something back through teaching others, often giving them the first experience of an activity. Military training has increased my confidence with transferable skills to utilise in my workplace and has given me the perspective to review my civilian career resulting in a career change. Receiving the VRSM was thus a humbling experience as I recognise I am a small cog in a gigantic wheel and the opportunities for the TA soldier are now widespread as we play an ever increasing role in supporting and participating in the one Army concept. After the parade we had the opportunity to spend time with the guests to extend our gratitude for their support and help to integrate them deeper into the military family. For me, this parade was a great moment to renew my pride in being part of an organisation that has been part of my life for so long that I sometimes take it for granted. We are fortunate that our OC, **Maj Navindra Gurung**, not only provides us with excellent leadership but also with great food from his restaurant Chautari in Lichfield (a little plug) with supporting contributions by **Pte Broomfield** our chef. It was therefore a very enjoyable evening for all those present and I look forward to seeing many more of our soldiers achieving not only service medals but also operational medals in the future.

ARMY

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BELFAST

CO	**Lt Col Whichelo**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) Coates**

The month of July saw many changes in the Regt. We sadly said farewell to the CO, **Lt Col Whichelo** as he departed to Op HERRICK. The QM, **Capt Bob Pye** departed on promotion to become OC HQ Sqn in 7 Sig Regt. The MTWO, **WO2 Dennis Watts** and 85 Sig Sqn SQMS, **SSgt Phil Atherton**, left on retirement after decades of hard work and dedication to the Regt. **SSgt McDougall** left the clutches of Limavady for drier pastures at Gamecote Barracks. And finally **SSgt Williams**, our Art Veh, left after just 6 months on promotion – he only managed to escape about one mile down the road though! We would like to thank them for all of their hard work and wish them well in the future. As the saying goes, no one is irreplaceable and so we welcome **Lt Col McConnell**, **Maj Wright-Jones**, **WO2 Ashe**, **SSgt Weatherstone**, **SSgt Edkins** and SQMS 85 Sig Sqn, **SSgt Alfer** to the Regt. We also congratulate **WO2 McCaw**, soon to be **Capt McCaw** for successfully passing the TA LECB.

Lt Col Whichelo handing over command to Lt Col McConnell

EXERCISE FRENCH FINN – KAYAKING EXPEDITION 19 – 27 JULY 2008

"Better a bad day on the water, than a good day in the Office" Ex FRENCH FINN started off in September last year when the majority of those who attended started there kayak training on the cold waters of the River Bann and the Atlantic Ocean. **SSgt McDougall** ran a series of Kayak Foundation Courses (KFC) and in a passing comment said the next step is blasting down the Alpine Rivers. Originally the expedition was aimed at more experienced paddlers who wanted serious log book experience but it became clear that with TA commitments and a busy training program that it would have to be aimed at a lower level. In the end we took 6 students **SSgt Palmer**, **Sgt Lindsay**, **Sgt George**, **Sig Alexander**, **Sig Moore** and **Sig Gage** from 69 Sig Sqn. In addition to this bunch we took 2 Admin personnel, **Mr Billy Lyle**, the Civvy storeman and stable boy to the *"Horse"* and **SSgt Dave Thomas** from SHQ at Belfast. The instructors were **Sgt Daz Howe**, RLC but really a Pioneer from the Defence CBRN School and the OIC Exercise, **SSgt McDougall**.

SSgt McDougall and his team

Day 1 and 2. The drive from Limavady TAC to the exercise area was a feat worthy of Boardman and McGregor on their bikes. With a total distance of over 1400 miles and 2 ferry crossings all to be done in 36 hrs. It was an eventful trip with **Sgt Ricky George** taking over as 69 SatNav missing the M20 after being told 30 times it was coming up. Along with this and **SSgt Dave Thomas** making us stop every half hour for a toilet break. All this made us late for the ferry and rushing to get onto the last boat available that night, we forgot to pick up a paddler at Dover. Once in France the roads were good but expensive and the services are a little strange but not half as bad as the toilets. We found the site at Le-Argentiere-Le-Besse in the Ecrins National Park, part of the Alps Mountain Region. It did not take long for us to get our tents up and the shop bought out of beer.

Day 3. This was the start of the training for military and civilian awards on the training lake at Camping Les Ecrins just on the banks of the Durance River, with all attending getting some form of qualification. The first day was a culture shock feeling the difference between UK waters and Alpine Ice melt. It preparation for the rest of the week we did a bit of White Water Rescue using throw bags and floating line. Going onto the water, we were all sure that it would take at least 2 attempts to get you out. To get our eye in we went for a little trip down the river just below camp, first time on moving water and it was carnage with **SSgt Paul McDougall** chasing **Sgt Ricky Lindsay's** boat for a few hundred meters.

Day 4. After the introduction to moving water we went back to the lake to consolidate some skills. A good day was had by all with most learning to roll. The water features lesson was good with the 2 instructors blasting down the slalom course to point out the eddies, holes and waves. It just looked like they were enjoying themselves and showing off a little (a lot).

Day 5. This was to be the first river trip going from The Aerodrome to the Slalom Course at St-Clements on the Durance. We had to start early because the Tour De France was coming past our camp site and all the roads were closing at 0830hrs. **SSgt Palmer** was the first to take a swim closely followed by most of the group. The trip went well with only one big drama when **Sig Moore** lost his boat when he capsized after hitting a fallen tree. This was made worse by both instructors being off the water so **SSgt McDougall** had to chase on foot for around a mile. The trip ended with a bang when we hit the Slalom Course where the river doubled in size and speed. To the instructors'

surprise, 3 from the group made it to the bottom dry but the rest got very wet. **Sig Gage** was the only member of the group not to come out of the boat but don't think that this is because he was good, he is just lucky and scared of the crocodiles. After the first day on the river **Sgt Ricky George** was the King of the Swimmers with 5 long cold dips. That night we had a BBQ after **Sgt Ricky George** worked out how to build it, just to sit and tell the tales of the day when the Grade 3 slalom course became a Grade 6 man killer.

Day 6. This time we went from the Slalom Course at St-Clements to the Rabouix Wave, again on the Durance. It started as it finished the day before on the Slalom Course. This was the start of the title chase for King of the Swimmers, with **Sig Alexander** having a nightmare of a run and drawing for the lead. The river started calm and wide with spectacular views down the Durance Valley but then quickly returned to form, when the horizons started to disappear. Half way down there was a 20m overhanging cliff over the river so a stop was made for some cooling off.

Day 7. This was to be the test day were we went onto the European Slalom Course next to the camp site – it had to be done, we had been looking at it all week. The course is on a particularly fast flowing stretch of the River as 2 tributaries meet. A solid Grade 3 from top to bottom with technical areas, large holes and waves. **Sig Gage** was first down with **SSgt Palmer.** They both made it to the last wave when '**Pasties**' hit it sideways and went swimming. Young **Sig Gage** sitting in the bottom eddy with a smile from ear to ear says: "Fair play to you but if you think I am doing that again you can think again." Being the weakest paddler of the group, he only took one swim and completed everything thrown at him including the man eating bears we told him about, so he slept with a high-visibility vest on his tent just in case. Next up were the Army shooting team, **Sigs Alexander** and **Moore**. **Sig Alexander** puffed and panted his way half way down and then gulped and spluttered the rest but **Sig Johnny Moore** rode her to the end but it must have scared him a little as on the trip back, we had to stop every 50 miles or so for his upset stomach. The last of the first runs was the 2 Rickys, **Sgts Goerge** and **Lindsay**, who have to do everything together. In true form, they lasted no more than a few seconds with both of them clinging to rocks by the half way point with boats and paddles everywere. Another long chase for **SSgt McDougall.** It was now official **Sgt Ricky George** was crowned King of the Swimmers with a respectable 10 in his big Yellow Submarine.

Day 8 and 9. We made a decision to leave early to give us some comfort time for the journey back. We left the Alps at 1700hrs on the Friday afternoon and travelled to Calais overnight. This final and most challenging of all the phases was the recovery back to Limavady. Would you want to swap the Ecrin Mountains of the Alps bathed in sunshine for Benevanagh in the rain? The exercise was a complete success, achieving all the aims we set ourselves; the main one being promoting paddle sport to the Army and TA. **Sig Gage** managed to make the whole exercise without seeing one of the big bears he was so afraid of. **Sig Alexander** overcame his fear of water which he let us know about on Day 4. **Sgt George** has put in a transfer to a Trident and **Sgt Lindsay** is sure to follow. **SSgt Palmer** managed to keep his belly sucked in the whole week and remained cool at all times. **Sig Moore** made it back in the same pair of pants – just! And they all left with a Kayak Foundation Course (KFC) or Inland Kayak Progression (IKP) pass done as Distributed Training from JSMTC and Indefatigable. This was to be **SSgt McDougall's** swan song with 40 Sig Regt as he has started work with 256 Sig Sqn at 30 Sig Regt and came back to Northern Ireland to lead the expedition he started. Many thanks to all those who helped, advised and donated money to the expedition. The experience was made all the better by **Mr Billy Lyle** and **SSgt Thomas** for keeping us on the water and fed at night.

NATIONAL TA 100 EVENTS

Over the weekend of 25 – 27 July, several of our TA Officers and soldiers volunteered to make the trip across the water to participate in the TA 100 National Pageant at St James Palace, London. After a crash course reminder in drill they proudly marched down the Mall during the parade.

Capt Mayo, Sgt Lindsay, Maj Kyle and Sgt George on a quick break from the drill rehearsal

BASIC TRAINING – A TA RECRUIT'S PERSPECTIVE
- by Sig Richard Clarke

The main reason I joined the TA was to challenge myself to see if I was capable of not just reaching the required standard but excelling. My older brother, who had joined the Regt a year and a half previously, had told me about TA training and I thought if he can do it, why can't I? I'll try to be better, faster and stronger than him. After the filling out all the forms, going for medicals, attending the selection day and being finally being attested, I was now a member of the TA. What had I got myself into!

On my first training night, I was introduced to the recruit training team in Limavady which including **SSgt Murray**, **SSgt Dennison**, **Sgt Lynch**, **Sgt Duncan** and **Cpl Moore**. All proved very committed to making me the best I could be, commenting on my fitness at my very first training session, **SSgt Murray** said: "your fitness is not bad, but it's still s**t". I turned this into a good motivator to improve and I did so considerably. It took 5 months from attestation until I commenced my 1A training.

This was maybe longer than I would have liked to have waited due to work commitments; but it gave me ample time to improve my fitness, which was not a bad thing. The impact on my civilian life hasn't really bothered me a great deal, although with 2 jobs and a new baby, as well as my commitments to the TA, I haven't got a lot of spare time or sleep!! All of the people I have met through my training with TA have proved very genuine, friendly and trustworthy. In terms of the instructors in both 1A and 1B phases of training, they showed a lot of professionalism and pride in what they do, as well as knowing the subject matter inside out and having the ability to pass it on. I would count many of the people I have met as friends and would not mind having a pint or two with all of them.

Of the skills I have learned, the most enjoyable is not surprisingly how to handle the SA 80 A2 rifle. Although this isn't exactly a transferable skill to my civvy jobs as I'm not a bank robber, it has definitely given me more confidence. I often think to myself, if my superiors knew I could handle a deadly weapon they'd think twice about giving me extra work. In all seriousness, a skill that I never properly appreciated before is being able to get a team to work together to achieve a common goal. If I am able to ensure everyone is involved and committed to doing a job, even if it is as mundane as making sure a room is clean, I have learned something of value. Of course to patch up someone bleeding heavily might come in handy and reading a map, 6 figure grid reference so I won't get lost may also be useful on occasion. All in all I am very glad I joined the TA and it has genuinely enriched my life. My next phase of training is 1C which started on 5 July 2008 at Winchester. I am really looking forward to showing what we at 40 Sig Regt are made of.

EXERCISE MARBLE TOR 08

OC	**Lt S Farmer**
Sgt	**SSgt Farmer**

Tosca Pl was one of 2 pls of exercising troops which deployed on Ex MARBLE TOR to Gibraltar, 14 – 29 June 08. The majority of the troops in the platoon were personnel due to deploy on operational tours, many of them on Op TOSCA. On the morning of departure, Saturday 4 June, the pl assembled and departed Clonaver TAC for warmer pastures in Gibraltar. On arriving at Gibraltar on Saturday evening, we were greeted by **Maj Andy White** before dispersing to the accommodation blocks and the NAAFI, not necessarily in that order! Tosca Pl undertook the Military Skills element of the exercise first, which consisted of a 5 day field exercise. The training delivered was wide ranging and set amongst the unique backdrop of Gibraltar was truly memorable. The Tunnel Fighting and FIBUA phases were a first for almost everyone, except perhaps **Sig George Anthony** who failed to mention that during his time in the Regular Army, he spent several weeks on a tunnel fighting course in Gibraltar. The Military Skills phase also included an amphibious landing in Rosia Bay, which although exhilarating, left the Pl's 2 GPMG gunners pondering how on earth they were expected to remain afloat should they go overboard, even with a lifejacket.

The communication phase – SSgt Palmer and LCpl George

The night before the final attack the Pl established a harbour just below the summit of the Rock at Spur Battery. Everyone agreed that as harbour positions go, there were few which could offer a better view and of course all round defensive capability. During the move into this location we had our first opportunity to meet the local indigenous population, a family of apes. Some members of the Pl got a little too close and **Sig Tyrone Howarth** received a slap in the face for his trouble. The final attack the following morning was the culmination of the first week's training. The Pl, armed with more pyrotechnics and ammunition that the Regt would normally use in a year assaulted the FIBUA village at dawn. The GPMG gunners suppressed the enemy to such an extent that the yellow paint on their barrels melted. Meanwhile the 3 sect commanders, **SSgt Dave Thomas**, **Sgt 'Dougie' Dugdale** and **Cpl Andy Blair** led and in some cases dragged their sects from house to house, often displaying almost gymnastics qualities when entering through windows. As for the outcome, the enemy, apparently caught off-guard due to their state of undress were eventually defeated.

The second week of the exercise saw the Pl engaged in several tasks. After the adventure training and R&R phases, it was up to Tosca Pl to complete the 2 MACC tasks that Jabal Pl had begun. Everyone, including the Regimental 2IC and Operations Maj got their hands dirty and thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the process. Following the MACC tasks the Pl undertook the communications phase. For quite a few this was a first in itself, as included in the Pl was a REME Armourer, several SPS Clerks and a host of other trades, including 2 young soldiers who had yet to complete recruit training. As the exercise drew to a close, the one part of training which almost everyone was dreading arrived, the famed Rock Run. This is 2.7 miles straight up and it was no mean feat. All of us couldn't help but wonder how the record could stand at little over 17 mins. Surely a mistake? In the end everyone completed the run and thereby signalled the end of the exercise and training. Ex MARBLE TOR was a truly unforgettable camp and everyone who took part will undoubtedly remember it as one of the best exercises they have attended. The Operations Team have their work cut out if they hope to better it at next year's camp!

Lt Farmer, our Olympic hopeful, completing the Rock Run

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215) TIDWORTH

OC	**Maj RDW Rumsey**
RSM	**WO1 S Watts**

22 YEAR DINE OUT

The Officers, WOs and Sgts of 215 Sig Sqn came together in the WOs and Sgts Mess to dine out **Sgt 'Smudge' Smith** after 22 years colour service. The evening was not only to recognise the end of an era for **Sgt Smith**, it also allowed the us to bid farewell to **Capt 'Chris' Parkes** and **WO2(YofS) 'Ian' Wilson** who are both also posted to less glamorous jobs outside of the Sqn. The evening was a great success, with tradition returning to the Mess. The Sqn chefs provided a fantastic feast. As the evening progressed into the early hours, entertainment was provided by **Sgt 'PJ the DJ' Johns** in the form of Karaoke. This was well received by all members of the Sqn, though by some more than others! Needless to say what happens in the Mess stays in the Mess!

All members of 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215) would like to wish **Smudge** and his family all the very best for the near and distant future.

SQUADRON BATTLE CAMP EXERCISE DARTMOOR DEVELOPER 2

First of all Support Tp would like to welcome **Sig Josh Coates**, who is the first person in the Sqn to have a 3001 number, and also welcome **Cpl Sharon Loftus** both of whom have joined the MT. On 1 June 08, 215 Sig Sqn deployed on Battle Camp to Okehampton Training area where the Sqn would complete a 2 week package. As soon as we saw the gloomy skys ahead, we knew there was going to be Directing Staff ready to do some shouting, known as 'random exercise shouting'. On arrival at our new home for 2 weeks, we were greeted by **WO1(RSM) Watts**. This man isn't the tallest person ever but having done senior Brecon, he can defiantly shout if he wants and scare a few people.

After a few 'very interesting' briefs we were split into our pls and sects, which had to change a few times due to people having injuries. Before we could deploy in the field, we had to do some training for a few days i.e. pairs fire and manoeuvre, map reading and various other training packages. **LCpl Hutt** stripped his weapon down to clean on the ranges but then got called to a lane to fire. While rushing to get his kit away, he forgot to put his cocking handle back on and still tried to fire. To this day, not one person lets him forget about it.

After a few more days of training, 215 Sig Sqn was ready to deploy. Prior to deploying we had our kit issued to us and were briefed on what was going to happen once we deployed or what we would like to happen! One member from each sect 'volunteered' to carry the GPMG for the exercise. Our first location was to be a barn yard were we would stay for one night and guard, while each sect went out on a patrol around the area. Some people were hoping not to get ambushed, whilst people like **Sig 'Woody' Wood** and **Sig 'Trips' Triplett** were desperate to get attacked just to fire the GMPG.

215 Signal Squadron on Battle Camp

Then our second night was to be alfresco in the woodland. On the final day we had a set of orders given to us and briefed on what was expected on the final attack. Around 0400hrs 13 June we got dropped off a few km away from where our objective. We were to patrol to the Forming Up Point when **Cfm 'Catty' Catson** fell off a stile with full kit on, staggered to his feet and then decided to kick the fence stupid, shouting at it while we were in a tactical exercise, not sure what he was trying to achieve. The attack happened almost instantly; GPMG link was getting fired as if it's going out of fashion. **LCpl 'Leeroy' Thewlis**, **Woody's** link man, was getting spent link in his face which many people thought was highly amusing. **Cpl 'OD' Mahoney** hasn't quite yet learned to walk on his own as he fractured his ankle during the final attack. After the final phase and clean up was done, 215 Sig Sqn was to live to fight another day. On the last day there was a Sqn BBQ and various prizes/awards were given out:

Best Section	2 Section
Best Endeavour	**Pte 'Fossie' Foster**
Best Shot	**Sig 'Borebon' Arbon**

MERCURY CUP CRICKET AND FAMILIES DAY

The latest instalment of The Mercury Cup Competition 2008 turned to cricket. The powers that be gave permission for the competition to be held throughout the day and this saw some big hitting from some pros and some not so big hitting from the semi-pros in a reduced 8 over innings. After the group games were played, the fight for the wining team and the wooden spoon was on! It ended as SHQ and Sabre Tp fighting for the winning spot with the playoff for 3rd and 4th between Support and Bengal Tps.

The latter was a low scoring affair. Support Tp changing their team from the group games, bringing in the many years and experience of the QM, **Capt 'Chris' Kidd**. With a good performance in the field and some very fast bowling by the QM, Support Tp came out on top by 8 runs. The final between SHQ and Sabre was a somewhat higher scoring affair. SHQ managed to score the highest number of runs in the competition and this turned out to be too high a score for Sabre to chase, although they did try valiantly. In the final there was some outstanding bowling performances for SHQ by the OC, **Maj 'Rich' Rumsey** and **Sgt 'Maggot' Moran** which ensured SHQ came out on top.

Although cloudy for most of the day the rain stayed away and the sandwiches and food put on at lunch were all devoured and the families came along to support. The only losers in the competition were the cricket bats, 4 of them succumbing to the pressure of the day and breaking! **Cpl 'Razor' Gillett** collected the trophy for SHQ Tp and they moved into a stronger lead in the Mercury Cup Competition. Bring on the hockey next!

TROWBRIDGE PARADE

On Friday 27 June 2008, 8 members of 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215) were chosen to represent the rest of the Sqn on a celebration march around Wiltshire's county town, Trowbridge, town centre;. The parade was so that the people of Wiltshire could show there appreciation for the work that was carried out by 1 Mech Bde whilst on Op Telic 10. At 0630hrs we were all paraded outside the Sqn HQ awaiting the inspection of **WO1(RSM) Watts**. Following the inspection, we all made our way down to the RHA parade square where we all formed up to practise the routine that we were going to carry out down at Trowbridge. It was still early in the morning while the drill practice was taking place but a few lads in 2 RTR must have still been asleep or they didn't know their left from their right, considering they had just come off a parade at Buckingham palace a few days before. After an hours drill preparation, the RSM was happy and the parade fell out and loaded onto the buses. We then made the hour journey down to Trowbridge. On arrival at Trowbridge's town centre car park we off loaded from the buses and made our way to the forming up area just outside the car park, where the parade was starting from. Then in the rain, we all began the march to the town's park where we waited for the arrival of the County Mayor, officials and **Brig Bashall**. The County Mayor addressed the parade thanking us for the work carried out on Op TELIC 10.

The parade then marched out of the park and onto the main road leading into the town. At the start of the parade the support for us didn't look to good because there was only a handful of people in the streets but when we turned into the main street, it was full of people all shouting and waving flags. The support from the people of Trowbridge clearly shown by the number of people lining the street. There was also the much awaited Sun newspaper bus and Sun girls which made **Sig 'Liam' Todd's** day.

CORPS FEMALE ROUNDERS COMPETITION

The day started well with the long drive up North to Catterick and a tactical stop at Burger King to breakfast like fine athletes would on double cheese burgers. Upon arrival at Strensall Barracks we settled in and decided to go out and sample the delights of York and catch up with the other teams. **Sig 'Toni' McCourt** demonstrated some impressive moves on the dance floor and practised her lunges ready for the big competition the next day. The shortage in numbers meant a new combined team with 19 Lt Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (209) and after a quick practice, we took to the pitch and realised we were in for some serious competition. **LCpl 'Brum' Bierman** put in some big hits to score a few rounders and **Sig McCourt's** lunges must have paid off with some excellent catches. We at least looked the part thanks to some new tracksuits purchased by the QM. After a round robin of matches but unfortunately no silverware for us, we headed home with **LCpl 'Leanne' Knott** singing to cheer us up! More practice needed for the Div competition.

4 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204) CATTERICK

OC	**Maj P Griffiths**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) A Maylett**

4 MECH BDE HQ & SIG SQN (204) SAY FAREWELL TO OSNABRUCK - *by Lt Sam Rice*

It was with heavy hearts that on 25 July 08, 4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (204) finally left Quebec Barracks in Osnabruck. The unit now moves as a whole back to the UK after a long and enjoyable tenure exceeding 25 years in the northern German town. In total around 3600 troops from 4 Mech Bde will move in to Catterick Garrison replacing 19 Lt Bde, which is no small undertaking.

Preparation for this mammoth task has been long and painstaking and with an operational tour to Iraq thrown into the mixing pot, it was never going to be a simple process. In true 204 Sig Sqn style, the soldiers and officers have pulled together to make things work. Behind the scenes the effort has been coordinated by our indomitable QM, **Capt Pete Hatton** and RQMS, **WO2 'Midge' Midgley**. As head of the rear party, the RQMS had almost the entire unit in boxes by the time the deployed element returned from operations. More work has continued during post operational leave and again in the few weeks prior to relocation.

It has, however, also been an enjoyable recuperation period for the soldiers of the Sqn with plenty of sport and Adventurous Training. These included expeditions to Namibia, led by **Capt 'Dutch' Osterloh**, and Bavaria organised by **Lt Sam 'Scorpion' Rice**. Undoubtedly one of the highlights has been the emptying of the accommodation. With numerous wardrobes and cabinets requiring demolition, one would have been hard pressed to move around the camp without seeing a Sig with a sledge hammer and a smile on his or her face.

Normal daily business has continued with Tp Offices sporting simply a table and DII terminal and SHQ also looking rather bare. **SSgt (YofS) Chris Alston** improvised well with GS tables and random chairs to ensure important operations work continued until the unit left. Along with the furniture, key personalities within the Sqn have also changed. During the tour, **Capt Andi Davis** took over as 2IC from **Capt Fiona Watson**. **Capt Georgie Hood** replaced **Capt Ben Price** as Operations Officer and **WO1(RSM) Andy Maylett** succeeded the now **Capt Ben Batley** as the Bde RSM. Not only have numerous members of the hierarchy changed but a significant number of soldiers are also leaving. Among them are some real characters and we wish them all well in their new postings. No farewell would be complete without the obligatory parades and 204 Sig Sqn has certainly fulfilled its quota. A medals parade was held to award the Op TELIC decoration to those who had deployed. With the OC, **Maj Paul Griffiths**, providing the words of command and the musical accompaniment provided by the band of the Scots Guards, the event passed off well. Numerous families and Bde Staff came to witness the spectacle first hand which added to the atmosphere. Further parades took place including a Church Service in the Dom, Osnabruck's Cathedral, in which a plethora of the Sqn attended to give thanks for our safe return from operations and remember those who paid the ultimate price.

That afternoon, around 50 members of the Unit then formed part of the Freedom of Osnabruck parade through the town centre. It was fantastic to see so many local people turn out, despite the torrential downpours, to say their final goodbyes to the soldiers of 4 Mech Bde. Cheers and applause echoed through the town's streets as the local residents showed there fondness of the units who had shared their home for so long. With a 'Party in the Park' held in the evening, attended by much of the Bde Sig Sqn, 21 Engr Regt and Bde Staff, the curtain more or less closed on Quebec Barracks and Osnabruck Garrison. With the close down procedure continuing, the Unit is now focused on its new life and home in Catterick. Many new faces will replace those who have left and there will be much work to do but everyone is excited and looking forward to the challenge. It may be farewell Osnabruck, but Catterick here we come!

DECOMPRESSION IN CYPRUS - *by Capt James Osterloh*

After a highly successful Op TELIC 11, 204 Sig Sqn finally left Basra as a complete unit on 27 May 08. With only the specified 'de-compression' kit in day sacks, we made the tediously slow hop over the border to the Ali Al Salem airbase in Kuwait in order to catch the Omni Air International flight to Akrotiri. As only the military can do, the 4 hr trip to Cyprus eventually touched down 20 hours after the journey had started in Iraq the day before. Suffice to say that everyone was now in dire need of de-compressing.

Any frustration or scepticism about de-compression was very quickly dissolved as soon as we were fed into the slick and polished programme coordinated by **Maj Bairstow** AGC ETS. From the airport we were whisked away in buses, driven by

Cypriot ex-racing drivers, while still feeling slightly uncomfortable without our rifles and body armour. As soon as we arrived at Bloodhound Camp we had a short brief about the programme, handed in our laundry and within an hour were on the beach.

The water sports facilities which were laid out when we arrived at the beach were second to none. Tired faces suddenly perked up at the realisation that the incredible array of kit was there purely for our enjoyment. Before long, the aqua climbing castle and inflatable trampoline were covered in exuberant signallers revelling in the perfect weather and warm water. Others did last minute tanning, while the inflatable banana boat was towed around lap after lap to the delight and terror of all on board. Not to be outdone, the Tp Comds decided to reveal their keen athleticism and chiselled physiques with an amusing display of waterskiing.

After 4 or 5 hours of non-stop fun and sun we were exhausted, significantly more relaxed and in some cases a little bit pink. The evening, however, had only just begun. After a quick shower and turn around, we were treated to a generous BBQ and then an hour or so of mandatory briefs. Thereafter we began the much anticipated re-introduction to alcohol. This was accompanied by a brilliant comedy show and a karaoke machine, which was dominated by the talented RSM, **WO1 Andy Maylett**.

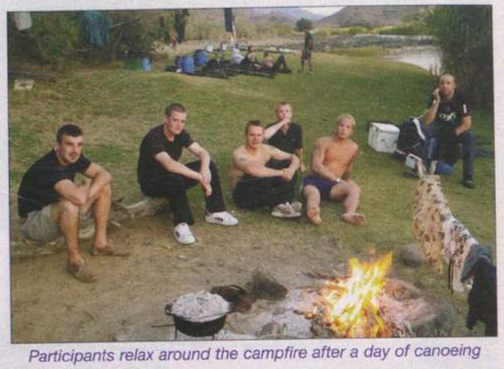
The next morning we were up early to get our clean laundry, have breakfast and hand over the accommodation. After another quick brief we were then on our own time until mid-morning, allowing a chance to soak up more sun, make welfare calls or use the play station room. All too quickly we were back into the air-bridge machine with the thought of being re-united with loved ones foremost in everyone's minds. Late afternoon on 29 May 08 we arrived at Hanover Airport to be welcomed with the news that our luggage was still in Kuwait. This lessened the effects of de-compression for those who had left car keys in their hold luggage. Nonetheless all the annoyance was forgotten the moment we arrived in Osnabruck where family and friends were waiting to receive us for a fantastic welcome home celebration organised by our tireless rear-party. 204 Sig Sqn's tour had finally come to a close.

EXERCISE NAMIB RAT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA

- by Capt James Osterloh

After a well-deserved POTL, 13 fortunate Sqn personnel and **Capt Dave Calder** RE (JSMEL) departed from Frankfurt on their way to Cape Town. Taking full advantage of the in-flight entertainment and endless episodes of 'Prison Break', participants eventually touched down from the 12 hr flight on 12 July 08. With passports checked and baggage collected, we were on our way to the Cape Town Waterfront shopping complex in order to pick up cash, supplies, and any last minute kit requirements. The rest of the day was spent travelling north, in clear and crisp winter weather, to Namibia where we eventually arrived just before dark. The next morning we set about packing and preparing the canoes for our 3½ day journey down the Orange River. The river, which forms the border between the two countries, had plenty of water despite it being the dry season and was surprisingly warm. The first to discover this was **LCpl Dan Vallelly** and **Sig Norman McKenzie** who chose to capsize their boat on the very first rapid, aptly known as 'morning shower'. In true Army tradition, this misfortune was greeted with wails of laughter from the rest of the dry boat crews.

The rest of the day was spent getting used to working in pairs in the 2 man canoes and predictably the journey soon became an incessant competition. **Sgt Dave Walker's** 'Nerf Ball', a whistling torpedo shaped football, became the terror of the seas which could strike boats or crews without warning. Exercise members would cower at the mere sound of the ball and then race after the prize in order to 'attack' another unsuspecting team. The weather during the day was warm and sunny and regular swims were taken by simply flopping overboard. It took some time to get used to the spectacular scenery of the river and the rugged mountains which surrounded it. The stop on the first night was on a grassed over river bank which required the removal of cow patts before we could move in. Some of these patts found themselves flying through the air, while others were found later hidden in canoes and sleeping bags. Last light was at about 1730hrs and this, combined with a day of exertion, tricked body clocks into thinking it was late. For the duration of the exercise most people were asleep by not long after 2000hrs.

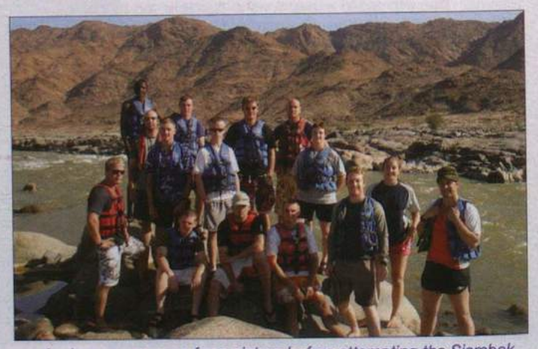


Participants relax around the campfire after a day of canoeing

The second day of canoeing had more excitement in store. The rapid known as 'entrance exam' taught junior **Sigs Andrew White** and **Ben Woodward** a quick lesson in communication. Their canoe got out of shape before being flipped effortlessly by the large standing wave at the bottom. Crews were tested several times on Day 2 and the agility, accuracy, and teamwork to avoid rocks and currents was improving significantly.

Canoe crews enjoying the Orange River experience

The afternoon saw some fast, strong currents through narrow channels and several canoes capsized and had to be emptied out before carrying on. Once again we camped beside the river in another breathtaking location and after dinner no one needed encouragement to go to bed.



Anxious crews pose for a picture before attempting the Sjambok

Day 3 had an array of tricky rapids in store and we also had a significant distance to cover. The largest rapid of the trip, ominously called 'Sjambok' after the traditional African leather whip, required dismounting and a careful explanation from our guides before teams headed down one by one. Not surprisingly the massive standing wave flipped and filled several boats, although as usual the girls pairing of **Capt Andi Davis** and **Sig Kirsten Wrobel** annoyingly made it down without taking on so much as a drop of water. Our final night on the river was slightly cooler and windier but as usual campfires kept us warm as we swapped stories of the day's adventure.

On the fourth canoeing day, we were picked up at midday allowing the exercise to return to the base camp. We then drove to Hobas Campsite which was about 2 hrs away near the start of the Fish River Canyon Trail. After a quick recce of the enormous canyon, the second largest on the planet, we set up camp at Hobas with some participants feeling quite anxious about the task ahead.

Sig Potter, LCpl Woodward and Sgt Knowles enjoy the spectacular entry into the Canyon

The first day of trekking started with us moving in the dark to the start point where we had breakfast while adjusting to the sensation of height. As soon as it was safe to do so we began the 550m descent to the canyon floor which took about 1½ hrs. The views from above and from the inside of the canyon were indescribably vast and stunning. **Sig McKenzie** and **Sig Wrobel** who had initially harboured concerns about the steep insertion soon forgot about their nerves. At the bottom we were greeted by a large group of starlings and we were pleased to find that the Fish River had more than enough clean and clear water for drinking, washing and swimming.

The going on the first day was quite slow and consisted of long soft beaches and large boulders which had to be navigated carefully. During lunch a lone baboon came to have a look at the new visitors and we bumped into several troops during the trail. Regular swims offered respite from the warm sun and we stopped late afternoon to set up camp on a wide flat beach next to a good swimming spot. Already in a solid routine from the previous days of canoeing, the exercise naturally broke into smaller groups, who shared food and jokes as they sat around the various campfires. Before long the beach was covered in snoring bivi bags. The brightness of the moon and stars was quite impressive as was the quiet. All of a sudden this silence was broken by what sounded like a roaring lion. This turned out to be **Sig Russell 'Barry' Potter** who had a short and sharp spell of food poisoning.

The next morning we got moving early to maximise use of the daylight hours. The going was quite slow once again, due to the very uneven terrain but nonetheless we exceeded our daily target by some margin. Just before lunch we passed Palm Sulphur Springs which was a surprisingly hot and smelly spring which ran into the river. We stopped again late afternoon to enjoy the last sun and meals were eaten enthusiastically in the knowledge that every mouthful made the packs lighter. The third and fourth days of the trail were supposed to be flatter and faster but did not quite live up to expectations. We needed to cover about 25km each day and this was made challenging by constant river crossings and rocky outcrops. It was pleasing to see the group encouraging each other along, especially those that were starting to feel a little weary.

The long days of walking were broken up with sightings of wild horses, more baboons and regular swimming stops. A last big effort on Day 4 saw the group walking until after dark, which allowed an easy finish on Day 5. By mid-morning on 21 Jul 08 the exercise had successfully completed the superb 90km trail. We returned to the Namibian border after a short celebration at the tuckshop in Ai-Ais and now our sights were firmly fixed on R&R in Cape Town.

It took a full day to return to Cape Town and predictably everyone felt like a special meal at the Waterfront to celebrate the completion of the canoeing and trekking phases. Owing to the favourable 14:1 exchange rate there was no reason to hold back and **Sig Ben Woodward** managed to finish an enormous wildebeest, kudu, gemsbok and springbok steak platter.

Exercise members wind their way along the Canyon floor

The next morning we seized the opportunity of good weather to climb up Table Mountain. The views from the top were well worth the effort and late afternoon and evening were spent shopping and enjoying the nightlife on Long Street. The following day the group visited Cape Point and the penguins at Boulders beach. The day finished with a stop at the very interesting Two Oceans Aquarium where predictably the shark tank was a huge hit. The final day of R&R was a visit to the wine growing district of Stellenbosch and Paarl. Before lunch we tasted wine, cheese, port and brandy and then spent the afternoon exploring the historic town of Stellenbosch.

For the final evening we ate at Kalk Bay harbour where **Cpl 'Gaz' Parham's** sharp eyes spotted a whale just a few hundred metres from the restaurant. It was all over too soon and the following evening we had landed in Frankfurt and were on the way back to Osnabruck. Ex NAMIB RAT, positioned during the post-Iraq recuperation phase, was a tremendously valuable and unique training opportunity which will bring back happy memories for years to come.

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

OC **Maj Carter**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Greenwood**

FINAL PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING - *by Sig Reed*

The Sqn deployed on the Bde's Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) in Hohlenfels, Bavaria. The 6 hr journey was slightly extended by traffic so we spent 12 painful hrs cramped on the coach. It could be worse; we could have been on the advance party who left before the weekend started. Tigris Tp had many roles, manning the Bde Processing Facility (BPF) – we were getting callouts all hours of the night. We also had to sign for 4 Bulldogs. This was great because they were all VOR. After a week of TLC, we managed to get them roadworthy but we then had tp hand them over and sign for 4 more, which were just as bad if not worse. Good times! Tigris Tp deployed a Fwd HQ to provide communications for the BG. We also deployed on a Merlin to help the RAF with supply drops – a good experience!

Members of Tigris Troop trying to look hard

Euphrates Tp manned the Bde HQ. There were a few blunders but that's not to say that Tigris didn't have any. Not mentioning any names, they know who they are, but a Bulldog was reversed over one of the LAD's tool box, the same day the LAD's maintenance tent got ripped by some remarkable direction. But the grand prize of the 'Missing Link' competition went to the OC, **Maj Carter** – he managed this by ringing out on his phone but inconveniently received a call on his other phone. So he put his phone down and answered the other phone. He did this 3 times before realising he was ringing himself – everyone was tired that exercise.

The parents and family of the late **Scott Barsby** came to visit us in Hohne. They came to see what Army life was like being part of the Desert Rats. There was a church service in his memory. Later that day we did what we do best and visited the bar for a "few" drinks. Prior to this **Sig Wright** got a fund together to buy a Derby FC shirt which each member of the Sqn signed. This is now framed on the wall in the Sqn bar. A big thanks goes out to **SSgt Oulton** for the Sqn pre-tour do – it was a really good night. Watching the QM, **Capt Hay** holding on to the bucking bronco for his life was highly amusing and seeing **Sig Papa** demolish **Capt McMillan** on the bouncy boxing also made the crowd roar. All these events were made slightly more interesting by the use of the cocktail bar. Thanks also to the chefs who cooked on the huge BBQ. Delicious!

All too soon we were flying out to Kuwait. It was a good flight but the heat that hits you when you step off the plane is unbearable. We went to Kuwait for acclimatisation and to undertake an RSOI package. Its OK, you do PT at 0500hrs when it's coolest but you still end up getting sweaty. During the RSOI we had some very beneficial training like being sand blasted on the ranges in 45 degrees heat – beautiful. On route to the ranges, the driver got stuck in the sand and then said "get out and push", cheers for that!

We had some training from the Americans using a system called HEAT. This is where you get in a HMMWV and rollover to practice the drills. Watching and listening to people screaming and hanging on upside down is funny until it's your turn and they turn the lights out! We also did causality extraction using very lifelike dummies and a patrol though a replica of Basra city where you get tested on your interaction with the locals. The majority of the Sqn have now completed the RSOI and are settling into life on the COB. So far all has gone well, fingers crossed this stays the same for the duration of the 6 month tour.

LCpl Burns meeting a local

EUPHRATES TROOP - *by Cpl Kennealy*

Outside the desert sun is sitting low in the sky and the temperature is 46°C while here in my convalescence chair in the tech workshop, the lonely air conditioner coughs out an occasional burst of tepid air, keeping us at an ambient 36°C.

SSgt Smith states down the phone line, **"Cpl Kennealy**, as you're a weak, malingering, cripple infected with some random desert leg infection, how about writing Wire notes?" Which is how I find myself here, one leg elevated on the desk, hammering out the first 207 Sig Sqn despatch from the cradle of civilisation, Iraq.

Arriving in theatre from Kuwait, the Sqn completed a quick fire 2 day RIP which left us all dizzy. **SSgt Bottrell** rounded up all spare personnel in MND (SE) and set about re-painting Div HQ (using snatch paint) hoping it might earn her an MBE or mention in dispatches, while **LCpls Atkins** and **Kelly Sharman** plastered Red Rats everywhere. In RADCON, while **Sgt Beerling** had his boys moving antennas, **Sig Hymas** carried out a recce of the Hospital. **LCpl Just** set about reorganising the COMMCEN with **LCpl 'Sorbs' Sorby** helping by getting COMMCEN Baghdad to fax him some plain paper – as he'd run out – and in the JOCS cell **Sig Clayton** managed to upset everyone by wiping the Tetrabyte 'Morale' Hard Drive.

With Div HQ getting a facelift, Allenby Lines SQMS, **SSgt Bufton**, not to be out done, joined the summer fun, building blast walls

everywhere and installing a new barrier for the guard to play with but black nasty does not a barrier make and it lasted only 8 hrs. Not disheartened he built a second and then a third only to see them destroyed by HGVs – barrier 4 has been installed this morning, wait out on further information.

Despite the fast pace of life in the COB, the Tp has had men out in the city and beyond, with **LCpls Beesley**, **Slessor** and **MacDonald** enjoying time at the Palace – which gave **Capt McMillan** an excuse for a G1 visit (that's his own G1, as all he did was sleep) – while **LCpl 'Hookie' Rutherford** and **Sig Stokes** accompanied representatives from the British Museum on a fact finding trip to Tallil. Rumour has it though that **LCpl Rutherford** and **Sig Stokes** were such ideal examples of the evolution of man that the museum folk found no need to continue their mission to find the missing link.

Welfare, as well as warfare, is now well on the agenda with everyone acclimatised and used to the daily grind. The R&R plot started last week with **Cpl 'Kenco' McKechnie** enjoying a week on Safwan Hill courtesy of the RAF, while back in Allenby **Cpl 'Ski' Latusek** is organising a BBQ for the weekend to welcome the new arrivals from 1 Div. So, that's our story so far, but with 5 more months to push there'll be plenty more to tell and lots more opportunities to name check the rest of the Tp for crates. Maa as salaama.

TIGRIS TROOP - *by Lt Wells*

Certainly Tigris Tp has had a busy start to their 6 month tour. Even in the middle of our handover, we were reacting to tasks and deploying our guys out of the COB. A number of the Tp are detached from the Sqn throughout the majority of the tour. They could be working with the RAF to go on patrols in Bulldogs – something which **Sig Papa** can't stop smiling about – they are certainly learning the meaning of hard work on the maintenance of the Bulldogs in these conditions. Some of the Tp are with the BGs – providing the communications to the MITTs. Apart from **LCpl Eaves** having a moment of weakness and needing a night off patrolling, they have all been very successful and enjoyable taskings. A very different job from that of the normal signaller! They are working on their own with the BG, which in itself is a challenge but it also means they only have their own experience and knowledge on which to rely – a reality that means they have to be top of their game.

The other areas that Tigris Tp cover are mobile detachments that provide phone lines and INET access. The hardest part of this is getting the detachment into location and ensuring it is all in and working within the set time limit. After that everyone has to learn to live with slightly worse living conditions compared to the life of luxury in the COB. In some locations there is no running water – solar showers or a wash bowel only – no fresh food – only rations – but this has been found to be a good weight loss scheme over a period of time and having to make do with running round a route of 400m several times to achieve some PT. Still **Cpl Jones** finds morale for the guys by playing monopoly on a Saturday night!

The Tp have managed to find time to enjoy a well earned camel race night – a highly amusing event – no matter how loud **LCpl Burns** shouted at the camel he still didn't claim much in winnings. And a bit of time off to discover that they have a long time to go until they reach a Top Gun standard of volleyball – **LCpl Kimber** and **Sig Holden** have discovered that even wearing the vests doesn't help! Despite the relentless pace of operations, the guys are enjoying the variety that the job offers – if it carries on like this – those 6 months will really fly by.

MY MITT EXPERIENCE SO FAR - *by LCpl Eaves*

MITT is the British Army mentoring the Iraqi Army to help stabilise Iraq. It's our aim to provide support and coaching to Iraqi Army Operations. My role as an attachment is to achieve long range communications back to the rear echelon for the Comd via the use of 117F, PRC 506 and CNR. I was shipped out to the Mastiff park with my kit to meet my new pl comd from 2 R ANGLIAN. Luckily I met an old face in the form of **LCpl Wood** from 204 Sig Sqn and the handover was carried out in quick time so I could find out what he had really been up to in the last 6 months. It wasn't long before I was out on the ground on my own providing CIS advice and Tacsat capability to the pl. So far all has gone well, the patrols can be long but it's good to integrate with the locals and Iraqi Army alike. The tasks have been challenging and varied and I fully look forward to the tasks ahead of me.

SQUADRON OPERATIONS TEAM - *by Yeoman Woolley*

The lead elements of the Sqn Operations team arrived in theatre in early May, consisting of the Operations Officer, **Capt Peers** and **WO2(YofS) Brooker**. Their arrival initiated the handover process with the 4 Bde Operations Team. The arrival of **Maj Carter**, **WO2(FofS) Box**, **SSgt (YofS) Woolley** and **Sgt Evans** marked the final elements of the Replacement In Place (RIP), with 4 Bde departing in late May.

Sqn Operations now forms part of a larger J6 function responsible for both tactical and strategic communications across MND(SE). **Capt (Tfc) Wood** is the continuity within J6, having been deployed since February. The operations tempo is high and the combined J6 machine is working to maximum effect, while still finding time for the obvious sarcasm and humour that is the underlying signature of the team.

'Op MASSIVE' is also in full flow with **Capt Peers**, almost at bursting point, while still managing to catch glimpses of his massiveness in the mirror. Joking aside, he looks well.....fed.

The obligatory 'YofS' digital photo frames are in and working – not necessarily the Comd's main effort – but they do add a feeling of home to the cell vibe.

Unfortunately at the time of writing, the 'Third of a tour' team, consisting of **Maj Carter**, **FofS Box** and **YofS Woolley** are approaching there final 6 weeks, soon to be posted to RMA Sandhurst, Cormorant Trials, Blandford and The Honourable Artillery Company respectively.

The variety of work, including Op deployments involving interoperability across the AOR, infrastructure projects, new equipment delivery and communications testing to deployed Fleet assets is ensuring that the Team is keeping busy.

REAR PARTY LIFE - *by Sig Fryers*

I suppose all personnel think Rear Party is cushy, loads of time off and loads of golf, (the SQMS wishes) well that is not exactly true. Since the Sqn has deployed we have maintained the vehicles on the servicing forecast, manned the duty bunk as an emergency contact, maintained all the Sqn areas for visits. This included the SQMS getting hold of a gas burner for the weeds which **Sig Waters** nearly set **Cfn Warren** on fire with! There have been numerous airport runs for families and the few personnel returning from theatre which have kept us exceptionally busy especially over the children's half term.

On the families side we have had a families Sunday Lunch, a families BBQ, a trip out to the man made lake at Sudsee, and also a shopping trip to REAL in Celle. The Oasis cafe has stayed open to remain a focal point for the wives and families; even though it is not as busy it is still visited on a regular basis.

The welfare centre garden has been refurbished to an excellent standard with many thanks to the lads on 'The Rear Party' and one of our welfare drivers **Kevin Kiteley** along with the SQMS who managed to procure most of the building materials through local agencies on camp (Not like the SQMS to get stuff for free!). He does state that it was all asked for. The garden required a woman's touch (or so they said) so **Mrs Paula Oulton** and **Mrs Kerry Garrett** thought that they would go out spend some

pennies on plants that the barman **Cpl Si Heptinstall** will kill any way through lack of water. We had a golf day out where all members of the Rear Party went to play golf - some for the very first time. **Tim Burr** even came out of his clothing store only to complain about losing balls and how much they cost. **Sgt 'Bandito' Deakin** won the afternoon much to the dismay of **Cpl Heptinstall**, but it was a good day out.

Most of the rear party are away in June and July on resettlement courses but the tasks still go on and we only a little over 5 months to push. We wish all those out in theatre all the best and to come home safely. For all the photo's of what's been going on at home and in theatre go to ArmyNET and the 7 Bde home Rat Site, unit pages and it will take you too the Sqn pages.

OCTOBER UPDATE

It has been a busy few months for the Sqn deployed out in Iraq. Time is flying by - **WO1(RSM) F Greenwood** was lucky enough to meet the **PM Gordon Brown** – a nice bit if face time! Also all the girls in the Sqn took part in the Basra Race for Life. This involved running 5km three legged in fancy dress at 5am around the COB! It was an enjoyable morning and 207 managed to raise $2,900.

The RSM meeting the PM

The Sqn has also had a change of OC – we say farewell to **Maj Rich Carter** and welcome **Maj Andy Greenfield.**

207 Sig Sqn girls and the OC after the Race for Life in Basra

Maj Greenfield now in the Chair

SQUADRON OPERATIONS TEAM - *by Yeoman Brooker*

The Team are all now fully bedded into the J6 community within HQ MND(SE) and have quickly set out to remove the stigma of being tagged "COBitts", which is the ability to remain within the COB for the duration of the tour. **Maj Rich Carter**, **WO2(YofS) Kev Brooker** and **Sgt Rob Evans** visited the Synergy Mobile detachment based at the Iraqi Army 14XX MiTT HQ. Aside from the ICS piece, they spent their time waiting for a helicopter lift and playing the Iraqis at football (according to the OC 'you never lose it' – he was obviously not referring to the ball). The Sqn Operations Officer, **Capt Ian Peers** has been very busy talking about deploying on operations but cannot seem to survive contact with the J5 Ops and Plans Office or the Allenby lines Gym. **WO2(FofS) Lyndon Box** has found himself charging round the city with his new tech friends and **SSgt(YofS) Gaz Woolley** has been out to sea delivering the Bowman plan to *HMS Chatham* and by all accounts was well looked after by all the boys on board.....

Sqn Opereations is about to go through a big change in personnel with fond farewells to **WO2(FofS) Lyndon Box** and **SSgt(YofS) Gaz Woolley**. A big welcome to the new boys, **WO2(FofS) Rich Avery** and **SSgt(YofS) Matt Green**.

The pace of work stills continues with the Team's focus firmly set on support to the MiTTs which are moving along at fast pace. The delivery of ICS packages that provide flexibility and interoperability is keeping the whole Team busy.

EUPHRATES TROOP - *by Cpl Smith*

JOCS CELL

The JOCS Cell has been mourning the loss of **Sig Paddy Sutherland** to RADCON, if only because they have to do more duties and shifts! The work and stress levels are up, due to every e-mail containing the words 'IT' being sent to us. The Allenby Lines LAN is up and running with the ever popular game 'Call of Duty', which provides the guys who can't get out on the ground somewhere to practise their drills!

DIVISIONAL TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

Sgt Boz Litster is away on R&R leaving **Sgt 'H' Aitchison** in charge. **Cpl 'Kenco' McKechnie** has been learning his new trade of BFBS Engineer to bring a bit of morale back to the BaOC and Basra Palace.

COMMCEN

All is quiet in the world of signals and faxes this month. **Sig Jerram** as well as attempting to re-trade to the Veterinary Corps has gone on a visit to the war memorial and **Cpl Curtis** after been given some remedial DU-INET training still requested an idiot's guide.

RADCON

RADCON have become so concerned over **LCpl 'Hooky' Rutherford's** weight that they have applied for disability benefits for him. **Cpl Lawson** is on 'Op MASSIVE' whilst away at CIMIC House. **LCpl Grice** is pulling the long stag at Basra Palace.

MILITARY SERVICE DESK

On the "Desk of Power" this month things have been running so smoothly that the highlight of the month is **LCpl Greenwood** going on R&R!

TALILL - *by Sig Stokes*

LCpl Rutherford and I headed north up to Tallil on Op SUMERIA. Our task there was to provide a rear link to the Tallil Operations room and the Operations room back in HQ MND(SE), via Tacsat secure voice, while escorting the British Museum team and their security personnel. As an operator on the ground, we moved locations by Merlin SH about 3 times a day. One minute the operator on the ground would be admiring the ruins of an ancient civilisation, and the next minute we would be establishing communications from the top of the Ziggurat of Ur. In addition to that role, we also provided force protection for the archaeologists, along with contributing toward the British Army's hearts and minds campaign in Iraq. We also took the opportunity to observe the methods and practices of the Iraqi Police Service. It was encouraging to see how professional they were. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for both of us, and even the time spent in the Operations room passed quickly. I feel that I have experienced something that a great deal of people can only dream about.

TIGRIS TROOP - *by Sig Papa*

The HO/TO of the 2 Tigris Tps went smoothly and now we are ready to begin the job. As soon as we arrived, we were straight into it and kept busy from the off. People from the Tp have been sent all over Basra and are currently in the BaOC, the Palace and we have several guys embedded with the MiTTs. On the COB, we are always training and trying to improve how we work. We have set up our Forward HQ several times which is extremely hard work in this heat. We have been down the IED lane with RESA which is good fun and makes you realise how important the drills are. There were some laughs one night when **Sig Cox** upon hearing 'contact IED', turned and ran, falling straight into some fencing, as he claims he could not see where he was going. The mood he was in afterwards filled everyone's night with plenty of morale. We have taken on numerous extra taskings which include working with the RAF going out on patrols – certainly an experience! The world famous Baz Bar has been busy with quiz nights and events such as 'Basra's Got Talent' – which to everyone's surprise **LCpl Burns** has made it through to the next round with his guitar, which has softened the blow of missing the football because of **Capt 'Rizla' McMillan's** incompetence.

Forward HQ

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE MITTS CONTINUED....
- by LCpl Eaves

Life in 50 Bde MITT has improved. The initial handover from 4 Bde has been and gone and now the process of shaping our Pl house has come into full swing. The addition of aircon and comfy beds have been gifts from God and a welcome break from coming back from patrol and sweating it out on a camp cot. Patrols and CMOC tasks have been the main activity. CMOC includes going around the various Iraqi Army Bns and seeing which civilian infrastructure needs improving. We have mainly been visiting schools and clinics in various states of repair, seeing what projects need the money the most. We also look at the generation of community areas including football pitches and community centres.

Of course our main role here is MiTTing the Iraqi army. There have been plenty of search and strike ops to keep us busy, ranging from the outskirts of the city to very densely populated market places. Under our direction they have been improving their skills. Life continues to press on and improvement is being made in our area of Basra. It is good to see we are making a difference. They appreciate our efforts and we are welcomed warmly. I look forward too seeing what we as a Pl have accomplished by the end of the tour.

LCpl Eaves in action

LIFE IN THE ARMOURY - *by Sig Hardy*

The armoury that I work in is the main one on the COB and here we hold over 1000 weapons on the books and they are constantly going in and out on a daily basis. We also hold some foreign weapons like Saddam Hussein's personal guard's weapon, a silver AK47! We also hold over 30 American weapons, ranging from Berettas to machine guns. When we first arrived we didn't have any air conditioning – the place was like an oven and it was colder outside than in our armoury! The QM, **Maj Phil Hay,** in between getting beasted by **Pte Mate** on the treadmill, was straight on the phone to the contractors getting a date for the aircon to be fixed – life is much more pleasant and cooler in here now!

LAD

So far it has been a fairly quiet start to the tour, not much else to do apart from fixing broken vehicles. However, it's not all been doom and gloom; the poker nights/ tournaments have raised a bit of light hearted banter around the place. **Cfns Fairbairn** and **Jackson** have been on Op MASSIVE since the start of tour, drinking maxi muscle and going to the gym. **LCpl William** is getting worried now as he may not be the biggest in the LAD. The EDs have been rushed off their little feet. The beach area is now up and running, so much so that **Cpl Elston** has started Op BRONZE and is sunbathing during lunchtime. The AQMS, **WO2 Lawrence**, has been moaning about insect bites, heat, insect bites, the mysterious rash that has appeared on him, the heat, just about anything that he can really. So much so, the Crafties are now afraid of 'the big grumpy man'!

Cpl Elston and **Cfn Field** were meant to go and represent the Sqn at football down in KSF, but due to oversleeping (they claim the RAF changed the flight times) they missed it. It could have been worse; **Cpl Elston** could have spent the few days before he went bragging about swimming in a lovely cool pool – good job we haven't taken the mickey too much!

MT

Upon arrival at the COB, we were separated from the Sqn and formed COB Sp MT. We hit the ground running with VIP visits and guard duty; **LCpl Young** didn't even get to unpack his sleeping bag before he was on guard! **LCpl 'Mouth' Stevenson** has been busy with driver training with the RIP going on so we have hardly seen her for the first couple of weeks, we were starting to wonder if we had left her behind in Hohne. Unfortunately we lost a couple of people to different departments: **Sig Hardy** to the QM (T) and **Sig 'Mongas' Monaghan** to the SQMS, but don't worry boys we haven't forgotten you yet!! While all this has been going on **Sgt 'Bundy' Timmerman** has found time to try and get a tan, although he now looks like a battered leather couch. He has also made friends with the QM (A) and the COB CO who kindly volunteered him to be their running partner (not like him to get face time). **SSgt Law** has been building his empire to run efficiently, by telling the lads how good looking he thinks he is. He also wanted designs done for a blast wall; we chose **Sig 'Granty' Grant's** design due to it being the only one handed in. The lads painted this onto the wall under the headlights of the white fleet.

When we arrived we didn't have an MT restroom which is unheard off in the MT world, so we sorted out this problem. We found an empty corri-mec and got the power switched on and got it equipped with sofas and a 50 inch telly – much better. Due to the massive influx of American forces it was decided that the 7 Armd Bde Sig Sqn personnel of COB Sp Unit would move from the Ritz (Camp Charlie) to the Holiday Inn (Allenby Lines). R&R has now started to kick into action for a few of the boys (treat yourselves to a 4 month stint when you get back). We mustn't forget the augumentees; we have **Sgt 'Deni' Todd** who took over from **Sgt Vaughan**, **Pte Nicholls** who never shuts up – all are doing well.

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261) ALDERSHOT

OC **Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 A Morris**

With a break from exercises for a couple of weeks prior to summer leave, we will focus in this edition on the sporting achievements of Sqn personnel and adventure training.

4 DIVISION ATHLETICS - *by Cpl De-Gernier*

A week after the Sqn's success in winning the minor units category of the Morrison Cup, the male and female athletics teams headed west once more to compete in the 4 Division Athletics Championships. Shortly after booking in, the male team realised their main opposition would be the APTC but this did not deter them. The team began well, **Cpl 'Ash' Ashcroft** surprised himself and everyone else by winning the pole vault as well as the 110m hurdles. **Cpl 'DG' De-Gernier** won the hammer by a sizeable margin but left it until the last throw before taking 1st place in the discus as well. **Sig 'Tex' Raratabu** proved too strong for the rest in the shot put, with **LCpl 'Nuks' Nukutabu** and **Sig 'Doris' Day** winning the javelin and high jump respectively.

Victories in the afternoon continued with **Sig 'Stu' Keighley** winning the 1500m by a hefty margin. **LCpl 'Mo' Morris** coasted home in the 100m while also helping the 4 x 100m relay team, **Sig Doneghan**, **Sig Stratton**, **LCpl Morris** and **LCpl Nukutabu**. From these results, it is clear to see why 261 Sig Sqn won the Minor Units competition and progressed through to the Army Finals Championships. The girls had stiff opposition from much larger units but **LCpl Martin-Law** and **2Lt Morris** convincingly won their events (high jump and 5000m respectively), with **Cpl Evans** securing a 2nd place in the discus and **LCpl Tuppen** finishing 3rd in the 400m. The female team finished in a well deserved 5th place. Overall it was a very enjoyable day and a special well done to the male team for making it through to the Army Minor Unit Finals Competition.

ARMY SUMMER TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS - *by Sig Day*

Between 12 and 16 July, **Sig Day** took part in the Army Summer Tennis Championships held at Aldershot Tennis Centre, competing in the Mens Open singles under 21 Competition and the Mens Doubles. There was strong opposition in the Mens Singles, and after winning his first match and proceeding to the second round, **Sig Day** was unfortunately knocked out. However in the under 21s Competition he was more fortunate. Despite some stiff competition, he managed to fight his way to a well deserved 3rd place. Well done to **Sig Day**, and hopefully he will return next year to compete again.

ARMY SWIMMING AND WATERPOLO CHAMPIONSHIPS - *by Sig Potts*

SWIMMING

On the morning of 12 June, the Army Individual Swimming Championships was held in Aldershot swimming pool. From 261 Sig Sqn, **2Lt Morris**, **Cpl Ashcroft** and **Sig Potts** were able to attend. The competition brought swimmers from all corners of the Army bringing the standard of swimming to a very high level. **Sig Potts** had the first race, 800m freestyle and came a respectable 3rd. **Cpl Ashcroft** then had the 100m Breaststroke and made it to the final in 5th place. **2Lt Morris** swam in the 100m and 200m Breaststroke and not only came 1st in both events but broke the Army record in the 200m Breaststroke. All 3 swimmers swam hard and competed well and the work paid off as they were all asked to attend the Army Swimming camp in June – well done to all.

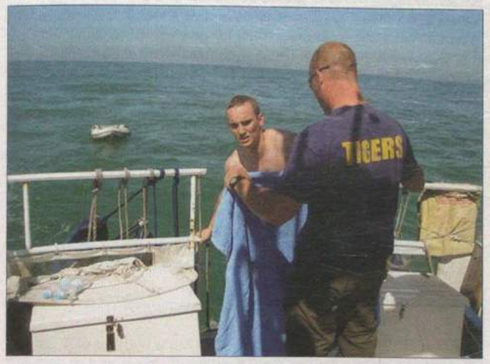
WATER POLO

261 Sig Sqn entered a team in the Army Water Polo Championships despite only 2 out of the 12 players ever having played before. One day's training and they were set to go. They had 3 matches and faced very tough opposition from Army players, who had vast amounts of experience! Undeterred they played on, scoring goals which some players had thought not possible! Unfortunately the years of experience from the other teams went against us and 261 didn't make it to the final. However, there is plan for some more training so there is always next year! Well done to everyone who took part.

EXERCISE CHANNEL TITAN - *by 2Lt Morris*

2008 saw the first Inter-Corps Cross Channel Relay Race, Ex **Channel Titan**. Six teams were to take part, with training camps and competitions leading up to the event as you wouldn't want to jump into the Channel with no training. On 23 July at 0100hrs, the race started! Two members of 261 Sig Sqn took part in this event, **2Lt Morris** and **Sig Potts**. **2Lt Morris** took the first leg in the pitch black and she took the lead. The Sappers were a close 2nd, dictating how most of the race would pan out. **Sig Potts** swam excellently and even managed to get some swimming in

with some dolphins! The Corps team made it across in 11 hrs 14 mins, only 15 mins behind the Sappers – an excellent result!



Sig Potts after his second swim

EXERCISE SEA TIGER - *by LCpl Landry and LCpl Lemmon*

On Monday morning we woke up early to head to the coast for Ex SEA TIGER. Eleven members of the Sqn were ready to make the journey to Gosport. We arrived and were introduced to **Becky**, our Skipper for the week, and shown around our boat called *Chaser* and what a mighty fine vessel she was. After we were formally introduced, we were split into 2 teams called Port and Starboard watches. Port leader was **Capt Andy Lothian**, Starboard leader was **WO2(FofS) Jim Healy** (the dream team). We were shown the cubby holes where we were meant to sleep and packed our kit in them. **Sig Sam Shelly** was glad she didn't bring her hair straighteners. Once we were briefed, we set sail into the blue-ish yonder of the Solent. We landed at Lymington quite late on the first night. This was when some of us, who are only used to tying shoelaces, found a new challenge in the form of the bowline. For anyone interested, this type of knot is used for mooring! The next morning we set off for Weymouth but it wasn't all plain sailing. Due to the tidal conditions we floated around for a bit practising tacking and gybing and man overboard drills. At this point we heard a Mayday call over the radio. This was when *Chaser* transformed, with the drop of the jib and flick of the engine switch, we raced to aid the 'Damsel in Distress'. Fortunately the RNLI lifeboat was quicker and we were stood down! As soon as the tide was in our favour, we sailed on passing the Needles on the west coast of the Isle of Wight. We landed at Weymouth where some of us enjoyed the giant sandcastle and the nightlife. Unfortunately the castle was closed and the guard was adamant that we couldn't cross the drawbridge. Some of us, who are keen volleyball players, were a bit dismayed that we were going to miss the beach volleyball competition, damn shame. Next day we set off for Poole. En route, the young and the foolish took a dip in the water. This was when we all wondered whether **Sig Ashley Pechy** was a girl due to his high pitch scream on entering the water. Once in Poole, we had quite a few onlookers probably wondering how so many people could squeeze into such a small boat. We enjoyed our spag bol, cooked by **LCpl Al Austin** and **Sig Ian Butler** in the enjoyable atmosphere of Poole harbour. Next morning we were heading towards Isle of Wight. On the way **Capt Rachel Thompson**, **Capt Andy Lothian** and **Uncle Jim** got to practice some of their skippering skills by trying to pick up **'Bob'**. Luckily the sun was out, so **Bob** didn't suffer with hypothermia but nearly drowned through boredom! We rounded off our week by having a proper meal, according to **LCpl Martin Landry**, with a few beers and a lots of salty sea stories. Next morning we woke to cloudy and overcast sky and headed back to Gosport where we ended an excellent week by scrubbing the decks.

Sig Shelly, LCpl Landry and LCpl Lemmon enjoy life on the ocean waves

12 MECHANISED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228) ALDERSHOT

OC **Maj NM Stokoe**
RSM **WO1(RSM) SJ Crooks**

Yet more changes in our realm As Maj Stokoe takes the helm. Half Colonel Watts, as he is now, Is leaving us with saddened brow. He's off to Land and pastures new To put his feet up and drink brews.

Lt Col 'Taff' Watts hands over 228 Sig Sqn to Maj Niall Stokoe

EXERCISE ACE MARKSMAN - *by 2Lt Draper*

Ex ACE MARKSMAN saw the Sqn deploy to Sennybridge in early July for what we all hoped would be a warm and rain free summer battle camp. "God's Country", however, had other plans. The exercise formed part of the Sqn's build up training ahead of PDT in December; the aim being to practise basic infantry skills and to improve the battle shot with a little MATTs training thrown in for good measure.

On the Monday morning at the somewhat unsociable hour of 0400hrs, the Sqn mustered outside SHQ. Despite the sun still not being up and the week just begun, morale was high and everyone was looking forward to trying their hands at some slightly 'greener' activities. The first day saw the troops complete their grouping and zeroing and APWT with some excellent scores being achieved on the latter range. Special mention must go out to **Cpl Andy Howard** and the 2IC **Capt Kelly Rhodes** for their stalwart efforts. **Cpl Howard** showed admirable determination as he worked to ensure the consistency of the ranges by having 5

attempts on the APWT and **Capt Rhodes** displayed amazing patience after **Sgt Manns** twice wiped her score at the console 'accidentally'. He swears it was witchcraft that it was just her lane which didn't record, both times, on two different lanes. Everyone else thinks she just failed twice.

Cpl McSharry leading section attacks on at Sennybridge

The ranges continued with the IBSR, the sect attacks and despite heavy rain and formidably steep terrain, the sects put in an excellent performance. After a quick break over the weekend in Castlemartin and a "quiet" night out in Tenby, the troops returned refreshed to Sennybridge ready to start the main phase of the exercise. This involved everyone leaving behind the cushy farm they had become so used to and moving to a less than

LCpl Loftus, LCpl Hamilton 65, LCpl Overland, Sig Havinden, Cpl Hankey, Sig Coldrick and LCpl Williams-Toy – loving every minute!

welcoming pl harbour in bashas. Personal administration was practised and severely tested by the heavy rain but still morale remained high. The final phase consisted of a grenade range, varied dry training, a 12 hr long defensive shoot and 2 excellent live pl attack ranges. Thanks must be given to **SSgt Jens Gronn** and **Sgt Jamie Roderick** for all their hard work in putting together the pl attack ranges, both of which where of the highest calibre.

Ex ACE MARKSMAN saw a great improvement in the field skills of all the exercising troops and despite the constant rain everyone clearly enjoyed having a go at something a bit different to normal camp life. Congratulations go to **Cpl Rachael Hankey** for getting Top Soldier of the exercise, her quality performance as a sect comd meriting much applause. A big thank you to **SSgt Marc Beckett** and all the range staff for all their hard work in organising what was an excellent battle camp.

EXERCISE ACE SURPRISE 3 - *by Sgt Jamie Roderick*

The ACE SURPRISE series of exercises are a number of 1 day packages designed to provide a welcome break from the rigours of an intense training calendar. ACE SURPRISE 3 was a London based activity comprising of leadership presentations and a socially based team activity.

Despite an early start, 11 members of the Sqn made it to the National Army Museum for the first activity. This was a lecture on historical leadership given by the senior education officer at the Museum. It focused on a number of individuals throughout history and examined their particular qualities. The next phase was the Circle Line quiz. This involves going to all the stations on the Circle Line and carrying out tasks or finding out various pieces of information. At the same time it allowed people to see all the major sights of London. Top prize goes to **Sgt Rob Kavanagh** who got the highest score, aided by his intimate local knowledge.

It was then time for a quick period of battle preparation prior to moving off for the night exercise in central London. This proved to be a bit of an eye opener, especially for the older, more conservative members of the group. Groups of soldiers are very popular in some specialist bars and clubs. The worst chat up lines prize goes to **LCpl Craig Williams** who despite the lack of quality made up for it with sheer persistence. Top prize of the night, however must go to **Cpl Lee James** and **LCpl Mike Skarratts** for their 2 man synchronised version of the squaddie two step. They have since decided to go professional and can be booked for all Unit functions.The exercise concluded with a necessary slow start in the morning followed by a visit to the Imperial War Museum.

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

OC **Maj RJ Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Brown**

2 PARA REAR LINK DETACHMENT (RLD) - *by Sig Douglas*

We are just over half way through our tour of Afghanistan with 2 PARA, and morale is still generally high. Most of the RLD have now returned from their R&R with only a few blokes left to cycle through. It's been over a month now since 2 PARA Main HQ moved from Bastion to Sangin. Life in Sangin is generally good, food is adequate and the accommodation 'cave man' but the river makes up for all that. Many an hour is spent cooling off bathing in the river that runs through the middle of the FOB. The RLD consists of 11 personnel, 4 of the RLD are based in Sangin, **Sgt Giroux** and **Sig Douglas** working with 2 PARA Main HQ and **Cpl Clark** and **LCpl Kirkham** working with the R IRISH Coy. The rest of the RLD are spread out amongst the rest of the FOBs within BG North. **Cpl Meecham** is attached to B Coy at FOB Inkerman, **Cpl Parker** is attached to C Coy at FOB Gibraltar, **Cpl Dunseith**, **LCpl Waters** and **Sig Swithenbank** are attached to Patrols Pl at Kajaki and **LCpl Abdulrehman** and **Sig Glancy** are attached to D Coy at FOB Robinson. Having the RLD imbedded in with the 2 PARA Coys certainly makes the job of **Sgt Giroux** a lot easier at 2 Para Main HQ because when it comes to daily issues with TacSat, HPW, 506, OTAR and Bowman, the RLD manpower make sure that all problems are dealt with and rectified quickly keeping the communications infrastructure of BG North intact.

The RLD is also used on a lot of 2 PARA's patrols, generally as TacSat operators or as the OC's signaller. There has also been opportunity for the RLD to deploy on the BG's deliberate ops some on foot, some by Air Assault and some by vehicles. A few guys have had some close calls while out on patrol, with **Sig Douglas** almost being blown up by an IED, **Sig Glancy** being taken out by an RPG which landed between him and 2IC D Coy but luckily the RPG was a dud. The other guys in the RLD have also been heavily involved in the contacts that happen on a daily basis in and around the FOBs. All the blokes in the RLD are performing well above their station and are receiving a lot of praise from 2 PARA BG. Of course this should be no surprise to anyone who has ever worked with or been posted to the Sqn as the guys always dig out blind and perform well - Airborne!

We're on the home straight now, even though there are 3 months left and the high tempo of the RLD will not change, but the guys are certainly looking forward to getting back to the UK in October for a well deserved break.

Sig Douglas out on patrol in the Green Zone with 2 PARA

FOB ZEEBRUGGE - by Cpl Dunseith

Since deploying on Op HERRICK 8, members of 216 (Para) Sig Sqn have been attached to the 2 PARA BG at Kajaki working as an RLD. **Cpl 'Bart' Dunseith**, **LCpl 'Dicky' Waters** and **Sig 'Daz' Swithenbank**. Both **Bart** and **Dicky** have been at other locations. **Dicky** the most recent arrival, was reallocated from BG North HQ down in Sangin after a well earned R&R with his wife and baby girl **Abigail**. Also back from R&R is **Bart** who got to see his new son **George** for a much longer period than he had before he deployed. Both fathers claim it was 'great to be back home' but it was more or less over in the blink of an eye. We have been supporting X Coy, part of which is made up of the Patrols Pl (2 PARA's Recce Pl). There have been lots of patrols involving the employment of an OC's Tac Signaller plus one. Most patrols are ground clearance and domination; contacts are fairly frequent with impressive amounts of firepower being put down from Air/GMLRS assets as well as the Coy's own FSG.

Kajaki was recently visited by **Cpl Stopforth** and **Sig Smith**. With Routine Maintenance checks to the Coy's 2 FEPS generators. Their time was mostly spent building an epic wooden shelter. They were mistaken for Sapper 'Chippies' rather than Electricians, this was due to the fact that they had done more woodwork in 3 days than the Engineers had in 3 months! No doubt they will go into business together when they leave the Army. It's been first-rate working with the Patrols Pl. They are enthusiastic, quality and mature guys to work with; from the most junior Tom, they are keen from the bottom up. Now that the back of the tour has been broken, time will fly by but we are all eager to see 45 Cdo arrive.

FOB INKERMAN - *by Cpl Meecham*

Since arriving in theatre on 17 March, I have been attached to B Coy, 2 PARA as part of the Signals pl detachment. FOB Inkerman is situated furthest north into the Zone within the Sangin valley. Lately the Taliban have been pushing closer and closer towards the FOB making it increasingly vulnerable to contacts on the ground. Yesterday is as good an example of a normal day here. It started at 0330hrs with a patrol of 3 pls with FSG sections in each. Mortars and guns are constantly second guessing likely enemy firing points along the path of the patrol. At about 0600hrs the Taliban spotted our patrol but we had PID'd 3 enemy positions and 'dickers' were also seen in these compounds. The OC on the ground called in GLMRS, mortars and guns on these compounds. After the Fire Mission, we suspected that the enemy were badly hurt and as a result they mounted a rash attack with mortars and SA fire. The fire was inaccurate and our patrol won the fire fight with ease. The patrol got back to the FOB at 1130hrs with no casualties; later reports confirmed 6 kills and news of the wounding of a high level Taliban commander.

As a Royal Signals operator you expect to work in established and safe camps when on tour. Working with 2 PARA and patrolling alongside them in the fiercest fighting area in Helmand has been amazing and very different from normal HQ jobs.

FOB ROBINSON - *by LCpl Abdulrehman*

It is often said that as well as being signallers, we are first and foremost infantry soldiers. This has become apparent at D Coy 2 PARA at FOB ROBINSON, where **Sig Mark Glancy** and **LCpl Jaffa Abdulrehman** are employed. Working with an Infantry BG and getting to do our job on the ground is exactly what we had joined the Army for. So being attached to 10 and 11 Pl of D Coy of 2 PARA as patrol signallers has been a mega experience to say the least. **Sig Glancy** and I have been involved in all sorts of patrols in the lower Sangin Valley, ranging from providing the primary comms back to Coy, Bn and Task Force Helmand (TFH) HQ, to being the ECM pack mule in the patrol, lucky us! Our turn seems to come round faster than others. The lads of D Coy have been a great bunch of blokes to work with, and never once did they make us feel like outsiders. It has been an operational tour we will never forget.

Sig Glancy and LCpl Abdulrehman

FOB EDINBURGH - *by Cpl Hensby*

FOB Edinburgh is situated 6km away from Musah Qa'lah (MSQ). It is situated in the middle of a desert plain to the West of MSQ DC, so as you can imagine it is one of the quieter FOBs within the TF AO. This makes for a lot of down time which is filled with plenty of PT, detachment maintenance and film watching! Conditions are reasonably basic as with all the FOBs; 10 man rations, well water and such like. Life however is starting to improve with the introduction of some fridges and a limited PRI run by the 5 SCOTS QM. Conditions here are bearable, if not quite comfortable with the biggest battle being with boredom rather than the Taliban, although the manoeuvre elements are getting into contacts when venturing out of the FOB, The FOB itself is quiet apart from when the co-located GMLRS or 7 RHA's 105mm light guns have been given a fire mission. The focus now, although still on the job at hand, is preparing for the Replacement in Place, ensuring the incoming unit has all it needs to operate on a winter tour of Afghanistan.

FOB GRAY (NOWZAD) - *by LCpl Campbell*

Cpl Galtress and **LCpl Campbell** deployed to FOB GRAY, Nowzad in April in support of the Estonians. The Rear Link Detachment (RLD) role is to provide a UK rear link from the Estonian Coy Comd back to BG (NW) and TF HQ. As of May 08, a USMC coy has also deployed to FOB GRAY and the RLD works closely with both nations to ensure each is informed of the other's intentions and movements. FOB GRAY is in the unique position of still being engaged in conventional warfare. Enemy forces have a well defined and defended FLET with any incursions into this area being met with heavy resistance. The USMC launch frequent strike operations into the FLET with some lasting up to 15hrs. Occasionally 216 personnel are required to deploy on these ops in order to provide a direct link between the USMC and the Estonian Coy.

Due to this intense fighting, there is no civilian population left in Nowzad and a ghost town is all that is left of what appears to have once been a thriving community. However, the lack of civilians allows the enemy to litter the streets with well prepared PPIEDs and both the USMC and the Estonians have suffered several casualties, some fatal, due to these tactics. FOB GRAY, although never coming under direct attack during our deployment, frequently comes under attack from indirect fire with as many as 19 x 107mm rocket attacks in a 48hr period. Fortunately, FOB GRAY has a 105mm Light Gun Detachment from 3 RHA and an Estonian 81mm mortar line in fire support, which ensures a swift response to any IDF attacks.
Despite all the fighting, morale is very high in the FOB. Welfare facilities include a small TV room, text link and the Estonians provide limited access to the internet. The engineers have built a substantial gym solely from materials available from within the FOB and even a small dunk tank for cooling down post patrol. The chefs, although working with limited supplies, always manage to invent varied and surprisingly good food.

MUSAH QA'LAH (MSQ) DC - *LCpl Mason*

MSQ DC is a very busy FOB and we have Mastiff and Warrior Coys conducting operations from here. Facilities are substantial with good sized ablutions with 4 new shower units just installed, a large cookhouse with chefs making the most of 10 man rations and plenty of accommodation. Although some of this in the hard standing can be sweltering and many prefer to sleep outside. There is a fair sized television area sheltered between 2 ISOs and a welfare room hosting poker games most evenings. A decent weights area has been improvised and there's a small CV room with two bikes, a rower and a cross-trainer.

The FOB is noted for its problems with high numbers of flies and much dust but control measures have gone some way to reducing the number of flies and in preparation for the winter tour much of the ground has been hardened with gravel, making for a far better running surface. Should the power go down, however, then you're back in the sweltering heat with no working fans. Looking out from the FOB many local nationals can be seen working in a busy community. Pushing further afar, there are a number a Patrol Bases (PBs) from which the Afghan National Army (ANA) operate and although attacks on the FOB are rare, for the PBs it's a very different story as can often be heard from within the FOB.

Cpl Galtress, LCpl Campbell and Sgt King on the roof of MSQ DC

ENGINEER RLD - *by Cpl Sale*

Our tour started in Bastion, where we completed the Helmand Training Package. We found the package very beneficial; we got our hands on numerous weapons, including the GPMG and GMG, which was pretty ally! After completing the package we then moved to Lashkar Gah where we met 23 Regt RE, for whom we were to work and the rest of the Force Protection multiple; this included members of 2 SCOTS and 13 Air Asslt Regt RLC.

We then set about learning their drills before deploying on the ground on various reconstruction and development tasks. After 7 weeks we moved onto bigger and better things, moving to Gereshk and into FOB Price or "FOB 18 – 30". During our time here we took on the task of escorting the CIMIC teams as well as the Sapper reconstruction and development teams. We would visit various projects from schools and mosques, to wells and bridges, both in the Green Zone and in the centre of Gereshk. As well as doing these daily patrols, we would be regularly used as quick reaction force (QRF) for the camp. We were getting deployed as QRF on numerous tasks including fire fights, mine strikes and IED finds and a number of times found ourselves mobilising before the Danish QRF.

OP LOAM - *by Lt Cole*

Part of the responsibilities of the OMLT includes providing Force Protection to ANA convoys re-supplying FOB locations. **Lt Cole** deployed on Op LOAM, a 6 day CLP to Sangin DC involving a stop at a desert laager and at FOB Robinson before arriving in the DC. Due to the inability of the heavier DROPS vehicles of the convoy to cross the safer, but more difficult desert terrain, the convoy route followed the main 611 road, considered to be the most dangerous road in the world. With the advance Force Protection and EOD route clearance team being contacted before the departure of the main body, any element of surprise was lost and this was emphasised by the discovery during the CLP of over 25 IEDs along the route! The time taken to clear these caused huge delays leading to a 50 hr outward leg to reach the DC, a HERRICK 8 record. Once in the DC, the pace of life was much slower with plenty of time to unload and reload the vehicles and to enjoy the very essence of morale that is jumping into the Helmand River. The only onerous task was keeping track of the ANA and ensuring they did not get up to mischief or wind 2 PARA up too much!

The return leg should have been less dramatic with the route having been cleared and then watched over whilst the CLP elements were in the DC. However, enemy forces were still able to sneak in under the radar and lay another 5 IEDs, which unfortunately one of which resulted in leg injuries to one RLC soldier who is expected to make a full recovery. The OMLT mentors have participated in several such convoys so far during HERRICK 8. Cutting around in heavily armed WMIKS with .50 Cals is not a daily part of life in the Royal Signals but is highly recommended to those presented with the opportunity.

DANISH BG RLD - *by Cpl Hanes*

And so the final push commences towards going home. R&R has passed and good times had by all within the RLD especially by **LCpl Lockton** who is about to be a father (he thought a cold sore was his biggest worry out here). **LCpl Peach** thought he had good stories to tell until **Sig Roko** had to hard target coming under very close fire as rounds fell at his feet. **LCpl Wilkinson** lost 2 of his 9 lives as he came under effective fire as an RPG hit a Piranha which later had to be denied and a further vehicle which detonated the 2nd biggest IED recorded in Helmand.

None though can better **Sig Hingley**, who whilst waiting at KAF ready to come home for R&R, realised he didn't have his passport with him. What a waste of a sun tan especially as he was preparing himself for a starring role in the new **Ben Stiller** film "Tropical Thunder" as a stand in for **Robert Downey Jr**.

Not just one for providing comms the RLD has been called on to assist with a number of IED incidents with **Sgt Walker, LCpl Peach** and **LCpl Devlin** aiding in stretchering casualties for medical aid. **Cpl Hanes** covered IRT for a couple of weeks and upon returning to PCE played the local nationals in a football match. After being hacked down **'Stuart Pearce'** style with his leg cut he almost required a Medevac, until he realised it was time to man up. The RLD continues to provide support to the Danish BG which is getting busier as we speak.

PB ATTAL - *by Sig Andrews*

I arrived at PB ATTAL as part of a team from OMLT 3, consisting of 7 soldiers from 1 R IRISH and myself. We also brought 2 US soldiers with us and a VM from 13 Air Asslt Regt RLC. The journey down to the PB was a road move, consisting of numerous British, US and ANA vehicles, some of whom split off to go to separate locations. It was not until we were around 1km from the PB that things got interesting. One of the ANA Ranger vehicles, packed full of soldiers, strayed away from the proven route and struck an IED, causing 4 casualties straight away. As the US and British medics treated the casualties and an extraction vehicle was brought up, we started receiving SAF (small arms fire) and IDF (indirect fire) from what appeared to be a compound several hundred metres away. The response was immediate, with all 4 British WMIK vehicles returning fire, myself on GPMG top cover on one of them. The heavy rate of fire put down, including HMG from a WMIK, and GMG from the US Humvee, allowed the large ANA vehicles including the 4 casualties to turn around and meet with the QRF C/S that had deployed from the PB. Once all ANA vehicles were clear of the contact, we could withdraw ourselves. The contact was effectively closed by 2 Javelin missiles being fired at the compound from the PB.

After a good night's rest, it was straight into familiarisation patrols around the Green Zone, and a good chance for me to see how things in the Ops room work. This, however, did not last long and I was out on the ground the very next day, providing BG communications for the patrol.
15 July turned out to be a day that would test not only the ANA soldiers we are here to mentor, but also some of the British involved. It was an early morning patrol, leaving around 0400hrs. The intention was to have a presence in the Green Zone before first light. Things started to go downhill with the discovery of a suspicious vehicle believed to belong to a local IED maker. We noted the very large number of local women and children running from the area and this put the ANA on edge.

The contact came as I was in the middle of an open field with **WO2 Roy**, the team leader. A quick burst of SAF followed by RPG sent us all running for cover, which unfortunately came in the form of a 1ft wall in the middle of the field. It seemed the ANA behind me had decided they did not like the idea of being in the field, and had ran back to the cover of a stream, where our 2nd platoon had gone to ground. This didn't seem to matter, as the 5 or 6 ANA that had followed on were very professional, and returned fire with RPG and PKM, if not a little close to my head! I had relayed news of our contact to anyone that would listen and the Danish in the area had responded, saying they were going to send their Main Battle Tanks to drive through the GZ and extract us! Needless to say this option was put aside as a last resort and we managed to get the support of 105mm guns in the area. They fired several fire missions into the grids we gave and we decided we were going to extract under the cover of one of the fire missions. This did not go entirely to plan however, due to the ANA not understanding and I did not leave the position until after the last round had landed, this resulted in enemy fire landing a bit close to me for comfort! I imagine the Taliban were taking great enjoyment watching me dancing across a field trying to send a LOCSTAT. We extracted back to the PB with 'overwatch' from an Apache, which gave the ANA great confidence.

I am thoroughly enjoying my time both working with the Irish and in PB ATTAL, I have had the opportunity to learn and fire all the different weapon systems, including .338 sniper rifle and 51mm mortar. Being the only signaller here, I have been able to greatly improve my range of skills.

OPERATIONAL MENTOR LIAISON TEAM (OMLT)
- by SSgt Jones

The 1 R IRISH BG OMLT has now passed the 4 month point and the end is in sight. The Mentor team now consists of **SSgt 'Loddy' Jones** and **Lt Graham Lee,** having just taken over from **Lt Nick Cole** who is now attempting to put an Afghan spin on his Tp Comd role in Main Tp.

To date, the Afghan National Army (ANA) communicators have been very impressive, and working with them has been an interesting if sometimes a frustrating challenge. To begin with working through a *Tageman* (interpreter) has been sometimes amusing, seeing his eyes widen as you start using words like wavelength and dipole. I often wonder how this comes out in Pashtu, not that our own linguistic skills have been left wanting, with most of us getting to grips with hello, thank you, good and goodbye. With most of the ANA putting us to shame as they practise their English on us, most soldiers, or 'warriors' as they like to called, can speak 2 or 3 local languages with a smattering of English throw in for good measure.

Instructing ANA soldiers on radios has been a rewarding process but comes with its own problems, such as the fact that all the dials, switches and LCD screens are in English as the equipment comes from the Americans. This is good for the mentors but not so good for your average ANA soldier, as it's in the wrong language and written the wrong way around since he will read from right to left. Think back to your own trade training and add that into the equation, and it's not a pleasant thought. Add to this the fact that a lot of ANA soldiers will have no formal education, with barely any literacy and numeracy skills in their own language, let alone someone else's, and this makes for some interesting lessons on inputting frequencies.

Mentoring the ANA is not all a camp rat job, it also entails mentoring the ANA in their KANDAK (Battalion) positions on the ground out on operations and on combat logistics patrols. This usually entails running about trying to get your relevant ANA together, as watches and the ability to tell the time are in short supply. You find ANA time keeping not really up there with Sergeant Major time, so anywhere within a couple of hours is not too bad in their eyes. Then it's time to play 'how many ANA soldiers can you fit in a pick-up truck?' – which if you haven't seen before is something you will never forget and the stuff of health and safety nightmares.

Afghanistan National Army convoy with mentors

Then it's time to move out and take in some of the best scenery in Helmand for 24 to 36 hours, always keeping a wary eye out for the Taliban and any surprises he may have left lying around. This is where the ANA come into their own, as they have the uncanny ability to tell if something is wrong. They understand

atmospherics much better then we do and can spot a foreigner within a crowd. This alongside the fact that the ANA, without any special equipment, have found more IEDs than the rest of ISAF put together makes them good to have on our side On operations you find that the ANA communicators are very good at their jobs. When asked if they can talk to the next patrol base you will find they can also talk to Corp in Kabul. It helps that the kit they have been issued is robust, powerful and easy to use but you shouldn't let that take away from the operators, as anyone who knows long range HF out in Afghan can testify to. On the whole, working with the ANA has been a great experience. They are a friendly if slightly infuriating bunch and I can definitely recommend this job to anyone who is fortunate enough to get a chance to do it. However, as with all good jobs there is a 'but'! Just remember a touch of patience goes a long way, and that when you shout 'jump' at the ANA don't expect them to ask 'how high?' – just expect them to look at each other and ask aloud why you asked them to jump for no apparent reason.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) CORSHAM

OC **Maj Steve Clout**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Collins**

The summer months saw the start of the deployment rotations for the training year. At the time of writing, 857 Tp have successfully completed their projects in Gibraltar and 855 Tp have completed a deployment to Cyprus which will be the subject of a full report in the next issue. The Sqn has also held a successful recruiting weekend in July, interviewing and selecting nearly 20 potential new recruits to commence their basic training. It also continues to further its links with BT through a presence at various management conferences and Modern Apprentice training events.

In other news, **Capt Mark Arscott** takes a temporary leave of absence (known as "defecting") to work as SO2 Defence Career Partnering at Regional Forces. In this role, he will continue his excellent work in developing links with industry and will continue to assist in the running of the Ex FIRST LOOK events across a wider range of companies. In recognition of his huge workload whilst at the Sqn (or possibly his lack of full-time employment...), his recruiting responsibilities will now be split between **Lt Richard Smith** and **2Lt Mark Oxley**. After a long and distinguished career, **WO2 Al Carruthers** has recently decided to hang up his Combat Boots and leave the Sqn – but is being kept busy on a number of equally interesting activities by BT.

EXERCISE FIRST ROCK – 857 TP IN GIBRALTAR

857 Tp deployed to Gibraltar 1 – 21 June on Ex FIRST ROCK. The aim of the deployment was to deliver the installation and upgrade of the data communications in the Royal Gibraltar Regt buildings, located at Devil's Tower Camp (DTC) – with a secondary objective of catching up on the forearm and face tans sorely missed on last year's South Atlantic Islands deployment.

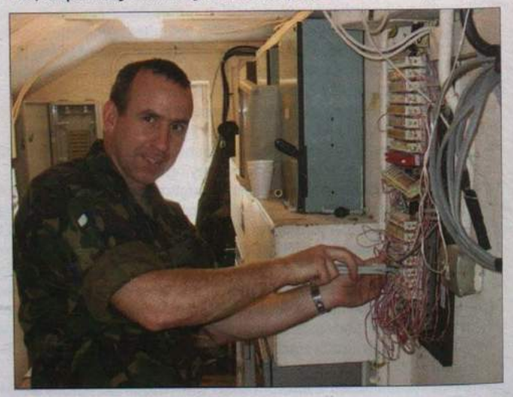
The advance party consisted of **WO2 Al Carruthers**, **SSgts Jon Helm**, and **Bill Gordon**, **Sgts Richard Squance** and **Bal Kang** plus **LCpl Jim Watson** (RLC) to fulfil an obligation to provide a chef. After flying by EasyJet from Gatwick on 2 June, the team quickly set up a project office and store room at DTC and confirmed transport, accommodation and stores that had all been arranged after the recce in January. The main parties arrived on Tuesday 3 June with chalk commander, **Sgt Jones** and Saturday 7 June with chalk commander, **Sgt Pearce**. After unpacking, both parties were tasked and working the next morning after their arrival.

The SNCO accommodation at DTC was excellent as it was in the new mess, which had just opened. The accommodation for the junior soldiers was basic to say the least but it is understood that the accommodation is due to be upgraded within the next year (although whether the same gold plated taps, marble basins and pile carpet will be installed remains to be seen...). During the first party's R&R most of the troops spent the Saturday evening and Sunday visiting interesting establishments on The Rock, including the 100 Ton Gun, the Rock Apes, siege tunnels and bars/nightclubs in the pursuit of cultural activities, including a short foray into Spain to sample some of the Spanish cooking most admired by 81 Sqn, while the SNCOs stayed at DTC to welcome the second party, who arrived on the Saturday evening. The R&R sorties didn't go by without some unusual events, but more on that another time!

Those who remained in Gib, plus members of Party 2 went fishing at sea on the Sunday to acclimatise to the weather (on the orders of the Medical Officer!) and then had a BBQ with the fish they caught. The following 7 days saw the Tp put in 12 and 16 hr days in order to meet critical deadlines for the Royal Gibraltar Regnt, including the Queens Birthday Parade, during which the Tp was stood down and managed to get an afternoon of sailing courtesy of 4 Dock.

SSgt Bill Gordon and Sigs Thain, Jeffreys and Redford – '4 men in a boat' – holding up their catch for the day!

Towards the end of the deployment the Tp was visited by a number of VIPs including the Sqn PSAO, **Capt Tim Craven** and 2IC, **Capt Andy Kennedy**. All of the projects where inspected



LCpl Welch 'hard at it' punching down

and approved. During a Tp Meal, **Sig Iain Jeffreys** was awarded the Troop Trophy for Most Improved Soldier due his perseverance and sterling efforts on re-terminating over a period of 5 days. Each of the 3 projects had a Cpl in charge, **Cpl McCrone**, **Cpl Harris** and **Cpl Lazenby** who all coped admirably with the responsibility. All soldiers worked long into the evenings, on all 3 tasks, so that they were able to have some R&R at the weekend. A special thanks go to **WO2 Rowbottom**, Chief Clerk Royal Gibraltar Regt, who greatly assisted us in gaining access during stand-down periods – despite being on his days off!. All 3 projects were completed on time and to specification and changed over within time scales. 857 Troop received the congratulations and thanks of CO Royal Gibraltar Regt for a job well done. All were in agreement that despite the long hours and heavy workload, the deployment was one of the most enjoyable in recent years.

OTHER UNITS

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

INFRASTRUCTURE AND HQ SQN

OC **Maj M McCorry**
USM **WO2(SSM) Tresidder**

CORPS FORMATION DAY- 27 JUN 08 - *by Lt Miller*

The officers and soldiers of Cyprus Communications Unit (CCU) celebrated their first ever Royal Signals Corps formation day on Friday 27 June. The event, held at Happy Valley was developed and organised by **Lt Miller** and provided an opportunity for the serving personnel of CCU to celebrate the day that the Royal Engineers Signal Service became the Corps of Signals on 28 June 1920. Serving and retired members of the Corps from around the rest of the island of Cyprus were also present.

The day started with a parade in the rising temperatures of mid-morning and saw the CO CCU, **Wg Cdr Featherstone** review the formed up troops during a small and personal parade. OC Infra and HQ Sqn, **Maj Mel McCorry**, in his capacity as senior Royal Signals officer on parade, gave a speech on heritage, current deployments and the future vision of the corps.

This was followed by **Padre David Kingston** leading the parade in a moment of reflection for those that have lost their lives in recent conflicts. Individual recognition came in the form of the LSGC medal awarded to **Cpl Mick Jones** for his exemplary service for over 15 years in the Army. The parade finally marched off to the tunes of the bagpipe played by **LCpl Del Slowey**.

Cpl Mick Jones receives his LSGC

Following the parade everyone moved to more informal surroundings and relaxed while being entertained by the cricket playing members of the two sqns of CCU, in the latest instalment of the Griffon Cup. In keeping with the spirit of the day, Infra and HQ Sqn with a high majority of Corps personnel, dominated the cricket and won comfortably. The team and the match were well organised by **Sig Malarek** of Akrotiri Tp with Dhekelia Tp showing their strong sporting prowess. Later in the afternoon, there was an opportunity for the three Tps in the Sqn to have a competition to decide the best Tp once and for all. The setting was the battlefield damage repair scenario that all Installation Technicians are proficient in from their trade training days. In a test of trade skill and composure, Episkopi Tp admirably lead by **Cpl Gaz Coy**, showed their class and emerged as Champion Tp – a fact that will not be forgotten quickly. Overall the day was a huge success and hopefully will be the first of many for years to come. Those that deserve a mention include **Sgt Dino Simpson**, **Cpl Craig Murney**, **LCpl White** and **Sig Malarek**. Without their efforts the day would not have happened.

The Royal Signals Corps Formation Parade

AKROTIRI TROOP - *by SSgt D'or*

OC **Capt Dave Watson**
SSgt **SSgt Tony D'or**

With the big change over of unit personalities and also the Cypriot holiday, the Tp has got a quiet period for a couple of weeks. The Tp is going through a manning change at the moment with a new OC, SSgt and Line Sgt all in the same month! Farewell to **Capt Paul Williams** who has done us proud as the boss of the Tp for the past 2 years. Also farewell to **SSgt Tony D'or**, after 3 years in the chair and many war stories about 259 Sig Sqn; he is leaving us to go to Henlow. Good luck to both of you and all the best for the future. Welcome to **Capt Dave Watson** who takes over as Tp OC and also **Sgt Dino Simpson** who is taking over as Line Sgt from **SSgt Steve Cooper**. The work load is expected to come thick and fast at the beginning of September as we see a vast amount of project work coming our way for Project WELCHMAN and also the arrival of some 850 soldiers in October to conduct Ex JOINT ADVENTURE.

DHEKELIA TROOP - *by SSgt(FofS) Floyd*

OC **Capt Chris Moody**
SSgt **SSgt 'Kips' Fisher**

Once again it's been a busy period for Dhekelia Tp; with the recent influx in projects the Line Techs have been working hard out of hours to avoid disruption to all users. The Tp is also working hard in preparation for the islands biggest event, the Dhekelia Dash, which will take place on 11 October 08 and hopes to be as successful as last year and raise even more money for charity.

The Tp recently took part in a 1 week Adventure Training programme along with Episkopi Tp, which involved a small taste of Diving, Parachuting and Kayaking. Unfortunately the parachuting wasn't for all when **Sig Russ Matthews**, who showed less testosterone than **Michael Barrymore** and **LCpl Ally Watt**, decided to stay on board awaiting the in-flight movie. Also **Sig Chez Rogers** decided to practice the PLF landing when he flared a little early and creamed into the ground. There have been a few personnel changes within the Tp with the departure of **Sgt Si Brewington** to begin the gruelling Foreman of Signals Course, **Cpl Matt Caddy** who left on promotion to Sgt for a 6 month stint in the Falklands, **Sig Matt Clark** who was pulled back to Episkopi Tp and **Sgt Wayne Stewart** who has now got his feet up in the AFCO, Hull. Good luck to them all!

The Troop would also like to welcome **Sgt Steve Poole** from SHAPE and IS Geek, **Cpl Neil (Taff) Barritt** from RAF Henlow, who is now loaded due to his small win on the Army Sports lottery – get the beers in! We also welcome back **LCpl Rich Danby** who has returned after 9 months away on his Class 1 course and a Falklands tour. Congratulations to **Sig Gaz McFegan** and **Nicola** on their new baby boy **Charlie** and to **Sig Gaz Evans** and **Cpl Rob (Moobs) Heap** on completing their Class 1 course in Blandford.

CENTSAAM 2008

Following on from the success at CypSAAM in April, 4 members of the unit were selected by the HQ British Forces Cyprus to represent the Island at the Army Operational Shooting Competition held at Bisley. Having made the long trip from Cyprus, they were joined by 6 other soldiers from across the island and the team set about preparing for the competition. With hardly any shooting practice at all, we were kindly allowed to join the SASC shooting team for some valuable range time. It quickly became apparent that we had a real opportunity to do well in the overall ratings if the 3 days of practice were anything to go by. The day of the competition arrived and **Lt Dusty Miller**, **Sgt Chris Sankey**, **LCpl Pops Larkins** and **LCpl Del Slowey** all set about their individual matches with purpose. By the end of the first day there had been a mixed bag of results, however **Lt Miller** looked to be in contention.

The elusive and coveted Army 100 badge was the aim of the week's shooting and by now each practice was being committed to memory and prayers were said for some Cyprus style heat waves that would have maybe given us an advantage. Unfortunately for the team the weather that ensued was a complete contrast to what we are used to. Bearing in mind that Cyprus is experiencing a water shortage - it hasn't rained since April – and the only winds are sea breezes, the torrential rain experienced on Day 2 was a nightmare. It did however sharpen the mind and called for a high level of marksmanship procedures.

Overall, of the matches fired by the 4 members of the team, there were some pretty high scores, however we soon found out that just one poor score could effectively end your hopes of that badge. Once all matches are fired the top 100 are selected to fire match 8, which then determines the final finishing position. **Lt Miller** was the only entrant from the Royal Signals element of the 4 Cyprus based firers who made the final. He eventually finished 62nd and was pipped by an Infantry officer to the top junior officer score. He was picked however to represent the Army Developmental squad the following day in a match against all of the international teams as well as teams from all of the UK Armed Services. A great personal success, one which has hopefully been noticed by the traditional shooting teams from within the Royal Signals. All 4 members who took part can be extremely proud of their achievements, knowing that for 2008 they are inside the top 200 marksmen in the Army. Well done.

EPISKOPI TROOP – *by LCpl Hamilton*

OC **Lt Dusty Miller**
SSgt **SSgt Ian Farrow**

The workflow for Episkopi Tp over the last month has been steady and has mainly involved a continuous number of small Structured Cabling projects throughout camp. The removal of all old and unused cabling within Building 18 in preparation of the new Operations Centre is also currently taking place. The work has kept the Faults crew on their toes after a good few weeks of not having much work on.

With the completion of the 'JR's Family Club refurbishment, the Tp received a well earned day off work to go to the local Water Park at Fasouri. This was partly funded by the 'JR's committee as a thank you for all the out of hours work carried out on the bar by the Tp. We left camp at 0930hrs and returned at 1600hrs. Spending the majority of the day in the sun and water caused a few people to suffer from wrinkly fingers and the usual case of sunburn for **Sig 'Gwar' Billingsley**. A few 'man tests' took place while there including 'King of the Ring' on one of the inflatable slides, which didn't impress the lifeguards. The Kamikaze slide highlighted the men from the boys, or girls, as **Sgt Andrea McNeil** proved when after climbing the 8 flights of stairs to get to the start of the ride, she proceeded to take one look over the edge and freeze. Her 'walk of shame' back down the stairs was hardly noticed by the remainder of the Tp! This came only a week after **Sgt McNeil** jumped from a plane at 3500ft and forgetting to flare, landed gracefully on her face.

As all Tp members attended this occasion, it seemed only right to take a Tp photograph at the side of the pool. This opportunity wasn't going pass without **LCpl 'Tomo' Thompson** making his way to the front of the pack, dipping himself in the water to do his hair before tensing up just in case a Men's Health rep happened to be passing. Later that evening the Tp travelled the short journey to Paphos for a Chinese meal and a trip down bar street for some free shots of Sambuca. The drinking carried on until the early hours of the morning and a good time was had by all. However everyone didn't look quite as happy the next morning at when **SSgt Farrow** took knock on parade at 0645hrs. It was emotional.

Congratulations to **Lt Miller** who is now part of the elite 100 best shots in the Army. **LCpl Slowey** and **LCpl Larkins** who also went to Bisley. They have asked if I can refrain from mentioning their finishing positions though, as their weapons were really playing up that week! Congratulations also to **Cpl 'Dino' Simpson** who was selected for promotion and will make the short trip to Akrotiri Tp as their new Line Sergeant. Also **LCpl 'Tomo' Thompson** has also been promoted to Cpl. Well done guys.

Episkopi Tp currently has 2 members on courses at Blandford. **Cpl Yeit Ming Fu** or **'Andy'** as he prefers to be known is undertaking his Installation Tech Class One upgrade and **Sig Tannock** is completing the Bowman Advanced Signal Course. The Tp has sadly said farewell to 3 members, **Sig 'Vortex' Kerr** left island for Blandford to commence his re-trade, while **Sgt Andrea McNeil** will also be in Blandford enjoying the FofS course. Finally **Sig Dylan Randall** has been posted to Catterick. Good luck to all for the future

Welcome to **SSgt(FofS) Dave Wood** who has just been posted into the Tp and welcome back to **Sig Overs** who is just back from a well deserved 4 months off on sick leave after having half his stomach removed. It is sad that he will only be able to eat half the pies he used to!

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Dennis Weir MBE**
PSAWO **WO1 John Farrell**

OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS

The first half of 2008 has been another busy time for all in JSSU(V) but particularly for those 7 unit members who have been deployed on, or in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. **CPO Spider Kelly** has completed more than a continuous year in Afghanistan, where he has played a vital role in Force Protection measures.

WO1(YoS(EW)) Jock Robertson and **WO1 (YoS(EW)) Squirrel Jordan** have done alternate 4 month tours with the US Forces in Afghanistan, whilst **WO1 Ted Roberts** and **WO2 Steve Miller** have done similar tours in Baghdad. **WO2 Bob Wright** has completed 2 tours as 'our man' in the Basra Bde and, last but not least, **Maj Geoff Williams** has now served almost a year on the J2 staff at PJHQ.

These pages are not an appropriate place to describe the precise contribution these JSSU(V) personnel have made but our reputation within the organisation we support, has never been higher and we are all both grateful to and proud of our deployed colleagues.

CHARITY FUNDRAISING

It will come as no surprise to many *Wire* readers to discover that there exists a strong relationship between JSSU(V) and the 'Y Services' Branch of the Royal British Legion. It is logical that our fundraising efforts tend to be focussed on the Poppy Appeal with the 'schwerpunkt' being the annual Lincoln 10km charity road run.

A total of 10 unit members took part in this year's race. As our picture shows, some chose to keep the TA in the public eye by running in boots and combats, whilst others chose the softer option of trainers and sports kit. No matter what the form of dress, a total of over £700 pounds was raised through a combination of individual sponsorship and a roadside bucket collection.

Other fundraising initiatives, such as quiz nights and charity auctions raised a further £600 pounds and we were delighted to be able to send **WO2 John Haggerty** to the RBL annual conference to present our cheque in person to the chairman

The team before the run

Capt Nigel Watton and WO1 Marina Neighbour supervising the bucket carriers

BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY

On 10 July **Her Majesty The Queen** hosted a Garden Party at Bucking Palace to mark the 100th Anniversary of the TA. TA personnel were invited to bid for tickets for themselves and their civilian employers and of course their spouses. Our lucky candidate was **WO2(YoS (EW)) Brian Armstrong,** who in civilian life works for TQ Training Group. **Brian** and his wife **Sandra** were accompanied to the palace by his managing director, **Jane Quarmby** and her husband, **Garry**. **Brian's** 'after action report' assures us that his group had an absolutely splendid day and that his employer was very generous in her reciprocal hospitality.

ALPHA & ROMEO TROOP FORCE DEVELOPMENT (FD) WEEKEND

A and R Tps decided to combine their resources to run a joint FD weekend in the Peak District in July. **Capt Steve Rofe** sorted out the necessary paperwork and a total of 18 personnel arrived at High Ash Farm suitably prepared for what was forecast to be a very wet weekend. The challenging activities were organised for us by Peak Pursuits and the programme for the first day involved a trek across the moors, followed by canoeing in the afternoon. Our picture below is the irrefutable proof that this relatively mature tri-service group of communications specialists actually made it to the top of Shutinslow.

At the summit of Shutinslow

It would be unlike JSSU(V) to neglect the social side of TA life, so the very successful Saturday evening time table included an excellent lasagne, courtesy of High Ash Farm, followed by a mini-bus ride to sample one or two of Derbyshire's finest ales. Sunday morning was spent in the Manifold Valley, where mountain biking to Thor's cave was on the agenda. The continued downpour ensured that all participants were easily identified by the streak of mud up their jackets and all were relieved not to have to wash down the bikes at the end of a thoroughly enjoyable weekend's training at High Ash Farm.

LIMA TROOP FORCE DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND

This year's Lima Tp FD weekend was spent at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Twelve members of Lima Tp, along with **Maj Graham Barber** of the HQ staff, undertook the long journey to Scotland on 2 August. Showing great leadership, the Tp Comd, **Capt Chris Lowish,** volunteered to be the designated driver and the whole group arrived safely in Edinburgh, where they met up with our native JSSU(V) Jock, **WO1(YoS(EW)) Andy Marshall**. After a hearty Chinese meal, the group headed out along the Royal Mile for the Castle and the 2230hrs late show. Fittingly the theme for this year's tattoo was a celebration of 100 years of the Territorial Army and a fine musical and marching display eventually culminated in the musicians spelling out 'TA 100' on the parade ground. The following morning we returned to the castle for a guided tour, taking in the Royal Scots and the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards regimental museums. . Finally it was time to head back south of the border and try to get everyone home in good time to prepare for work the following day. A great but tiring time was had by all and a special mention must go to **WO1 Marina Neighbour** who organised the weekend.

A wet and bedraggled group at the gates of Edinburgh Castle

THE FUTURE

September 2008 will see one group of unit personnel deploy to Cyprus on Ex HERMES VENTURE at Ayos Nikolayos while a second group will spend 2 weeks in Fredericia, Denmark on a major NATO EW Staff exercise. With the unit annual formal dinner scheduled for October, the latter part of the year promises to be even busier than the first 8 months.

1st NATO SIGNAL BATTALION

CO **Lt Col DJM Bizley**
RSM **CWO G Power R CANADIAN SIGNALS**

Life continues to be extremely interesting and varied at 1 NATO Sig Bn, with the ongoing commitment to supporting ISAF, deploying training and project teams to Southern Afghanistan, plus an even more hectic schedule of NATO training and mission preparation exercises than usual. At the time of submission our Danish Deployable Communications Module (DCM) is deploying to relieve the German DCM B, taking over the responsibility of providing NATO CIS to both Regional Command (East) (RC(E)) and Regional Command (South) (RC(S)). A 9 man SATCOM Training Team has just returned from ISAF, where they were responsible for converting TACSAT nets over to the new NATO DAMA system as well as carrying out 'train the trainer' courses for personnel from all commands and nationalities. Concurrently, German DCM D is about to deploy to Grafenwoehr in Germany on the latest RC(S) pre-deployment training exercise, assisting in the operational preparation of the Dutch-led formation which will assume command of RC(S) later this year. And just to keep the S3 team busy, German DCM C is shortly to deploy to Turkey in support of NATO's EAEW E3-A AWACs component. With two thirds of the Bn's deployable capability committed to operations and exercises it has been a far from quiet summer leave period. And more, OC 628 Sig Tp (GBR DCM A) has turned over with **Capt Gareth Oosterveen** taking the reins from **Capt Ali Biggs**. Welcome to **Gareth** and **Catherine** and good luck and best wishes to **Ali** and **Tree** in RAF Henlow. Keep smiling **Ali**!

PSR 057 INSTALLATION TEAM - *by SSgt Andy Gleadall*

Back in July 2007 it was recognised that the current NATO network within Kandahar Airfield (KAF) was struggling to meet the operational CIS requirements and would therefore need to be replaced with a new system. After much planning and procurement, the Bn received the go ahead in March 2008 to commence with Phase 1 of the installation. This would be the installation and activation of a high speed Synchronous Data Hierarchy (SDH) ring, routed through KAF via distribution nodes. The work utilised a large amount of COTS equipment and was to be carried out in conjunction with a US civilian contractor. The Bn deployed an initial team of 13 personnel; 5 Brits, 3 Germans, 2 Canadian, 2 Belgians and one Dutch, led by **WO2(FofS) Kevin Waring** of 628 Sig Tp.

The team sample the US version of 'horror bags' on the C-17 en route to ISAF

Arriving for the flight from Ramstein, all was going well until the airhead decided that we had too much equipment. After a spot of plea bargaining by our logistics section, we were finally allowed on the aircraft to begin our tour of the world en route to KAF, arriving 2 days after the journey began. Accommodation was NATO-procured cabins, much better then the transit tents last year, and there were a couple of days to square administration away before the real work began. **SSgt Andy Gleadall** headed up a four man COM/BME installation team including **Sgt Greg James** Canadian AF along with **Cpls Kevin Smith**, 628 Sig Troop and **Kieran Roberts** RAF. It was the project team's job to install all the Main Distribution Nodes (MDN) and Access Distribution Nodes (ADN), 7 in total, providing NATO voice and data circuits throughout the airfield. This initially included lots of humping and dumping, including all the 19 inch racks that were required to complete the task. This was slow going at first due to the sheer weight of the equipments and the lack of proper transport to do the job. This was followed by the connecting of all the nodes via a fibre ring installed within KAF, working in coordination with the civilian engineers. The IS side of life was headed up by **Cpl Tim Sluman**, who was focused on installing a management network within the offices and preparing all the new work stations ready to be rolled out when the project was nearing finalisation. Once this task was completed, he and his team were amalgamated into the COM/BME hump and dump squad! At this stage the team was joined by **Capt Tom Kelly**, to take on the HQ LO role and allow **WO2(FofS) Waring** to focus on the installation and contractor work and the Bn Foreman, **SSgt(FofS) Pat Paterson**, who was there to gain knowledge and experience ahead of him taking on Phase 2 of the installation. Once the ring was tested and fully implemented some of the existing circuits were cut across to the new network, to ease the strain on the increasingly overstretched MP4 network that has limited KAF for nearly 2 years. However with the installation work drying up, due to some contractual issues between NATO and the civilian contractor, it was decreed that a large slice of the team should return to Bn due as the resolution was some way off. Left behind were **Capt Kelly**, **WO2(FofS) Waring**, **SSgt Gleadall** and **Sgt James**.

The remaining members now concentrated on completing all the on the job training and 'as built' documentation for the resident German DCM, prior to a full hand over enabling them to monitor and maintain the network under the control of SHAPE. It certainly was not all work though; we managed a weekly football match against the German DCM, more often than not coming out on top in very competitive clashes. We also had time to improve our shooting skills, utilising some of the range facilities on KAF with 3 days of weapons training. This included the indoor American range, an event which was arranged by **Cpl Tim Sluman** and was greatly enjoyed by all.

Cpl Sluman with the IS Engr's personal weapon of choice

Once the training and handover was complete, the team began their long journey home. With 3 nights in KIA and an overnight stop in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), where we were shown great hospitality by the French Air Force, we eventually touched down in Brussels 6 days after departing KAF. You will not find many complaints about the Tristar service when compared to NATO air routes! The team are now on standby awaiting redeployment for Phase 2, to take place later in 2008.

NIJMEGEN MARCHES JULY 2008
- by Hfw (OR-8) Oliver Leiser and LCpl Chris MacDonald

At the end of February, 1 NATO Sig Bn was given the opportunity to enter a team in the 92nd "De 4 DAAGSE International Four Days Marches" to be held in Nijmegen, Holland. The request went out for volunteers, resulting in 33 members from Bn HQ, Maintenance & Support Coy and our Danish, German and Great Britain DCMs putting their names forward. Once this squad was gathered, selection and training could begin. Due to the geographical spread of the Bn, each sub-unit conducted their own local training. In Maastricht, training was conducted in the area of Brunssum and Sittard while our DCMs conducted their training in close proximity to their support bases at Elmpt Station, Wesel (Germany) and Haderslev (Denmark). Each week members marched 80km and covered a total of 800km as a team. This was difficult to accomplish as the Bn had ongoing commitments to operations and exercises but recognition must go to those not in the squad who stepped in and filled the gaps to allow team members to complete their marching training.

Cpl Peters and Cpl Robinson with French and German colleagues training at Eban Emael

The Team OIC, **Hfw (OR-8) Oliver Leiser**, then invited all remaining team members to attend a selection week in Maastricht. This selection week went well with the focus being on team cohesion and marching in formation. Although the team started with 33 members, it was eventually whittled down to 13. The team was also given a one-day "foot clinic" and medical briefing sponsored by the Canadian Medical Clinic which proved to be extremely informative and helpful. The final team composition was 1 French, 7 German and 5 Royal Signals soldiers. The British contingent was made up of **Cpls Andy Peters**, **Jim Robinson** and **Katie Savage**, **LCpl Chris MacDonald** and **Sig Claire Stafford**. On 14 July the team travelled to Nijmegen. We were based in Heumensoord Nature Reserve which is located near Nijmegen. Everyday between 0200 – 0300hrs we were woken by the sound of sirens. At 0400 – 0500hrs we were formed up near the start line. Once the marching commenced we were joined by our civilian counterparts at the 4km point, where it became much more difficult to keep in formation and maintain a constant speed.

Sig Stafford and Cpl Savage give the thumbs up on the Nijmegen March

The rules state that each team member is to carry a minimum weight of 10 kg; however the team carried approximately 15 kg due to food and water requirements. At each major rest point we were invited into the British and Canadian Contingent sectors, where we were greeted with amazing support that included medical care, hot food and beverages. The distance each day was 40 km, but the military were required to march approximately 6 km extra to return to camp.

We were to complete the march prior to 1700hrs each day in order that the Team OIC could attend briefings and secure permission to attend the following days march. During this time the team had time to shower and recover while **HBm (OR-8) Kremp-Jendras** and **HG (OR-3) Schuhknecht** attended to the teams' feet and backs, even though they were both in serious pain themselves. The task of carrying the Bn flag throughout the 4 days of marching went to **LCpl Chris MacDonald** and on the final day, he marched in the Flag Parade through the centre of Nijmegen.

LCpl MacDonald carrying the flag at the head of the line as they cross the Rhine

Everyday thousands of spectators lined the streets in all the villages along the route. These included many families with children who had prepared flowers, sweets and beverages for all marchers. The team took great pleasure in greeting the crowds and the reception was nothing short of amazing. Along the way there were also many tents and buildings with live music and DJs, which was great for keeping up morale.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a resounding "Thank You" to NCSA HQ for sponsoring our team, our Bn Comd for his guidance and allowing us the time to train and participate, our individual National Delegations for their outstanding support and finally our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Airwomen who "took up the slack" for us while we attended this worthwhile event.

Overall, this was an opportunity of a lifetime for everyone who participated and completed the 4 days of this demanding march. One can only hope that the Bn will have the opportunity to enter a team in the 93rd "De 4 DAAGSE International Four Days Marches".

628 SIGNAL TROOP

OC **Capt GMT Oosterveen**

MEDALS PARADE AND OC'S HANDOVER

On 28 July, 628 Sig Tp were presented with their much deserved medals for their deployment to Afghanistan from October 2007 to January 2008. For many members of the Tp it was their second deployment within the space of a year and for a select lucky few, their third tour in the space of 2 years. **Lt Col Bizley**, CO 1 NATO Sig Bn, presented the medals and thanked all the members of the Tp for their efforts on operations and those left behind for looking after the day to day running of the Tp.

Lt Col Bizley, CO 1 NATO Sig Bn, presenting Afhgan medals

The CO also had the opportunity to present **LCpl Keers** and **LCpl Vaughan** with their Modern Apprenticeship certificates. Along with the presentations we also witnessed the handover of command from **Capt AOH Biggs** to **Capt GMT Oosterveen**. **Capt Biggs** has been the OC 628 Tp for the last 2 years and will be leaving us for the more subdued RAF Henlow. We would like to wish him and his wife **Tree** the best of luck for the future.

Capt Biggs hands over to Capt Oosterveen on 28 July 2008

EXERCISE CASTLE FIELD - *by Sig Stu Hames*

Early morning on 21 July, 628 Sig Tp deployed to Elmpt Airfield to conduct Ex CASTLE FIELD; a 4 day deployment which would demonstrate the primary roles that 628 Tp performs when supporting Allied NATO forces throughout the globe on operational tours. The main aim of the exercise under the command of **Sgt 'Mac' McLachlan** was to arrive in location and within 6 hours have the Communications Gateway Shelter (CGS) and two Transportable Satellite Ground Terminals (TSGTs) set up. This was conducted in slow time to allow the less experienced members of the Tp to gain a better understanding of how the Complex comes together.

The jigsaw puzzle begins

Once Phase 1 had been completed, the Tp were divided into day and night shift and Phase 2 commenced. This involved establishing a link to our anchor station in Verona, Italy, which proved slightly more difficult than previously anticipated, due to unforeseen errors and fat fingers.

After much deliberation and sound engineering, the creases were ironed out and the link was established. The final 2 days enabled the crews of the various detachments to get a feel for working on other detachments, which enhanced their overall understanding of the CGS, and proved to be beneficial to all.

EXERCISE COBALT BACKSTOP - *by Cpl Richie Berry*

628 Sig Tp were given a new lease of life this year during a break from operational commitments, in the form of 10 days Adventurous Training in Bavaria. The training was organised by **Cpl Bri Clarke** and was to consist of a Summer Mountain Proficiency (SMP) course, led by **Capt Tom Kelly** and **Cpl Si Whelan**. This enabled the boys and girls to experience life on the mountains for 5 days. Alongside the SMP course, **LCpl 'Cl' Hosty** led a team of instructors conducting a Kayaking Foundation Course – aka 'KFC'. Lo and behold, all the usual wise cracks came out but the most memorable part of the KFC was when **Sig Das Stone** managed to simply lean against a bar rail and pull it on to his lap (not very genius-like). The very nice and polite barman's only comment was, "You need to stop eating pies, mate" (extremely genius-like). As the KFC group decided that they were the fun group, they became pirates and what great pirates they made. The poor tourist sailing ship at Alpsee Lake, never knew what hit them, when we boarded their vessel brandishing our plastic swords. The 'non-Spartan' members of the SMP group decided that SMP was 'Camp no-fun'. For those not involved in the SMP and KFC courses, a separate Rock Climbing Activity was organised – it would not be adventure training without it. However this was a different type of climbing than is usual in the Bavarian Alps. Due to the massive amount of rain we took over the 10 days, the remaining group decided to become masters of the indoor play ground or climbing wall, as those instructor-type people like to call it. The key moment during this must have been when **Sig Stu Hames** declared his massive fear of heights, to which the comment: "Adventure Training is to push you out of your comfort zone" came from **Cpl Clarke** and **Capt Kelly**. To achieve this he was sent to the top of the highest wall (nice one guys). The poor guy must have held on to that rope for half an hour after his feet hit the ground.

LATE NEWS

38th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) SHEFFIELD

CO **Lt Col SJ Baker TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) AJ Wyatt**

TA100

This year between 1 April and Remembrance Sunday, 9 November, a number of major events are being held to celebrate TA100. At the first major national event, a National Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Thursday 15 May, the Regt was represented by the CO, **Lt Col Steve Baker TD** and his wife **Cate**. The service was followed by a march through the City of London by TA units based in London and a lunch reception at the Guildhall hosted by the Lord Mayor of London and the City of London Corporation.

The Regt was also represented at the TA100 National Pageant on Saturday 21 June. The Pageant which was held on Horse Guards in London celebrated 100 years of service by the TA in the presence of **HRH The Prince of Wales, HRH The Duchess of Cornwall** and **HRH The Earl of Wessex**. One thousand Territorials took part in the event in front of a 6,000-strong audience which included the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, **The Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth**, the Chief of the General Staff, **Gen Sir Richard Dannatt**, serving Territorial soldiers, veterans, families, friends and employers The dramatic and colourful pageant re-enacted the history of the Territorials and highlighted pivotal moments in its history. Among the Regt's members who attended the Pageant was **WO1(RSM) Andy Wyatt**, who also represented the Regt at a reception hosted by **HRH The Prince of Wales** at Clarence House after the Pageant.

The Regt also promoted and supported TA Uniform to Work Day on Wednesday 16 July when many members of the Regt wore their CS 95 to their civilian jobs. This successful day raised the profile of the TA with the general public and work colleagues by making them more aware of the TA, its work and contribution to the British military in the public eye as a force 'among us' in society. It also raised awareness that Territorials worked in a normal day job during the week but at the weekends they are an effective part of the British Army, doing a good job and providing many personnel for operational tours in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

ROYAL SALUTE AND TRAIN NAMING CEREMONY, YORK

On Saturday 14 June, 38 Sig Regt's 2IC, **Maj Kevan Flanagan TD**, ROSO, **Capt David Edmunds TD,** along with **Sig Richard Hanstock** and **Sig Sarah Jordan** represented the Regt at the major event held by 15 (NE) Bde in Yorkshire to mark TA100. The day commenced with a Royal Salute fired by Leeds University's Officer Training Corps in the Museum Gardens, York in the presence of **HRH The Duke of York** to celebrate **HM The Queen's** official birthday. This was followed by a reception and Train Naming Ceremony within the National Railway Museum,

York during which a Type 5 diesel locomotive was named "The Territorial Army Centenary". At both events, **HRH The Duke of York** went out of his way to speak to almost all of the Territorials present, both serving and retired, and to their families and employers.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY, BUCKINGHAM PALACE

As one of the major events to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the TA, originally know as the Territorial Force, a Royal Garden Party was held at Buckingham Palace on Thursday 10 July. Unlike the torrential downpour of the previous day, the rain held off as a total of 53 members of 38 Sig Regt, their families and their employers attended. The Garden Party was hosted by **HRH The Princess Royal**, Colonel in Chief Royal Corps of Signals; her husband, **VAdm Timothy Laurence**, and **HRH The Earl of Wessex**, who wore the uniform of Hon Col Royal Wessex Yeomanry. There were Royal Escorts from The Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard and the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers of the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) in ceremonial uniforms. The officers and soldiers, in a variety of colourful uniforms from the numerous regiments represented, as well as their family members and employers in civilian clothes and some 'Chelsea Pensioners' shared an esprit de corps, pride and joy in celebrating the centenary of the TA. Among the musicians performing during the Garden Party was the Territorial manned Royal Signals (Northern) Band. They provided an excellent and varied programme of music throughout the afternoon and are to be congratulated on their excellent standard of musicianship.

64 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC	**Maj A J Powell**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) T Grant**

TARA CUP - *by 2Lt Rob Agar*

Much is made of the TARA Cup within 38 Sig Regt. It is an annual Inter-Sqn competition organised and run by the RSM. It always has considerable training value, provides points towards the Champion Sqn Competition and allows the winning Sqn to hold bragging rights over the remainder of the Regt for a year. Most of all, however, the TARA Cup really does single out the best Sqn in the Regt, This, of course, is 64 Sig Sqn. This year's competition was held on Swynnerton Training Area in Staffordshire over the weekend 5/6 July. The weekend started well with most of 64 Sig Sqn's key members attending. Although heavily represented by Nottingham Tp's usual faces there were also some of the best that Sheffield has to offer.

As we settled in for a pretty terrible night's sleep in an old concrete bunker, we were all confident of our ability to compete against the other Sqns in every event that the competition could throw at us. Without our OC, **Maj Andy Powell**, who was at Staff College learning how to conquer the world, I became team captain and undertook the slightly daunting task of team selection. The briefing on Friday night had been simple: Split your team in two for the following morning and parade at 2 locations, one half at the hard standing across from the camp for a drill competition, inspection and 'special' surprise while the other half was to parade nearby to take part in an orders and assault scenario. Saturday started well. The combat section, consisting of the hardened and bloodthirsty half of the team, set off for the scenario. After pl comd's orders the prep for battle began, as did the rain but we weren't going to be deterred, especially with **SSgt Dave Hineson** overseeing the admin side of things. After a little kick in the pants to speed things up and a brief O Group, we advanced to contact.

Unsurprisingly, the enemy had set up shop in exactly the location we expected them to but we managed to maintain the element of surprise thanks to a cunning left flanking with bags of smoke deception and it seemed to work if the look on **Sgt Ray Boulton's** face was anything to go by. Clearly he wasn't expecting the slightly psychotic appearance of **Cpl Jim Fowler** at his rear emptying an entire magazine into him on full auto. Job done and top marks for 64's assault scenario team, but how was the other group faring?

Luckily **SSgt Kevin Bedford** was there to marshal the troops and the guys were switched-on enough to have good-looking kit. The 'surprise' was a combat simulator which the drill team attempted with gusto, again getting excellent marks for the Sqn with their skill at arms. The afternoon was an entirely different prospect. The entire team would have to march from one tactical command task to another. A different junior soldier would be given command of each the task and would have to be briefed, back brief and control the whole thing. No pressure then for the uber-siggies of 64 who all stepped up to the mark admirably, despite **Cpl Jim Fowler** gesticulating wildly during his brief and adopting some crazy sign language before completely forgetting what he had been told. Special mention here should go to **LCpl Jez Clarke** and **Sig Alex Ratcliffe** who both explained, controlled and supported their team excellently. The future of the Sqn is bright with these guys around. Sunday morning dawned and once again we were in 2 teams, one shooting and the other undertaking a forced march around the area carrying burdens. The shooting wasn't great but the burden crew, including **Sig Alex Radcliffe** and no less that 4 PTIs, hammered themselves through the tasks only to find that the assault course awaited them at the finish line! We could taste victory by this point, so the final few minutes of walls and A-frames were no problem for the sweaty lads and lass (the unstoppable **Sgt Victoria Nevill**) of the 'Phys Team'.

Members of 64 Sig Sqn's winning TARA Cup team

No sooner had we dragged ourselves across the finish line than we were standing on parade waiting for the final result. The RSM, **WO1 Andy Wyatt**, wasn't giving anything away prior to the announcement. Then it came: Joint 3rd place to Support Sqn and 46 Sig Sqn, 2nd place to.....93 Sig Sqn! Amid scenes of resembling a riot, 64 Sig Sqn were once again crowned the rightful champions of the Regt, and winners of the TARA Cup. Special mention must go to every member of the team. Everybody had a serious part to play on the many stands and activities and 64 truly proved that we are the best the Regt has to offer. The War of the Roses against the boys from 93 Sig Sqn (top competitors I must add) is over for another 12 months. Now for next year.....

RECRUIT PASSING-OUT PARADE – 5 APRIL 2008

On a blustery but bright Saturday morning OC, **Maj Andy Powell**, and PSAO, **Capt Les Jordan BEM**, arrived at the Army Training Regiment , Winchester to watch the Passing-Out Parade at the end of an intensive 2 week Phase 1C Course. Having travelled down late the night before and been caught out by the closure of all roads around Silverstone for the British Grand Prix, it was with relief that we found the Training Regiment with little difficulty, due in part to the use of SatNav. On arrival, and wearing our best Service Dress with Medals, we were shown to the main hall where **Sig Sarah Jordan** (no relation to **Capt Jordan**) was

involved in showing the spectators and guests what had been achieved during their 2-week course. She was also preparing herself for the final part of her recruit training, the Passing-Out Parade marking the successful completion of her Phase 1 recruit training, and the award of Trained Soldier status. This will be followed by Phase 2 Trade training within the Regt which will culminate in a Trade Camp.

Having visited all of the stands and displays there was ample opportunity to speak to the soldiers and learn of their experiences whilst attending the course. Their enthusiasm for what they had achieved during their training was clearly evident. It was interesting to note that 9 of the 34 recruits were cap-badged Royal Signals and all were looking forward to returning to their Regts following the completion of their Phase 1 training.

Having spent time with the soldiers, we were taken outside to watch the Passing-Out parade. It was a very proud moment for **Sig Sarah Jordan** and the visit provided an excellent opportunity for us to look at what the Army Training Regiments are able to do for the Territorials.

93 (EAST LANCASHIRE) SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS)

OC	**Maj N P Reid**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) S B Hopkinson**

LORD LIEUTENANT'S CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION

93 Sig Sqn was privileged to host this year's ceremony at The Barracks at Canterbury Street, Blackburn to mark the presentation of Lord Lieutenant's Certificates to Territorial members of Lancashire units. Also included were members of Lancashire ACF who were receiving similar awards.

The event was organised by the North West & Isle of Man Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) and amongst the recipients was **Cpl Paul Snelson**, who has been a member of 93 Sig Sqn for some 30 years. His exemplary Territorial service along with his many charitable ventures were formally recognised as he received his Lord Lieutenant's Certificate from the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, **Col The Rt Hon The Lord Shuttleworth** who was accompanied by his wife **Lady Shuttleworth**. Also attending was the Chief Executive of North West & Isle of Man RFCA, **Col GJO Wells-Cole OBE** and **Maj Neil Reid**, OC 93 Sig Sqn (V).

Cpl Paul Snelson with the Lord Lieutenant, Ms Daveron and Maj Neil Reid

SPORT

LASER 5000 NATIONALS AT WESTON SAILING CLUB 21 – 22 JUNE 2008

The Laser 5000 is the forerunner of most of the modern day skiffs that can be seen on the UK sailing scene, including the 49er and RS 800. Its weight equalisation system make it accessible to crews across the range of weight and size and the huge power generated by over 50m² of sail area can give the ride of a lifetime. The challenges this boat presents and the rewards of sailing it well are immense. With these characteristics in mind, 10 intrepid crews/boats, including 'Army' sailed by **Capt (Tfc) Taff Owens** and **WO2(YofS) Andy Mount** gathered at Weston Sailing Club near Southampton on Friday 10 June 2008 for the Laser 5000 National Championships, which were being run concurrently with a Skiff Open Event by the Club.

This is a noteworthy increase in numbers from the previous 3 years when less than 6 boats were being entered. This is a reflection on the enormous work that the Class Chairman and his committee have put into promoting the class and the incredibly cheap prices of the boats on the second hand market currently. Those who attended were also armed with the knowledge passed onto them from the RYA Top Mark Weekend at Grafham in April run by **Peter Barton**, a past Laser 5000 sailor and current RS 800 Nationals and Series Champion. On Saturday the fleet were welcomed by the Commodore of Weston Sailing Club and the briefing was given by the Race Officer. The first race started at the second attempt just after mid day in a fresh force 4 to 5 after a general recall. The Race Officer decided that a black flag was required which kept most people away from the line at the start.

Warm Up

From the offset it was obvious that the series of races would be headed up by one of 3 boats – **Thomas Sauvel** in GBR 5231, **John Tinnams** in GBR 5302 or **Mark Rushton** in GBR 5249. **Thomas** got away well for the first race after a particularly confrontational start with the racks of the boat being caught up with

those of an RS 800 and lots of strange language being bandied about! He soon showed a great ability to get his boat to travel fast upwind with a great show of how a 5000 should be sailed in such windy conditions. On the other hand, 'Army' (GBR 5233) was doing well until one particularly hairy gybe on the second downwind leg of the first race, where the requirement to ensure that the main sheet is released coming out of the manoeuvre was not observed! After about 5 minutes of swallowing some of Southampton Water's finest salted water and swearing, particularly from **WO2(YofS) Andy Mount** (should he say that sort of thing to a Capt?), the boat was upright and back in the fray! However, the leading 3 boats were nothing more than specks in the distance.

After the first race, the 'Army' team were in the groove and the second race was particularly hair raising but no dent could be made in the lead set by the first 3 boats. **John Tinnams** in GBR 5302 made a particularly fine start and led the way throughout the race with **Thomas** coming second and once again **Mark Rushton** getting 3rd. With no sign of the wind letting up, the fleet lined up for the final race of the day. After 2 races already sailed in the upper end of a force 4, arms and legs were beginning to feel the effects of all the huge power of the Laser 5000! Once again, **Thomas** got away like a bullet and never looked back after a short sharp battle with **Mark Rushton** during the first lap. **John Tinnams** lost the pace slightly and had to settle for a 3rd place in this race. 'Army' once again sailed a consistent but slightly slower race than the first 3 and had to settle for 4th place as the first day came to and end.

Sunday loomed large, but, the wind loomed larger with gusts of over force 7 and the Race Officer made the decision to cancel the days racing, which did not stop a couple of 12 foot skiffs and a Cherup from going out on the water to give an excellent display of sailing in some extreme conditions! The result of the Race Officers decision meant that the final places of the Saturday were the final results for the Laser 5000 Nationals. All in all, the event was a success with 10 boats from the fleet on the water. Well done to all of those that made the effort to attend the event in what were some testing conditions. The fleet is now in the ascendancy and with luck perhaps over a dozen boats will enter the next Open event at Hayling Island on 27/28 September prior to the Inland Championships in October.

Getting sorted...

Final results were:

Posn	Sail No	Helm	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Total Points
1	5231	Thomas Sauvel	1	2	1	4pts
2	5302	John Tinnams	2	1	3	6pts
3	5249	Mark Rushton	3	3	2	8pts
4	5233	Taff Owens	5	4	4	13pts
5	5069	Olly Love	7	5	5	17pts
6	5008	Crawford Dave	6	6	6	18pts
7	5301	Niall Ferguson	4	11	7	22pts
8	5189	Adam Rutter	9	11	11	31pts
9	5269	Paul Burns	DNF			
9	5134	John Downing	DNF			

ALPINE CHALLENGE

With 2 teams selected from the Installation Services Team based at RAF Henlow, we were ready to begin the task of preparing for the monster event that is called the "Alpine Challenge". The Teams themselves where a mixture of both Army and RAF personnel, which in itself should have proved interesting but in the end this made no difference as the teams worked well together! The age range within the teams was from 19 – 35 years old with all different fitness abilities, from strong runners to strong hill walkers leaving a vast difference in between. The teams began a small training session in Capel Curig (North Wales) on Friday 13th; luckily for us this notorious date didn't bring any bad luck our way.

The format of the next few days was simple enough; get some miles under our belts and let our feet know exactly what they were in for in the coming weeks. The team for this part of the task was **SSgt 'Elvis' Hemstead**, **SSgt Gav Rickard**, **Sgt John Crutchley**, **LCpl Stevo Stephenson**, **SAC Gaz Ellis**, **SAC 'Drillbit' Hudson**, **SAC Ben Gray** and **SAC Matt Brock**. With the training completed in Wales, we made our way back to RAF Henlow, to get our equipment sorted out for the main event. With just under 2 days to go, the final preparation was complete; the bikes were loaded on the vehicles and final kit checks where done so everyone was happy. At this point there was a change in the team, **Sgt John Crutchley** would be staying and **Cpl Steve Gardner** would be joining us; this was no surprise as this was the plan from the beginning. Little did we know when we set off at 0500hrs on Thursday that the drive to Wertach in Bavaria would be such a long and tiring journey! Nonetheless we made it to Wertach after a night's stop in Ramstein. On arrival, the teams were given the brief for the main event and the weather forecast – what joy, it was going be hot, hot, hot! The 2 teams we entered into the event were Henlow Team A – **SSgt Hemstead**, **SAC Brock** and **SAC Hudson** and Henlow Team B – **SSgt Rickard**, **LCpl Stephenson** and **SAC Gray**.

Day 1 of the Alpine Challenge comprised 10 Check Points (CPs) within 12 hours covering approximately 30 – 35km with 3000 – 4000m of ascent. Check points had to be visited in numerical order. We started early with breakfast at 0500hrs and a kit inspection at 0545hrs to make sure we carried the mandatory equipment. Once we were called forward, we had to mark the maps and the day started well with both teams getting off to a relatively good start to what was going to be a long day. The map reading between CPs did not prove to be too difficult. **Drillbit** started to have problems with his feet from about CP 4 but managed to find the will-power to continue. Both teams crossed paths throughout the day but by CP 9, when we bumped into each other we weren't sure that **Drillbit** would finish the day, as the route between CPs 8 and 9 was the hardest of the day's events with a peak of 1738m. However, he surprised everyone by finishing the day and in a respectable 10hrs 30mins. At the end of Day 1, the Henlow teams were only split by 5 mins, which meant everything rested on Day 2.

Day 2 consisted of 10 CPs. CP 4 was a canoeing event which wasn't too taxing and CP 8 was mountain biking. These were the only two CPs that teams had to visit, the other 8 were simply to decide how we finished against the other 26 teams in the Challenge. With an 8 hr time limit and covering no less than 20km with a minimum of 1500m of ascent, our teams decided on different routes and so would only see each other once in the day as we passed. The mountain bike route proved hard as both teams pushed their bikes up the hills and the down hill section was no breeze either; the loose gravel on the route made high speed down the hills a daunting prospect. Fortunately, both our teams made it through this section without incident. Some teams weren't so lucky. The most serious of the incidents involved an individual going to hospital with a broken collar bone and some nasty grazes. By the end of the day both teams came in with time to spare. Team A visited 8 CPs and Team B visited 9. Over the 2 days our admin crew **Cpl Gardner** and **SAC Ellis** had an easier time; they ran us to the start point and back to the accommodation at the end of the day, if we needed it. On Day 2 they met us at the CPs with the bikes and the canoes. They also proved handy as a camera crew, as individuals wanted pictures of the events; although there were limited periods when they could actually take photos. After all the teams had completed the competition it was time for the official prize giving. All participants had already received a T Shirt and a medal but now was the time for the Team prizes. Neither Team finished in a high enough position to receive an award but everyone was happy to have simply taken part and complete the event as there were a lot of individuals who were unable to. In our classification Henlow Team B finished 7th out of 18 teams and Team A finished 8th. Everyone who took part from Henlow really enjoyed the 2 day event, despite how difficult it was.

ROYAL SIGNALS INTER-UNIT ROUNDERS TOURNAMENT 9 JULY 2008

The 3rd annual Royal Signals Inter-Unit Rounders Tournament was held at Imphal Barracks York on 9 July 2008. Despite the majority of units being extremely busy with operational deployments and other commitments a total of 6 units were represented. Last year's finalists 2 Sig Regt and 4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (204) were joined by 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt and JSSW (Digby). Due to a shortage of players, 1 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (215) and 19 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (209) joined forces to form a composite team. Therefore a 5 team "Super Group" was formed were each team playing everybody once with the top 2 teams going forward for the final. With a lucky break in the week of long showers all over Yorkshire, the sunshine brought with it some excellent competitive rounders. Following on from last year, 2 Sig Regt, the reigning champions, began with a close victory over 204 Sig Sqn followed by more emphatic victories over their remaining rivals. The highlight being an 18½: to 1½ win against the 209/215 Sqn composite team which included 8½ rounders being scored by **Sig Mandy Kidd**, the 2 Sig Regt Back Stop.

Cpl Tam Ingledew gets ready to hit a ball into space!

The 1(UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt team looking resplendent in their pink shirts were appearing in their first Corps competition and gained in experience as the day wore on and won one match against the 209/215 team. The JSSW team featuring members of the Corps, Intelligence Corps, Navy and RAF, as well as their secret weapon **SSgt Mandy Brookes** APTC, played hard and finished in 3rd place in the group stage.

The final was a repeat of last year's contest between 2 Sig Regt and 204 Sig Sqn. Despite 2 Sig Regt gaining the upper hand in the group game at the beginning of the day. A strategic change in the organisation of their fielding side saw 204 Sig Sqn restrict 2 Sig Regt to only scoring 7½, which was their lowest score of the day. With 5 balls remaining, a draw looked likely but the dismissal of **Cpl Tam Ingledew**, encouraged the remaining 3 batters, **Capt Georgie Hood**, **LCpl Toni McGonagall** and **Sig Nat Boulter** to out bat their opponents and steal home to victory 9 to 7½.

The 4 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn winning team with their trophy

The prize giving was quickly arranged by **WO1(RSM) Justin March** of 2 Sig Regt. Prior to the tournament results being announced, the officials and admin staff were all presented with sports watches. Then the top 2 individual highest scorers were awarded prizes. In 2nd place was **Capt Georgie Hood** who amassed 8½ rounders throughout the competition but she was shown a clean set of heels by **Sig Mandy Kidd** of 2 Sig Regt who managed to score a staggering 16½ rounders in 5 games.

Capt Stan Kelly present the top scorer prize to Sig Mandy Kidd of 2 Sig Regt

The runners up, 2 Sig Regt received some natty sportswear purchased by event organiser **Capt Stan Kelly** of 38 Sig Regt. The winners' trophy was then handed to **Capt Georgie Hood** of 204 Sig Sqn. Overall a great time was had by all with some fierce competition and some good old fashioned fun.

INTERNATIONAL TRIATHLON UNION WORLD AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

- by Capt Cat French

The International Triathlon Union (ITU) World Championships took place in Vancouver, Canada 6 – 8 June 2008. Having gained a place in the Great Britain Female 35 – 39 Standard Distance Team at the qualifying events in Summer 2007, I flew to Vancouver on Monday 2 June 2008. I was incredibly excited as having competed in the World Championships sprint distance in Hamburg in 2006, I knew what to expect. This year however would be a lot harder racing in the standard distance event. I arrived at the hotel Monday afternoon to meet fellow Army competitors, **Capt Caroline Graham-Brown** RE and **SSgt Mark Livesey** APTC, with whom I was staying and I tried desperately to stay awake until a decent hour to try and avoid jet lag as much as possible. Tuesday and Wednesday were all about recovering from the flight and trying to get over jet lag while recceing the course and training lightly to keep up my speed but not tire myself out. Knowing what to expect during the race gives you the advantage of knowing at what point to push in the race for the line. The recce of the swim course was extremely cold with the Pacific water temperature only being about 12° - 13° C. In fact the weather in general was quite poor and a lot wetter and colder than we had been experiencing in the UK; little did I know worse was to come. My parents, sister and brother-in-law arrived in Vancouver on the Wednesday to watch me race at the end of their holiday.

Thursday was about registering and picking up my race number and timing chip before attending the opening ceremony and pasta party. Disappointingly, the former was cancelled due to the wet and cold weather. I had been looking forward to the opening ceremony as all athletes were meeting and parading as nations, which is something I had not experienced before and thought would have an awesome atmosphere and really set the scene for the next few days' of racing. The pasta party, however, exceeded all expectations. It was held at the Aquarium in Stanley Park with various food stations positioned around the Aquarium. It gave all athletes the chance to meet up with the rest of the GB team and other nationalities. Friday was pencilled in as pre-race sharpeners, to keep me ticking over and stop me feeling lethargic but without tiring me out, team briefings and a GB team photo. It was then off to watch the GB sprint team compete in their races before meeting my husband, who arrived that afternoon, and then racking my bike ready for the next day.

Saturday was race day. The alarm was set for 0445hrs but I was awake long before that with nerves preventing me from getting back to sleep. It was up for a decent breakfast of porridge before leaving at 0530hrs to go to transition and lay out my bike and run kit to ensure a quick transition between disciplines. Once I was happy with my transition area, it was off to the start area some 800m away to warm up and get ready for the start of the race – my wave was off at 0745hrs. The race itself was a 1100m point-to-point sea swim (reduced from 1500m due to the conditions) in sub 12° C water, a 4 lap undulating bike leg in Stanley Park and a 2.5 lap 10km run. The sea, apart from being extremely cold, was very turbulent throwing the competitors around indiscriminately. It was incredibly difficult to get into any rhythm and it was a challenge to read the waves and make the best of the conditions. After the swim the bike was cold with wind chill and cool air temperatures. The hills seemed to grow on each lap as my legs got more tired; hills are not my strength on the bike.

It was a pleasant route through the park but you didn't really have time or energy to enjoy the view! After a quick and slick transition it was out on to the 10km run course. It took a while for my feet and legs to thaw out and for me to get feeling into them but I didn't have time to worry about the lack of feeling as I was running neck and neck with a fellow GB athlete in my age group. The atmosphere from the crowds, the GB supporters shouting "Go GB" every time they saw someone in a GB tri-suit and the support from my family helped carry me through. I had a strong run managing to drop my GB team mate on the final lap and crossed the line in a personal best run time and personal best finishing time. I finished 54th in my age group out of just under 100 competitors, which as a first time standard distance competitor I was pleased with.

Sunday was the elite race day and with my race finished, I was able to relax to watch the elite races from a very good fish restaurant balcony alongside the bike and run course and overlooking the finish line (perfect positioning and very good food). The atmosphere was electric and the female race exciting to watch as GB athlete **Helen Tucker** battled neck and neck with a US athlete all the way to the finish line to win the sprint finish and be crowned World Champion. All in all it was a fantastic experience and a successful race, I can't wait to qualify again – the 2009 Championships are on the Gold Coast in Australia, so hopefully the weather should be a lot better.

ROYAL SIGNALS YACHT CLUB GOES TO CORK 2008

The Royal Signals Yacht Club (RSYC) Offshore section decided that this years big trip out would be to take 2 yachts to Cork Week 2008. This is a high profile international yacht racing event held on the South Coast of Eire and attracts the biggest, fastest and most expensive yachts from across the 'yachty' world as well as the more down to earth – needless to say the RSYC was in the latter category. There will be a later article about the adventures of Yacht *Skywave* crewed by the Corps Racing Team, who were mostly soldiers, but this article will concentrate on the experience of the crew of Yacht *Petasus*.

The crew in front of Petasus in Cork. Air Cdre Tony Boyle, Lt Col John Rowley, Sqn Ldr Paul Hartland, Lt Col John Botterill, Lt Col Mike Griffiths, Maj (Retd) Calum Clark and Wg Cdr Chris Moore

The crew taking *Petasus* from Gosport to Cork gathered on Tuesday 8 July and was immediately named 'Team Saga' by the RSYC bosuns, **Sgts Windy Gale MBE** and **MJ Holt**; this name stuck throughout the week. We set off to Ireland that afternoon, hoping to get into Cork Friday evening to allow some race training on the weekend. The weather forecast was not great but off we went anyway. We completed 20 of the 350 miles and had to stop in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight stormbound. At 0400hrs, at the next tide, we set off again and completed 40 more miles before again stopping in Portland defeated by the weather. On Thursday morning, again at an ungodly hour, we set off into the wind and got a thorough kicking by the weather gods; finally getting into Cork Saturday afternoon to meet up with the rest of the crew.

Sunday was spent training with the skipper, **Lt Col Mike Griffiths** beasting Team Saga so that the spinnaker drills were looking good by the end of the day. This involved a few mast head issues which required **Wg Cdr Chris Moore** and **Lt Col John Botterill** winching the 14 stone skipper up the mast twice whilst at sea. After several hours, tactician **Lt Col John Rowley** and helmsman **Maj (Retd) Calum Clark** declared themselves happy, the rest of the crew said they were worn out, so back to harbour and a few pints of Murphy's. The racing started in earnest on the Monday and Team Saga got stuck in. There were many moments that stick in the mind, **Air Cdre Tony Boyle** cutting his hands so badly that he leaked all over the cockpit, **Sqn Ldr Paul Hartland** being so sea sick he was man down for a day and racing in Cork harbour with the spinnaker (in Corps Colours) up in bright sunshine. Team Saga acquitted themselves well but without a stripped down racing boat and racing sails were never going to trouble the scorers greatly and so it proved. The return trip was the complete reverse of the outbound leg. We completed it in 2 days arriving in Gosport Sunday evening; the wind was favourable and it did not rain at all. The RSYC will be running similar trips in the future and is in particular getting ready for Fastnet 2009. We are always looking for budding sailors, with or without experience, and if you are interested in learning more please contact **Sgt Gale** on 9380 65668 or at royalsignalsyachtclub@hotmail.com. We have 3 yachts based in Gosport available for charter (www2.army.mod.uk/royalsignals/sailing/rsyc/offshore/yachrchart er/bookingconditions.htm) and are also running a sail training week 13 – 18 October based out of Gosport, when we will be looking to train sailors to Competent Crew or Day Skipper, depending on experience.

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

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President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood

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General Secretary and Treasurer: Lt Col (Retd) CP Conlon
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

Membership. In July, I enrolled the 45,000th member of the RSA. Only 17,000 of these are on the RSA database as we have not heard from the remainder since 1994, when the RSA database was started. Despite 'mail shots' to old addresses and adverts by various means, these 28,000 remain out there unaware (or not interested?) of the RSA. If you know of a former Corps member, who is not a member of the RSA, may we ask you to point him/her our way? Congratulations to the South London Branch, who celebrated the 10th anniversary of their re-formation with a highly successful dinner at the Croydon Bowling Club in July. Darlington Branch member Pete Stemmer has recently been appointed as the official "Town Crier" for Darlington and of course the local press are featuring him as often as they can, citing ex Sgt Maj

Reunion. The next RSA annual reunion will be held at Blandford Camp over the weekend 27/28 June 2009. Full details will be available in February. They will also be on the RSA website: www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk. Pictures of this year's event can be found on the RSA web site – click 'reunion 2008'

Field of Remembrance. This year's Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey will be opened by **HM The Queen** on Thursday 6 November. All members of the RSA and their families are cordially invited to join the Chairman RSA at the Corps plot. Please be in position by 1030hrs. Everyone attending is welcome to join us afterwards for a buffet lunch at the Inns of Court Sig Sqn (transport will be provided from the Abbey). The Corps Carol Service will be held at St Stephen with St John, Rochester Row, Westminster on Monday 15 December starting at 1800hrs. All serving and retired members and families are welcome to join the SOinC(A) and Chairman RSA at the Service and to enjoy sherry and mince pies in the Church Hall afterwards.

New Life Members. A warm welcome is extended to the following members enrolled since the last issue of *The Wire*:-

Rank/Name	*Service*	*Unit/Branch*
Cpl Tim Smith	1978-94	
Sgt Ashley Jackson	1953-57	
Sig Robert Murkin	1949-51	Chesterfield Branch
Sig Norman Ellis-Leagas	1955-57	
Cpl Edward Scott	1946-60	East Kent Branch
Cpl Barry McGeachy	1998-08	
Sig Paul Mynett	1980-85	
WO2 Pip Crowder	1989-date	
Cpl Stuart Turner	1989-00	
LCpl Karl Rowe	1995-01	
LCpl Ann Collins	1989-94	
Sig Michael Roberts	1978-89	
Cpl Matt Smith	1995-date	20 Armd Bde Sig Sqn
WO1 Bren Matthews	1989-date	11 Sig Regt
Cpl Dave Allan	1966-78	
LCpl Brian Lamb	1984-97	
Sgt Iain McIntyre	1978-03	
SSgt Don Chester	1970-92	
LCpl Bob Smith	2000-06	
Pte Christobel Whitehead (Nee Bayliss)		1964-67

Cpl Mick Bird	1977-91	
Sig Michael Sowiak	2001-06	
Cpl David Pook	1980-94	
LCpl Scott Waring	1991-02	
Sig Clive Lee	1943-58	
Cpl Phil Duff	1984-98	
Sig Shelley Hardy	1989-98	
WO2 Tony Ward	1984-08	
LCpl Gary Middleton	1984-92	
Cpl Steve Taylor	1984-89	
Sig Jason Ormisher	2001-05	
Sig David Udell	1999-05	
Cpl Ade Ruffin	1985-95	
Sig John Hilton	1976-85	
Cpl Laurence Middleton	1977-00	
LCpl Barry Plumpton	1980-88	
Sgt Andy Wilford	1985-98	
Cpl Harry Rae	1980-87	
SSgt Michael Underwood	1971-85	
SSgt David Honeyman	1986-08	
LCpl Derek Kirkup	1980-86	
Sig Richard Mills	1959-65	
Cpl Wilf Sneddon	1978-93	
LCpl Michael Singer	1976-87	
Cpl Denis Donovan	1965-85	
Sig Alan Murray	1979-82	
LCpl James Inglefield	1989-96	
Sig Peter Johnson	1968-71	
Cpl Alan Thornton	1970-92	
SSgt Michael Kenyon	1969-94	
Sig Amy Booth	1996-98	
Maj Norman Lilley	1946-80	Air Fmn Sigs Assn
Sgt Colin Mortley	1944-59	
Sig Jason Knights	1988-90	
Cpl Kevin Clark	1993-98	
LCpl Sally Motson	1987-94	
LCpl Ian Benham	1990-01	
Capt Keiron Francis	1998-date	Eastbourne
WO2 Steve Hall	1999-date	Eastbourne
Cpl Paul Castle	1990-02	
LCpl Patrick Milnes	1986-97	
Sig Andrew MacIntyre	1991-94	
Cpl Kevin Plant	1974-85	
Cpl Martin Boika	1977-89	
LCpl Oz Grady	1982-94	
LCpl Tony Wilson	1970-79	
Cpl Dale Thompson	1998-date	
Cpl Michael Rice	2001-05	
SSgt Ed Howard	1990-date	
LCpl Mark Garside	1975-80	
Cpl Kieron O'Brien	1978-86	
Sig Baron McRae	1961-68	

DONATIONS

From the will of **Col Colin Gilbert**	£500.00
Jim Lister in memory of **Sig BM Gigg**	£20.00
Col Gordon Hickman OBE in memory of **Col Kevin Kirkby**	£40.00
R Waldron	£20.00
Cliff Reddish	£10.00
19 Sig Regt Assn in memory of **Maj Alan Harfield**	£20.00
Mrs M Symons in memory of **Maj Ray Webb**	£25.00
Certa Cito Lodge	£10.00
Miss Meriel Glaze in memory of her partner **Brian Ireland**	£100.00
York Branch RSA	£25.00
Keith Fenwick-Beadle	£5.00
Colin Mortley	£39.52
Gordon Thompson	£82.00

CARDIFF BRANCH

Chairman **Eric Powell**
Secretary **Bill Davies**

The Branch AGM took place on Wednesday 9~' January 2008 at the BBC Social Club Cardiff. The Officers and Committee were elected en - bloc but we were lacking a Social Committee. Fortunately **Brian Ashton, Darren Perkins** and **Selwyn Williams** volunteered to undertake the task of organising our social events. The Chairman, Hon Sec and Treasurer gave their reports and the Treasurer suggested that we keep subscriptions as they are at present. At our February Branch meeting our Social Committee set out their stall for the coming months. A quiz session would follow the March meeting and the April meeting would be enhanced with an Easter Buffet and Classical Guitar entertainment. At our March meeting the Dedication of the new Corps Memorial at Alrewas was discussed, and members were informed that if they wished to attend they would have to let the Hon Sec have their personal details as soon as possible. On 29 March, Branch President **Jim Lister** and Branch Hon Sec attended the RSA AGM at the Victory Club in London. April arrived and at the conclusion of the meeting, we had the promised Easter Buffet and were entertained by the classical guitarist. There is no doubt that the new Social Committee have got off to a flying start.

At our May Branch meeting it was intended that we would have a Race Night but due to a low attendance it was decided to defer this until our June meeting. Those members who had indicated that they were going to this year's Annual Re-union were informed that their details had been forwarded to the RSA Admin Officer at Blandford. June duly arrived and our Chairman **Eric Powell** gave a report on the Dedication of the New Corp Memorial at Alrewas. This Branch was represented by President **Jim Lister** and **Mary**, Chairman **Eric Powell and Daphne** and **Mike Peterson** and **Jean**. At the conclusion of the meeting our Social Committee provided entertainment in the form of a Race Night.

Branch Welfare visits etc are in the capable hands of **Gordon Baker**. **Gordon** gives his report on a monthly basis and keeps us informed of the various members who are not able to join us for health reasons. We are indebted to him for his dedication. Sadly we have lost 2 Branch Members since the beginning of the year. **Geordie Wright** whom we had not seen for some time passed away in February and **Bernard Gigg** our Branch Vice Chairman passed away in April. The Branch was represented at both services. At our June meeting **Trevor Summers** was elected to serve as our Branch Vice Chairman for the remainder of the year. Our Branch Meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at the BBC Social Club, Llandaff, Cardiff commencing at 1930hrs for 2000hrs.

DARLINGTON BRANCH

Chairman **Ron Botham**
Secretary **Ray Jeffery**

EX-ROYAL SIGNALS MAJOR COMES HOME – 22 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

A former Royal Signals officer, **Maj Alan Brown**, has finally been laid to rest in his home town – 23 years after his death. **Alan** died in 1985 aged 50 and was laid to rest in Alnwick, Northumberland but his wish had always been for his remains to be buried in Darlington, close to his family home. The mix-up happened because his wife, **Kathleen**, the only person who knew of his wishes, was ill in hospital when he died. Following an application from **Mrs Brown**, the Church of England took the unusual step of granting her permission to have **Maj Brown's** ashes exhumed and re-interred in Darlington. On 19 June, 12 members of the Darlington Branch of the Royal Signals Association, including the Branch Standard, provided an Honour Guard at the town's West Cemetery. **Mrs Brown**, together with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren paid their respects to **Alan**, who had latterly served at 8 Signal Regiment.

Mrs Brown's daughter, **Rose**, said "We are really pleased with the way the funeral went and we are very grateful to everyone from the Royal Signals Association. It was unusual to have a second funeral for Dad but it is nice to have him back in Darlington at last."

Photograph by kind permission of The Northern Echo

EAST KENT BRANCH

Chairman **Brian Calladine**
Secretary **John Ballantyne**

The branch has had a busy tome over the past 4 months. The May meeting took us to Hythe for lunch at a new watering hole for us, followed by a visit to **Harvey** and **Sue Blizards'** lovely garden. The weather was beautiful and we almost overstayed our welcome as we wandered around the garden or sat and took in the sea view, while enjoying tea and cakes. **Harvey** ran a raffle for 3 of his plants with the proceeds going to RSA funds. It was good to have **Peter Foakes** and **Peggy** with us; **Peter** almost recovered from his recent ill health.

On 20 May, 5 of our members went to the National Arboretum at Alrewas for the dedication of the RSA memorial by **HRH The Princess Royal**, Colonel in Chief. **Brian Calladine** paraded our standard and was presented to **HRH** following the dedication. This was a great honour for him.

Sadly we lost 2 of our members in March and April. **Frank Castle** died very suddenly on 27 March. He was an active member of the branch and a regular visitor to the Blandford reunion weekends. His widow, **Olive**, will continue to come to our meetings whenever possible. The branch was well represented at **Frank's** funeral and the standard was paraded.

Rita Hughes, widow of the late **Maj Charles Hughes** died on 3 April. **Rita** had been unwell for some time. Again, the branch was well represented at her funeral.

Only 13 members went to Milton Keynes on 15 June for the Summer Showtime. **John Ballantyne** drove the minibus and everyone had a very good day. Several members of the branch attended the Annual Reunion Weekend at Blandford. **Brian Calladine** took part in the Standard Bearers Competition. It was a good weekend, enjoyed by all who went. August was our annual barbeque held at our President's home. After a wet Saturday, Sunday brought the sunshine and 84 members arrived with their picnic tables and chairs to set up in the garden. **'Kas'**, a young lady dressed in 1940s uniform entertained us by singing the old wartime songs for an hour. We were given song sheets to join in and Union Jacks to wave. The committee had decorated the garden appropriately with bunting and flags. We all had a wonderful time! This was followed by a superb meal and coffee, by **Richard** and his helpers, our regular barbeque caterer. **Marion Ballantyne** ran a very successful raffle. We were pleased to welcome back **Roy** and **Pat Andrews**, who moved to Yorkshire last year, but who were back in Canterbury visiting family.

EAST LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Maj (Rtd) Paul Burton**
Secretary **Alan Turner**

We have had what seems to have been a very busy summer. The report in the August edition, detailed some of the TA 100 Celebrations that had been taking place up to the beginning of June with which we had been involved and this has continued over the summer months along with the Annual Reunion in Blandford.

36 Sig Regt has the Freedom of the London Borough of Redbridge and this right was exercised on 14 June. The East London RSA with three Chelsea In-Pensioners, and representatives of the Colchester, Cambridge and Bedford RSA branches joined to take part in the March Past, helped by the music of the Royal Signals Northern Band. There was a photograph of this inside the back cover of the August edition of *The Wire*.

The following Saturday, a group of us made our way up to Horse Guards Parade to watch the TA 100 Pageant, a truly memorable event presided over by **HRH The Prince of Wales**. Then the Saturday after the Blandford Reunion weekend, we met at 0900hrs for a joint coach outing with our local REME Association to take part in the Veteran's Day event at Chatham. It was a very enjoyable day and with a promise that this event will take place annually at Chatham, we are very much looking forward to taking part again in future years. The following Thursday was the day of the TA 100 Royal Garden Party and a group of our members with TA service were taking part in this.

Having heard that the participants at the Red Cross event the previous day had been drenched, we were a bit apprehensive about what the weather would do to us but we need not have worried, the sun came out and shone for the whole afternoon. We all had a delightful time in the Palace Gardens partaking of the famed cucumber sandwiches and iced coffee whilst listening to the music from the various military bands, including the Royal Signals Northern Band and also catching glimpses of **HRH The Princess Royal** and her brother **HRH The Earl of Wessex** as they wandered amongst us.

At our July meeting, we had a presentation on the recent World Scout Jamboree by our member, **Trevor Saint** and his son **Adam**. **Trevor** took us through the process that **Adam** had to go through before he was selected to represent his region and **Adam** then talked about the actual 10 day event which had taken place in Chelmsford last year. The beginning of August has been a bit quieter but as we put these notes together, there are a few activities planned around the August Bank Holiday weekend including taking part in a Veteran's Parade at the Havering Show.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

This Northern Ireland Branch report begins on a sad note. Branch President, **Maj Noel Johnston's** beloved wife **Doris Johnston**, passed away on 30 June 2008 following a long illness. **Doris's** funeral on 3 July was attended by a large number of NI

RSA Branch members plus past and present members of 40(U) Sig Regt (V) amongst the family and friends, combining to overflow the funeral parlour in Whitehouse. We must applaud **Maj Johnston** for his continuing dedication to duty, as he was present as usual at our July meeting less than 2 weeks later. They were a devoted couple and **Doris** will be sadly missed by a great number of people. Branch Treasurer **Debbie Wolfe**, having already received the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate on 26 April was made Honour Member of the RSA at a short ceremony at our monthly meeting on 18 June. Branch President **Maj Noel Johnston** made the presentation.

Maj Noel Johnston makes the presentation to Branch Treasurer Mrs Debbie Wolfe

The Blandford Reunion this year had quite a good turnout of NI Branch members. The photograph, taken by **Chris Stitt** shows **John Loveday**, ex-RSM 40 Sig Regt with wife **Heather, Jim Hagan**, **Jim Reilly**, Branch Chairman, **Jack Mount**, Exmouth Branch and **George Cook** another ex-RSM 40 Sig Regt who lives in Wales.

John and Heather Loveday, Jim Hagan, Jim Reilly , Jack Mount and George Cook at the Blandford Reunion

Our members were pleased to meet up with ex-**Sgt Jack Mount** from Devon who, with his wife **Elizabeth** was speaker at our May meeting at Clonaver TA Centre, Belfast. Branch Asst Sec, **Carole Cameron** unfortunately had to cancel her visit as well as their holidays. **Carole's** husband **George** had a stroke just before the Blandford Weekend but is now making progress at home if not yet fully recovered. **Maj Chris Davies**, PSAO 85 Sqn, our speaker on 16 July, gave us a detailed account of the battle of Monte Cassino of 1943. He got a larger than usual turnout when the regular members were joined by visitors, all ex-40 Sig Regt. We hope to show a documentary film at our next meeting. It tells the story of the Belfast shipbuilding industry (including Harland & Wolff) where a record number of ships were built, some serving with distinction in two World Wars. This is a film of great local interest. It includes the story of the White Star Line, which owned sister ships RMS Olympic, Titanic and Britannic; the latter became a hospital ship in WW1. We issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, Regular or TA and ex-members of ATS/WRAC who served with Royal Signals, to join us at Clonaver Park TAC, Belfast, on the third Wednesday of each month.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Doug Anderson**
Secretary **Steve Bland**

On 18 July we duly celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the re-formation of the Branch with a dinner at our usual venue. Forty two members and guests sat down with our Guest of Honour, **Peter Cuckow** and his wife **Shirley**. **Peter** attended the re-formation meeting 10 years ago and didn't look a year older. After a welcoming speech by Chairman **Doug Anderson** and the usual toasts, Peter brought the Branch up to date on RSA matters and as they say, a good time was had by all.

Peter Cuckow, Doug Anderson and Steve Bland in deep discussion – probably about the wine

Peter Benstead tries his hand as a wine waiter, Bill Dedman looks suitably unimpressed!

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman **Mr Mick Teague**
Secretary **Mr Tony Hull**

Another year has passed and the time had come for the annual BEBA BBQ hosted by **Tony** and **Beryl Hull** in their garden in Bournemouth. This year it was held on Sunday, 20 July and the weather was dry and reasonably sunny. **Tony** had 2 BBQs going and he was assisted by an ex-Catering Corps Chef, **Stan Shine**, who had brought with him some home-made beef-burgers, which were quite delicious. Twenty people attended and some travelled quite long distances, such as **Dave** and **Eileen Pegrum** from Welwyn Garden City and **Dick** and **Adelaide Hurel** from Esher. There was a lot of chat about experiences in both 6 (Boys) Training Regt and the Corps generally. Some people took advantage of the dart board which had been set up on the side of the garage and played a game of darts. Eventually the weather turned cooler and people started to wend their way home, but all agreed they'd had a very enjoyable day.

Pam and Keith Andrews, Terry Poingdestre, Tony Hull, Tony Coleman, Beryl Hull, Norman Davies and Claire Littlecott

For several years we have been privileged to be able to attend the Sovereign's Parade Rehearsal at Sandhurst in August. This year was no exception and we arrived at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst at approximately 1000hrs on Wednesday, 6 August 2008. We took our places in the stand in front of the parade ground outside Old College and were given programmes by officer cadets. The cadets marched on accompanied by the Light Cavalry Band exactly as the clock struck 1100hrs. The programme gives instructions on when to stand, such as when the Colours are paraded past in both slow and quick time and also when the Commandant arrives at the podium. Whilst marching round the parade ground, the cadets split into 2 columns with an intricate manoeuvre when they reach the corners.

At the end of the parade, the Cadets who will be passing out as Officers march into the Old College followed by the Academy Adjt on his horse which goes right up the steps into the building. Afterwards we have a picnic in the grounds and whilst we were seated outside the cricket pavilion a Royal Signals WO, **WO1(YofS) Dell Goodenough**, who is on the permanent staff, came up to talk to us. He was very pleasant and informative and brought with him 2 other members of the Corps, **SSgt(YofS) Ollie Olver**, and **WO2(YofS) Laura Midwinter**, who had both been presented with medals by the Commandant. Their picture is shown below. It all made for a very pleasant day out.

WO2(YofS) Laura Midwinter and SSgt(YofS) Ollie Olver

Our Reunion this year will be held at the Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry over the weekend of 10/11 October. As this will be the 10th Anniversary of the setting up of BEBA, we do hope as many of our members as possible will attend. The Association has now run longer than 6 (Boys) Training Regt! The Staverton Park is a De Vere Hotel with excellent leisure facilities including an 18 hole golf course.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	Served	Died
Adams - Sgt B Adams	1975/93	16/06/2008
Allen - WJ Allen	1930/42	25/10/2006
Apthorpe - SSgt JP Apthorpe	1943/46	15/06/2007
Armstrong - IT Armstrong	????/??	16/07/2008
Arnold - Sig DJ Arnold	1990/94	28/06/2008
Bailey - LCpl JF Bailey	1942/47	??/07/2008
Baillie - Capt A Baillie	1955/67	01/07/2005
Bairstow - M Bairstow	????/??	03/12/2007
Barlow - Maj D Barlow	????/63	c 2008
Bates - J M Bates	1960/69	19/11/2007
Berry - JE Berry	1931/57	14/03/2007
Billups - C Billups	1939/45	16/08/2007
Boscoe - Cpl D Boscoe	1970/92	11/07/2008
Boscoe - Cpl DJ Boscoe	1965/89	11/07/2008
Brewster - BL Brewster	1921/53	01/08/2006
Brook - J Brook	1941/45	16/10/2007
Brown - DL Brown	1940/46	23/04/2007
Burgess - L Burgess	????/??	01/01/2005
Burritt - WO2 L Burritt	1936/46	29/04/2007
Burton - AC Burton	????/??	29/04/1998
Campbell - Capt P Campbell	1964/91	05/08/2008
Carter - BT Carter	1942/47	01/01/2005
Charlton - Brig MA Charlton OBE	1932/65	12/02/2008
Chisholm - Sig DH Chisholm	1939/46	01/07/2008
Clarke - FG Clarke	????/??	23/03/2005
Cliffe - F Cliffe	????/??	16/07/2008
Cook - Cpl P Cook	1956/79	25/08/2003
Cooke - M Cooke	????/??	19/09/2006
Cornford - JJ Cornford	1938/47	11/05/2006
Cotton - Sig RD Cotton	1935/46	02/08/2008
Cox - DW Cox	1951/61	??/??/????
Crowther - Cpl RL Crowther	1963/76	01/04/2004
Cunningham - CM Cunningham	????/??	01/08/2005
Drynan - J Drynan	1939/44	29/05/2007
Duckworth - W Duckworth	????/??	05/11/1992
Elliott - SSgt EJ Elliott	1937/59	12/06/2008
Evans - E Evans	????/??	c 2008
Gern-Gross - MA Gern-Gross	1956/59	01/09/2007
Gilbert - Col CJ Gilbert	1948/83	05/04/2008
Godfrey - Sgt AG Godfrey	1940/46	01/05/2006
Groves - EA Groves	1944/47	14/02/2008
Harfield - Maj AG Harfield BEM	1944/1980	16/06/2008
Harty - MJ Harty	1946/52	13/04/2005
Harwood - L J Harwood	1941/46	21/11/2007
Hawes - WJO Hawes	1940/46	27/11/2003

Hazel - Maj D Hazel	1946/76	04/08/2008
Heslop - A Heslop	1943/46	14/04/2007
Hill - Lt DM Hill TEM	1939/45	08/08/2008
Hodgetts - LCpl CA Hodgetts	1976/79	c 2008
Horton - SSgt DA Horton	1950/82	18/08/2007
Howe - APJ Howe	1955/57	11/02/2005
Howe - DM Howe	1937/46	16/04/2008
James - Maj HD James ERD TD	1948/82	16/08/2008
Jamieson - WO2 A Jamieson	1951/76	17/02/2007
Johnson - IS Johnson	????/??	01/01/2006
Jones - Sgt MP Jones	????/96	??/06/2008
Kirk - G Kirk	1940/46	10/12/2007
Kirkby - Col K Kirkby C ENG	1949/87	03/07/2008
Lane - Maj JH Lane	1939/66	12/08/2008
Ledger - WO2 EG Ledger	1937/59	02/09/2005
Lord - M Lord	????/??	08/11/2005
Mace - RW Mace	1997/04	01/01/2005
Maxfield - Sig CK Maxfield	1942/46	06/08/2008
McTigue - Sig LJ McTigue	1949/50	06/07/2008
Morris - Sig GR Morris	1970/76	21/09/2004
Nash - IE Nash	1943/46	01/02/2006
Nicholson - Sgt KR Nicholson	1962/84	05/08/2008
Oldman - Sig BM Oldman	1947/49	c 2008
O'Neill - Cpl CT O'Neill	1963/86	21/08/2008
Peach - Sgt GV Peach	1941/46	11/08/2008
Perry - Cpl BT Perry	1954/76	17/07/2008
Pheby - LCpl BM Pheby	1954/57	29/07/2008
Plumpton - R Plumpton	1951/64	19/10/2006
Presdee - J Presdee	1940/46	11/07/2008
Purnell - WO2 KC Purnell	1950/76	17/08/2008
Reed - AM Reed	1943/45	22/06/2006
Rham - L Rham	1938/46	01/01/2006
Rigby - JD Rigby	1942/68	15/04/2002
Roughley - Sig BJ Roughley	1974/79	c 2008
Saunders - MF Saunders	1942/46	07/04/2006
Searchfield - MW Searchfield	????/??	20/12/2007
Shaw - CA Shaw	1941/46	29/08/2007
Shorey - CV Shorey	????/??	27/05/2005
Shorting - Cpl AF Shorting	1953/78	27/03/2008
Silver - Cpl P Silver	1980/93	12/07/2008
Sixsmith - WO2 K Sixsmith	1957/77	10/07/2008
Smith - PS Smith	1945/47	16/07/2007
Stokes - EE Stokes	1943/47	01/01/2003
Sumner - AP Sumner	1960/72	01/07/2001
Swallow - Lt Col JJH Swallow OBE	1936/69	??/02/2008
Taylor - K Taylor	????/??	21/06/2006
Templeton - WO1 JYS Templeton	1943/70	31/07/2008
Vaughan - Sgt W Vaughan	1940/46	01/03/2008
Wall - TC Wall	1938/46	15/04/2008
Warwick - Cpl GDJ Warwick	2003/08	26/07/2008
Wayte - EV Wayte	1940/47	01/05/2006
Webb - Maj RA Webb T ENG(CEI)	1939/82	10/07/2008
Weston - EE Weston	????/??	02/08/2005
Whittington - JM Whittington	1945/48	05/02/2007
Wild - Sig MP Wild	1963/77	14/06/2000
Wiles - R Wiles	1939/59	14/04/2005
Williamson - SSgt T Williamson	1961/83	25/07/2008
Worsdale - EC Worsdale	????/??	18/05/2005

OBITUARIES

MARSH – WO2 Leonard (Len) K Marsh died on ??????

Len Marsh served in 39 (CofL) Sig Regt (SC)(V) for over 20 years. He joined theRegt as a SSgt in 1968 after the confusion that followed the reorganisation of the TA in 1967. He was one of many from The Oxfordshire Territorials (V) who became Poundon Tp of 1 Sqn based at the Regimental WETC near Bicester. Unlike the majority who were RA (Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars), **Len** joined the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (TA) in 1956. He did his National Service in REME from 1947 – 1949 serving in Egypt.

The Poundon Tp became known in the regiment as "The Heavy Gang" and recruited others in the area. The Tp was responsible for the maintenance of half of the Regimental base station which was housed in 'radar' trailers towed by 10 ton Thorneycrofts holding 27.5 kVA generators. **Len** was appointed SSM 1 Sqn in 1970. Following a Regimental reorganisation in 1974, the Tp moved across to 5 (Banbury) Sqn where **Len** took over responsibility for the MT. He is well remembered for holding a cup of water in his hand whilst teaching people to drive on Bicester Airfield; a severe reprimand followed any spillage! He was later appointed Regimental MT WO. On reaching the age of 60, he still wanted to continue his service and joined CVHQ RCT at Grantham as a driving instructor. **Len** was at his happiest behind a steering wheel; whether in the TA or driving fuel tankers, coaches or Oxford buses where he was a PSV driving instructor. After retirement those he trained kept a wary eye open for him boarding their bus because he would tell them in no uncertain terms if they made a mistake.

His funeral took place on Monday, 23 June at Wolvercote Cemetery in Oxford. His Royal Signals cap was placed on his coffin and the Last Post was sounded by a bugler from The Rifles. A number of his TA colleagues were present.

CHISWELL – Capt Jean Anita Chiswell MBE died on 13 April 2008.

Jean Anita Chiswell was born in Plymouth, Devon on 24 August 1924 and later moved to Exeter where she enrolled in the ATS on 9 September 1941, at the age of 17. She began her career at the No.3 ATS Training Centre and was employed as a clerk/driver with 596 Coy RASC (CMT). After the end of WW2, **Cpl Chiswell**, by then an experienced pay and administration NCO, was discharged from the ATS on 5 May 1946 with an exemplary report which recorded her dedication to her duties and her leadership qualities. She remained on the Reserve List, and was awarded the War Medal 1939 – 1945 and the Defence Medal. In May 1947, at the end of her period on the Reserve List, **Cpl Chiswell** re-enlisted into the TA with 668(M)HAA Regt RA. She was promoted to Sgt in January 1948 and to WO2 later that same year. She was commissioned in April 1949, and promoted to Capt in November 1951, as a Permanent Staff Officer. She attended a number of administration and pay courses at various establishments during her career. In January 1954, **Capt Chiswell** transferred to 106AA(M) Sig Sqn (TA), later re-designated as 57(M) Sig Regt (TA) in September 1959. She then became PSO of 43(Wx) Sig Regt (TA), and acted as Maj at 3 successive annual camps. In March 1967, 43(Wx) Sig Regt disbanded and **Capt Chiswell** transferred to 37(Wessex & Welsh) Sig Regt (V) where she was to spend the remainder of her career. She became a Tp Officer and later an Admin Officer within the Regt.

In July 1980, **Capt Chiswell** was appointed PSAO of 57(City & County of Bristol) Sqn, based at Horfield TA Centre in Bristol, where she became affectionately known as "Captain C". She was an extremely popular and well respected officer and was always on hand to offer help and advice to the soldiers in her care. In recognition of her 40 years continuous service in the ATS/WRAC, **Capt Chiswell** was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List in December 1981. She retired in August 1984, whereupon she became an active member of the Royal Signals Association, Bristol Branch. She was an avid supporter and regularly travelled to Branch meetings and social functions from her home in Clevedon, North Somerset until very recent years.

Capt Jean Chiswell served the ATS, WRAC and various other associated Corps for a continuous period of 43 years. Sadly, she passed away on 13 April 2008, and her funeral was held at Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset, on 24 April. She was a charming lady who is sadly missed but remembered with great admiration and affection by her many friends and former colleagues.

WARWICK – Cpl Gareth (Gaz) David James Warwick died 26 July 2008.

It is with great sadness that 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt reports the death of **Cpl Gaz Warwick** on Saturday 26 July 2008, after losing his brave battle with cancer. **Cpl Gaz Warwick** was born on 15 October 1981 in Aldershot. He joined the Royal Corps of Signals in February 2000. Serving his first tour within the Commcen at 16 Sig Regt, he then moved to 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (207) where he found his passion for working with armour, deploying on Op TELIC with the Sqn. From here he was posted to 2 Sig Regt until returning to his love of armour serving as a member of 202 (Armd) Sig Sqn at 3 (UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt.

Gaz enjoyed an exciting and rewarding career, during which he touched so many people with his sense of humour and professional attitude. Always volunteering and leading from the front, he was a remarkable, young, energetic man, who always put maximum effort into all that he did. A testament to his determined and resolute character, he twice attempted the 264 Sig Sqn selection course. He loved his job and was never happier than when commanding an AFV 436. He has certainly left a hole in the Corps and will be dearly missed by his friends and family. Our deepest sympathies go to his dear wife **Amanda** and all of **Gaz's** family.

CAMPBELL – Capt Peter Campbell died 05 August 2008.

The brother of Forfar Athletic Manager **Dick Campbell**, Cowdenbeath born **Capt Campbell** also had football in his blood. He combined his passion for football with his Army career by representing his Regts, his Corps and the Army on the pitch and during a posting in Belgium, he played for the Dutch club, Leonidas in Maastricht. He was a devoted Rangers Fan and a season ticket holder.

Capt Campbell had been in the Army for over 40 years, having joined the Royal Signals at the age of 16. He started his boy service training at Troon. His first posting was with the 22 Sig Regt in Lippstadt, West Germany. He went on to serve in Portadown, Northern Ireland, where he earned a General Service Medal. He was also awarded a Jubilee Medal and a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. On his return to Scotland he was commissioned and promoted to Capt and became Adjt of 32 Sig Regt in Glasgow. From 1989 until his death, he was the Permanent Staff Administration Officer at 61 Sig Sqn, Edinburgh.

Capt Graham Gaw, 2IC of the Edinburgh Sqn, paid this tribute to his colleague. He said, "**Capt Peter Campbell** was the indefatigable backbone of the Sqn. His loyalty, commitment and pride were unquestionable. Extraordinarily passionate about his work, he would always go the extra mile to ensure that everything he was involved in was completed to the highest standard. Well respected by everyone in the unit, he could be relied upon to assist the newest recruits right through to advising senior officers, utilising over 40 years of military experience. He was a great character who will be sorely missed by all in the Sqn. Our thoughts are will his family at this difficult time."

Capt Campbell lived in Cowdenbeath with his family, having married his wife **Sarah** in the town's former Cairns church in 1969. He was a keen golfer and a member of Aberdour Golf Club. Yesterday, his brother **Dick** remembered a "popular guy" who loved sport. "We're all devastated and everyone is rallying round. We're a big family and it's a trying time for everybody," he said. **Capt Campbell** is survived by his wife, **Sarah**, children **Gary**, **Grant** and **Wayne** and 2 grandchildren.

Dundee Courier – 09 August 2008

BARSBY - Sig Scott Barsby died 3 March 2008.
- by Maj Carter, OC 207 Sig Sqn

After a successful period of training in Harrogate and Blandford Forum, where his early potential was identified, **Sig Scott Barsby** was posted to Hohne in Germany in October 2006 and immediately set about learning what it takes to be a soldier in the most famous armd bde in the British Army, the 7th Armd Bde – the Desert Rats.

Due to his enthusiasm and intellect, it took only a few months for him to become an excellent all-round soldier, knowledgeable in military communications, while maintaining a keen awareness of tactics. He also learned that armd soldiering is not always fun; changing tracks in wet, freezing weather, up to one's armpits in mud and oil and wondering when you were going to next see your sleeping bag. But like most soldiers, his sense of humour which was particularly sharp, got him and those around him through the tough times in Germany, Poland and Canada.

Scott also had a constant desire for self-improvement, volunteering for anything including Special Forces training. Indeed, I believed that he had the potential for commissioning. But what was certain was that he was ferociously fit. Although he would be the first to admit that his chest was not as big as he wanted it to be and took to covering it with that huge tattoo, but that was just cosmetic. He could run like the wind and had the physical endurance of a seasoned veteran. An outstanding sportsman, **Scott** took pleasure in his sporting life. That is not to say that he did not enjoy his social life. He managed to find the time to explore Germany with his mates, although I've been told that he preferred cheap lager to the fine beers of Germany! And I don't believe he lived two separate lives in Derby and Germany. He was just so well liked by so many people that it was impossible for them all to have met each other.

Like many before him, **Scott** was tragically killed in a car accident on foreign soil serving his country. He was a man who saw life as a great adventure and he explored it to the full with plans to continue his adventure in Iraq this summer. As someone once said, 'a man of character in peace is a man of courage in war' and **Scott's** character will be unbelievably missed by the Sqn.

We have lost a friend and comrade. The Royal Corps of Signals and the Desert Rats has lost one of its most promising soldiers. The country has lost a young man whose professional hard work, character and self-sacrifice are alien to so many of his age group today and this is a credit to his Mother and Father. **Scott** has dug his last shell scrape and changed his last track. His mission is complete. **Scott** can now stand down and get some sleep.

BLAND – Sig Wayne (Blandy) Bland died 11 August 2008.

Wayne Nigel Ernest Bland was born in Leeds on 11 February 1987. His home was in the Gipton area of the city where he lived with his mother **Maureen**. He grew up with his three sisters and a brother, all of whom still live in the same street in Gipton. He joined the Army on 14 October 2005 at the Leeds Recruitment Centre and began his basic training at ATR Lichfield. From there he moved to the Royal School of Signals in Blandford to complete his Phase 2 training as a Royal Signals Driver (Driver/Lineman). After successfully gaining his Class 3 Royal Signals Driver qualification, he was posted to 16 Sig Regt in Elmpt, Germany in Sep 2006. Narrowly missing the Regt's commitment to Op HERRICK 5, he settled into his job working for the Regimental MT department of HQ (now Support) Sqn. He gradually developed his confidence and trade abilities in this environment and by the time the Regt had reconstituted from deployment, he was a competent and charismatic soldier with a reputation for hard work, reliability and enthusiasm.

In March 2007 **Sig Bland** was hand-picked to join the Public Duties Sqn to train as part of The Queen's Guard. The Sqn was formed from soldiers in the Regt who had proved to be fit, reliable and disciplined, all boxes that he ticked. He relocated with the Sqn to London in May to complete his training for ceremonial duties, under the supervision of the Welsh Guards. His turnout, drill and commitment during public duties was utterly flawless as he stood sentry outside Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St James' Palace and the Tower of London and took part in the Changing of the Guard ceremonies. He volunteered for extra duties including one at Edinburgh Castle and was thoroughly proud to be part of The Queen's Guard. His Tp hierarchy were impressed with the maturity and eagerness that he displayed in London, and he received an excellent report for his efforts there.

On return to Germany in September, **Sig Bland** was selected to deploy to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 8. He had to complete numerous courses first and in the next few months he gained several qualifications including an NVQ in Driving Goods Vehicles and an SQA in Tanks and Tank Containers. He completed his Defence Drops (MMCC) Vehicle and Bulk Fuel Vehicle Operators courses and, more importantly, he learned to both drive and command a Saxon patrol vehicle. Following OPTAG and Regimental pre-deployment training in January, **Sig Bland** deployed to Afghanistan in February 2008. He worked from Camp Souter in Kabul as part of Kabul Support Unit where he completed a variety of driving duties including movement of personnel and stores and providing force protection. His team were also responsible for the passage of VIPs such as the Chief of General Staff when he visited theatre. As part of a small team, he had one of the busiest and most dangerous jobs of anyone in the Regt, constantly putting himself in positions of risk, as was required of him in order to complete his duties. He demonstrated great strength of character during his deployment, and was considered by his SSgt to be his "right-hand man". His sense of humour and the support he provided his colleagues made him a popular and much valued member of the team. On Monday 11 August 2008, a week before he was due to finish his tour, **Sig Bland's** Saxon vehicle was rammed by a suicide bomber. He was providing top-cover. Despite the valiant attempts of his colleagues to save him, he later died from his injuries in hospital.

Outside of work he managed to play his way into a very strong Regimental football side. Football was his sport and his passion and he was a life-long Leeds United supporter – an object of much banter at work. He was also a proud uncle, often talking about his young nieces who were the pride of his life.

Below are some of the messages that have been left in memory of **Sig Bland** by his friends and closest colleagues:

- *by **Sgt Scott Barrie**:* **Blandy**. As your boss out here, you have not only done me proud, but also the boys and your family proud. There has been no better man to stand by my side as we pushed hard through this tour and you were my hero. You're gone in body mate, but never ever will your spirit be forgotten. God bless to you, and God bless to your family.

- *by **Sgt Paul Pierrepont**:* **Blandy**, what can I say. You are a legend even though you support Leeds. Sorry mate, the boys did everything they could for you. They did you proud. I'm just sorry I couldn't help you more mate. We did everything we could for you. As ever you were always the first on the line. You died the way you were, leading the troops. I'm gutted mate, absolute gutted. I'll see you on the other side mate. RIP **Blandy**. The boys will do you proud.

- *by **Sgt Taff Langley**:* God Bless you **Wayne**. Remember to march to the pearly gates erect and square to the front whilst St Peter plays 'Be gone dull care'. I have known you since day one of your career and have seen you grow from a civy to a fine young soldier. We will remember.

- *by **Sig Luke Cook**:* Alright mate. Well I really can't believe it's happened to you. You are going to be missed by everyone mate. Leeds have had a good start to the season so happy days. I'll see you again some day mush.

- *by **Sig Adam Fletcher**:* **Blandy** lad ...you didn't deserve it mate...no one ever does. I'm sure the beers will be toasted on your behalf...I certainly will be. You will be missed dearly and forever in our thoughts mate. It was a pleasure to know and serve with you. Thank you and God bless.

- *by **Cpl Scott Johnson**:* **Blandy** mush, I can't tell you how devastated I am. Just a couple of days left and we would have been on the bevvy in Cyprus having a laugh as always. I will never forget you wingman. CERTA CITO.

- *by **Sig Paul Smiles**:* I don't really believe it mate! I don't think it has sunk in yet! It gives me a huge lump in my throat knowing that you were loved by so many people and made such a huge impact on their lives! Everyone's thoughts are with your family. We will carry you in our hearts forever and ever bud! See you on the other side and the rounds are on me! You are a true hero and I hope we can make you proud.

- *by **Sig Peceli Tamanisau**:* **Blandy**! Tears may dry, years may fly but your memories with the MT boys in Souter in Afghan 2008 will never ever die. Till we meet again on the other side mush, may the good Lord be with you.

- *by **Sig Luke Brereton**:* Well mate, not really sure what to say. You were an amazing bloke. Always the centre of attention making the lads laugh and keeping our heads up. I love you mate and my thoughts and prayers go out to your mum and the rest of your family. You are gone, but will never be forgotten. You will always be a hero in my eyes.

- *by **Sig Phill Taylor**:* **Blandy**....You were the man. You always made us boys laugh here in Afghanistan. There was never a dull moment mate. I'm devastated. There's nothing more we could do for you other than what we already did. I wish things could be different mate. You are missed so much by me and all the boys. We're still going to Blackpool when we get back **Blandy**. I know you were looking forward to it so much. Loads of the boys are going. We're watching Leeds kicking Chester's ass 4-1 at the moment with only 33 mins gone...they still won't get promoted though! Miss you loads mate and love ya. Always thinking of you mate. P.S. it's 5-1 now!

REUNIONS

H TROOP, 13 SIGNAL REGIMENT (RADIO) DANNENBERG REUNION – JUNE 2008

In June of this year over 50 former members of H Tp, 13 Sig Regt and their families returned to Dannenberg to celebrate a Reunion. This particular year was chosen as it marks the 25th anniversary of the Award of the Wilkinson Sword of Peace and the subsequent decision by the Dannenberger Stadtrat to award the Freedom of Town to the Tp. The specific June dates were of course chosen to coincide with that tremendous annual event, the Dannenberg Schützenfest. Among those who attended the Reunion were 3 former OCs, **Eric Sambell**, **Andy Field** and **Bert Appleton**; 3 former Ops Officers, **Bill Hogg**, **Dennis Weir** and **Neil Mapp**; and 2 former SSMs, **Tam MacDonald** and **Rick Logan.**

The 6 day reunion opened with a civic reception in the Hotel Zur Post, during which the Stadtbuergermeister, **Peter Selber**, publicly reconfirmed the Freedom Rights by re-reading the original civic declaration. In his turn, the President of the Schützengilde, **Berni Boehm**, reminded the reunionees that their invitation to attend this and all future Schützenfests remained extant. **Dennis Weir** replied on behalf of H Tp, underlining the on-going close relationship between reunionees and the Stadt.

An unusual aspect of this Reunion was the fact that not all attendees actually served in uniform at H Tp. Amongst the guests were 3 'Cheltenham' civilian technicians who had been responsible for installing equipment at the site when it originally opened up in 1973 and who had such pleasant memories of their time in Dannenberg that they requested and were, of course, given an invitation to join us.

But it was 2 further retired members of the Corps who were to be the real stars of the show. Former Supervisors Radio **Tom Neal** and **Ray Armstrong** never served in H Tp, but as part of 1 Wireless Regt, had performed the same mission from a tented site on the outskirts of Dannenberg in 1956. They were thus returning to the town for the first time in over 50 years, a fact that greatly impressed our local German friends, some of whom recalled the site and the young signallers who served there all those years ago. Throughout the period of the Reunion a great fuss was made of **Tom** and **Ray** and indeed their wives **Helen** and **Elsie** and this richly deserved recognition culminated in their being awarded The Schützengilde Order Second Class, a medal which is not presented lightly.

Tom Neal and Ray Armstrong show off their medals

Those readers who served in H Tp will remember that the highlight of the Schützenfest is the Thursday Parade, a 12 hour musical marching marathon, involving a certain amount of food and an awful lot of drinking. It is with a great deal of pride that I am able to report that, despite our advancing years, we were able to complete the 'march past' at the end of the day in good order and with our numbers almost intact.

The H Troop contingent still looking good

It can be safely said that the H Troop 2008 Reunion was a resounding success. Many old friendships, both military and civilian, were renewed and our week in Dannenberg was an unforgettable experience. Should any former H Troopers wish to join us at a future reunion, or, indeed, accept the Schützengilde's invitation to attend any future Schützenfest as their guests, then they should contact **Dennis Weir** via the Wire Editor.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

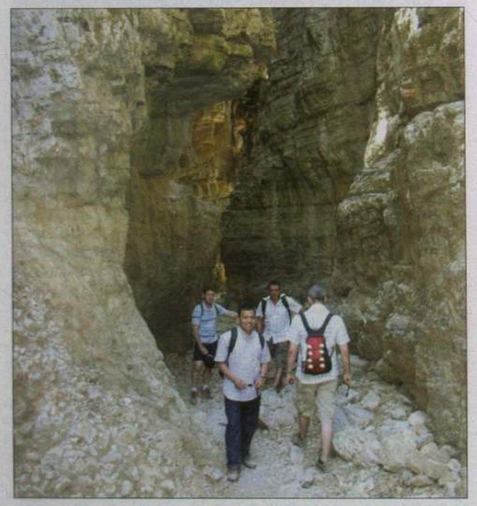
EXERCISE MERCURY STUDENT – 11 SIGNAL BRIGADE BATTLEFIELD TOUR OF CRETE - *by Capt TJ Cooper*

11 Sig Bde conducted a Battlefield Study between 9 – 13 June to examine Op MERCURY, the German airborne invasion of Crete in 1941 and the consequent allied defence. The aim was for the Officers and Warrant Officers of the Bde to analyse the campaign at the strategic, operational and tactical levels and from both the perspectives of both Allies and Axis using the 'Functions in Combat' as a framework. Students from HQ 11 Sig Bde and 2, 14 and 30 Sig Regts assembled on Sunday 8 June at Brompton

Barracks where we met up with our historian for the week, **Maj (Retd) Tim Saunders MBE**. Despite leaving well before first light the following morning, the exercise had a protracted start after the obligatory delay at Gatwick Airport. The party finally arrived at the final destination in Hania just in time for dinner and an initial recce of the town's harbour. The following day we deployed to the airfield at Maleme, which along with the overlooking Hill 107 was to become the pivotal battlefield of the campaign. The afternoon was rather more poignant with a visit to the massed graves of the many thousands of German paratroopers and mountain troops who lost their lives fighting to secure the Greek island.

The group pay their respects at the Suda Bay CWGC Cemetery

10 June featured a study of the German push to consolidate the western end of the island followed by the emotional experience of a visit to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery at Suda Bay on the north coast. Hindsight is an excellent tool and it is all too easy to forget that at the time of the Cretan campaign, the Commonwealth soldiers were the only Allies opposing the might of the German war machine. The remainder of the tour was spent visiting sites of specific interest around the island, the highlight of which was the 8km trek down the Imbros



Retracing the steps of the Commonwealth forces down Imbros Gorge

Gorge, following in the footsteps of the Commonwealth forces during their evacuation of the island.
There was also an opportunity to visit the ancient Minoan ruins of Knossos. At times the week became a self-induced sleep deprivation exercise: of particular note was the sterling effort put in by **Maj Steve Short** and **Sqn Ldr John Fortune** from Bde HQ. I speak for all those who attended what was a very well organised battlefield tour in extending our thanks to all those involved: our organiser, **Maj Scott Roberts**, **Tim Saunders** of Anglia Battlefield tours and our Hellenic Army Liaison Officers, **WO 'Billy' Zaraklanis** and **Maj Chrissa Paitaki** who certainly added value to our time in Crete.

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159 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH SIGNALS

The attention of The Editor has been drawn to an article published in *The Wire* of February 1964 which featured the **Smith** family. At that time their total service to Signals, beginning in 1899 when **Percy Charles Smith** enlisted in Royal Engineers Signals, was 144 years.

After his discharge in 1920, he was employed as a civilian exchange supervisor in Malta Headquarters putting his uniform back on in 1939 and continuing to serve in the HQ until the end of the war. All 3 of his sons joined Royal Signals and by 1959 when the youngest retired, the Smith family had 130 years of work for Signals with some civilian service included – 90 years of which were in Malta.

Percy Smith's grandsons added another 14 years to the family Signals service. In the 1964 article the challenge was to find any other family who could beat the 144 years.

Mrs Tracey Arlott (nee **Smith**) has written to *The Wire* to say that another grandson has now served for 15 years in the Corps which brings the combined total of military and civilian service to the Signals to 159 years. She wonders if any other family can match this?

From: **Mike Dalby** (Mikejd@autodatum.freeserve.co.uk)
11 Appletree Close
Uffculme, Devon. EX15 3EZ

Lt Col Richard Muir was born in August 1906 and was commissioned as a 2Lt In the Royal Corps of Signals on 29 January 1927. **2Lt Muir** was promoted to Lt in July 1930 and made an instructor with the Royal Signals from 1932 to 1935. He went to Palestine in 1937 when he was promoted to Capt. In 1944 he was promoted to Maj and retired as an honorary Lt Col in April 1946. In March 1930, he bought a recently introduced MG Midget in blue registered OU 4824 from the Morris Depot of the Hazelmere Motor Company in Aldershot.

I am now the owner of the car and interested in motoring history. It was rebuilt in the 1980s in Red and I have owned the car for about 4 years. Does any reader have any further details about him? Did he get married and to whom? Does anyone have any pictures of his car or any similar MG in the Forces. If you can add something to the history, please contact me at the address above.

Yours...

From: Ron Biddle (BIDDLE304@BTINTERNET.COM)
Honeysuckly Cottage
High Street
Porlock , Somerset. TA24 8PT

Dear Sir,

The attached photograph includes my late father, **Sgt RJ Biddle** who is top row 4th from the right. It is noted as being Sergeants Mess 2nd Training Regiment, Catterick Camp, with no date given.

I would like to ask your readers if any of the persons shown in the photograph can be identified.

Yours...

CORPORATE REFLECTION - FALKLAND ISLANDS CONFLICT 1982 - *by Sgt Indra Kumar Gurung*

When I was an 11 year old boy studying in Class 6 in the hills of Nepal, I can vividly remember the Falkland Islands conflict being the main topic of conversation. The media coverage attracted attention all the time since there was an involvement of Gurkhas from not only the British Army, but also from Indian, Singapore and UN Gurkhas. I am the 5th generation serving for the British Crown and I regard this opportunity with great pride and a privilege for me. In the hills of Nepal, joining the Army is a tradition and culture for some castes.

I joined the British Army after my intermediate level and have been fortunate enough to serve in a number of places from South Korea, Hong Kong, Angola, Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq etc. There was always one place in my mind on the other half of the globe which appealed to me to visit; the Falkland Islands.

The golden opportunity came when **WO1(FofS) Mick O'Hara** from Command Support Division organised a staff ride and liaison visit from 22 – 29 June 2008, allowing 16 of us to retrace the steps of the brave soldiers who fought so hard to liberate the Falkland Islands.

It was winter in the Falkland Islands with its typical wind and chill in the air. Everyone was given a part of the conflict to research to produce a detailed account of events in the form of a presentation, followed by walking the ground. The first day's visit was to San Carlos, Darwin and Goose Green. It was such a wise and intelligent decision to select San Carlos Bay to land the first British Forces on 22 May 1982. The ground was suited for all round defence due to the surrounding hills and the direction of attack was a complete surprise to the Argentinians as they did not expect troops to come in from the North. We visited the conflict memorial museum at San Carlos and the war memorial cemetery, which is nicely kept. The Chief Instructor, **Lt Col Andy Knott MBE** laid a wreath, followed by a 2 minutes silence to remember those who fell.

The British Paras and Commandos marched with full combat fighting order in such difficult terrain and weather for about 12 miles towards the South from San Carlos to attack in Darwin and Goose Green. The Camila Creek House was the place where the late **Lt Col H Jones VC OBE** gave orders to his troops. From there, the start line to attack Darwin and Goose Green was about 2 miles. The Argentine position was well defended and they outnumbered the British by more than 3 to 1. Considering the amount of travel and logistic support, some 8000 miles away from Britain, the degree of aggression and speed to attack the enemy and win was unbelievable. As the attack progressed on 28 May 1982, the daylight and the ground gave no concealment; **Lt Col Jones** led his troop himself into the enemy killing zone and gave his life selflessly for the awesome valour and integrity of his fellow comrades.

The second day's visit was an equally important one. After classroom briefings, we set out to visit Mt Harriet, Goat's Ridge, Mt Two Sisters, Mt Longdon, Mt Tumbledown and Mt William. Even without heavy bergens, we could not visit all of these places in one day due to time, difficult weather and terrain. Again, in such a well dug out enemy stronghold, winning the battle was an extraordinary achievement. By the time we reached Goat's Ridge, we heard the sound of a big river flow on either side; it was in fact the continuous wind which fooled us into thinking it was a river flowing. The weather can change so quickly up in the hills and the terrain is very boggy and rocky. It is possible to see how important it was for the Scots Guards to recapture Mt Tumbledown. It was not an easy objective to take as the Argentinian commander, **Gen Menendez** had placed his best soldiers (5 Argentine Commando Bde) to defend this strategically important place. He was not happy when it fell to the British. On

the same day, 14 June 1982, the 1/7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles recaptured Mt William on the south side of Mt Tumbledown. We had the great honour and pleasure of **LCpl Indra Kamal Limbu** being on the trip, as he was following in the footsteps of his father, who was a Falkland veteran; this made it a very emotional moment.

WO1(FofS) Mick O'Hara gives start brief to the team for the battle for Mount Tumbledown at the Mortar Pl's firing point

That evening, we went to stay in Hill Side Camp at Stanley, the capital town of the Falkland Islands. One of the residents, **Mr John Smith**, gave us a first hand account in a classroom presentation on what had happen in Stanley before, during and after the conflict, from the eyes of a Falkland Islander. The following morning, we went to visit the Falkland Island conflict memorial monument near the Governor's office and a conflict memorial museum in the town. The visit gave us a flavour of Stanley too. There were about 2000 people living in Stanley during the conflict and there are about 3000 people living there now. Livestock farming was the main occupation at the time of the conflict and people were living scattered around the Islands but occupations have changed now; fishing and tourism are the main occupations. For example, there were about 75 people living in the San Carlos area at the time of the conflict; there are only around 15 people living there now. Stanley is a copy of a typical Cornish village with cobbled streets and the people act in a very British manner, in fact more than some British people do.

The party under the whale bone monument outside Port Stanley's Cathedral.

On Day 3, we visited Bluff Cove where we heard a story about tragedy where a lot of Welsh Guards lost their lives during an Argentine air raid which sank *HMS Sir Galahad*. It was a very unfortunate and sad story and all of us were moved when we saw the remains of a Clansman radio pineapple antenna element still in the sea water 26 years on. The final visit was to the Mt Pleasant memorial site. There are 3 crosses/monuments on the peak and all are in memory of the crew and passengers of a Gazelle helicopter which was shot down in a blue-on-blue incident on 6 June 1982.

The Gazelle contained 2 AAC aircrew and 2 Royal Signals personnel; **Maj Mike Forge** and **SSgt Joe Baker** from 205 Sig Sqn, who were apparently going to recce some communication positions. The helicopter was travelling west to east and was detected by the *HMS Cardiff* who was south of Mare Harbour but unfortunately, a flight plan had not been submitted. *HMS Cardiff* checked the flight program and with no record of the movement, destroyed it with a Sea Dart from approximately 11 miles away. Here it was the turn of our youngest member **LCpl Newstead**, to lay a wreath on behalf of DCCIS in memory of all those who had fallen.

The fourth day was a liaison visit. First we had a Joint Service Communication Unit Falkland Island brief by **Air Cdre Bolton**. After that, the various subject matter experts from Blandford exchanged current information and solutions on various equipments like Bowman, Realitis Telephone Exchange and Lambeth trunk bearer system with service users on the operation. To close the day's activities, we were privileged to be escorted round the Tornado Squadron where they kindly showed us round the aircraft and their importance on operations in the Falkland Islands. All in all, it was a week very well spent out of the normal daily classroom environment for the whole DCCIS liaison team.

Here in the UK, I think we take for granted the British Forces victory in the Falkland Islands conflict but for me this is now not the case. By actually seeing the Islands, I know that it was a hard fought battle for both sides. It was a success story about sheer aggression, courage and on top of that, bravery. A lot can be learned from this conflict, including values and standards from both British and Argentine Armies. After all, it is all about inspiration!

THE FORCES PENSION SOCIETY

Are you on AFPS 05? – If so read this carefully:

One of our members left the Army in 2006 on AFPS 05 – one of the first to go under the new scheme. His pension was assessed using the best 365 days in last 3 years principle. However, in 2008, when meandering around the MoD website, he noticed the bit on salary calculation for pensions. JSP 764 Pt 1 paras 0305 and 0306 say that although the last 365 days will normally be the best, it is not unknown that the last 3 years include temporary promotion in the earlier part. He also saw that earlier years' income needs adjusting for inflation by increasing them by the same amount as they would have been increased under the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971.

This means that it is quite possible (in a trough year like 2007 for example) for the last 365 days' salary in the last three years to be lower than the first 365 days' salary uplifted by inflation. Our member knew about troughs and questioned SPVA, only to be told his pension calculation had been correct. He had a feeling in his water about this and a quick call to **David Marsh** confirmed he was right.

He challenged MoD again which led to a second response resulting in a pension **increase of over £400 per year** and an additional lump sum of over **£1,300**. Moral of this tale: non members lacking our advice may not be getting their just desserts.

The above story is a specific case but the principle behind it is important to virtually all of us. Do you have, or do you expect to have, an Armed Forces Pension? If so, then who's looking after your pension interests?

THE FORCES PENSION SOCIETY

Seeks improvements to your Armed Forces Pension Scheme Campaigns to have injustices resolved Helps members with service pension problems Has complete independence from the MoD which allows the Society to engage vigorously with parliament, ministers, the chain of command and officials to ensure that the Armed Forces pension Scheme is as good as it can be. The Society also campaigns for old (and new) injustices and anomalies to be corrected.

Since 1946, the Forces Pension Society has been campaigning on behalf of all ranks, their widows, widowers and dependants to seek improvements in the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. It also advises members on their individual Service pension problems. The Society is financed solely through subscriptions and is governed as a not-for-profit limited company. It works in close cooperation with other ex-Service organisations to benefit all past, present and future members of the Armed Forces. No other organisation has the sole purpose of protecting the occupational pension interests of the Services. The Society publishes a popular bi-annual magazine 'Pennant' and members also enjoy access to a wide range of members' services.

Additional benefits of membership include:

Our popular biannual magazine, *Pennant*, which contains a wide range of articles
Regular e-newsletters
FPS Armed Forces Pension Helpline
FPS Group Health Insurance
FPS International Health Insurance
FPS Wills and Probate Service
FPS Property Conveyance and Re-Mortgage Service
FPS Travel Insurance Scheme
FPS *Pennant* Bookshop
FPS Introduction Service

Other exciting affinity schemes are under development

For just £23 per year (£10.50 for widows etc) all Service and ex-Service people and their dependants can become members of the Society. The subscription covers the member and his/her partner jointly.

To find out more, contact us:

Telephone: 020 7820 9988
Facsimile: 020 7820 7583
E-mail: memsec@forpen.co.uk
Website: www.forpen.co.uk

Address: Forces Pension Society
68 South Lambeth Road
Vauxhall. LONDON SW8 1RL

From: **Mr C Story**
10 Congleton Road
Broughton
Chester. CH4 0SX

Dear Sir

On reading the August *Wire* magazine, I reached p47, and the article from 93 (East Lancashire) Sig Sqn (V) about the good old Austin K9 (with picture). At the end of 1959, I was posted to the School of Signals at Catterick Camp as a Radio Relay Operator and reached the dizzy heights of LCpl. Whilst serving with this unit, we daily went on exercise around the Catterick area with a crew of either, officers, or potential officers to instruct them on the operation of the C41 and 1+4 new radio relay system – even before Bruin! My OC during this period was **Capt Kirkby**. The picture enclosed was "my" radio relay vehicle, "Romeo Four", highly polished and well and truly bogged down on the moors near Otterburn, Northumberland, but comms were still established.

We managed to recover this vehicle – I wasn't the driver – using a Scammel from nearby Newcastle. This took the best part of 6 hours, by which time the crew of officers were well versed in making cups of tea and relating stories of old times. What a pleasant surprise to hear about one Austin K9 still living!

Yours…

P.S. Could the driver of Romeo Four still be living?

LOST COMMUNICATIONS

From: **Tony Morgan**
7 Mace Close
Lower Earley
Reading. RG6 7XX
Tel:0118 9860138)

Dear Sir

I am a Life Member of the Royal Signals Association and I would be grateful if you could help me with any details of the following former comrades of mine in the Caribbean Area Signal Squadron between March 1946 and March 1948.

I am now 82, and unfortunately my memory is failing so I cannot remember all their names. I do remember a few details which might jog the memory of someone who served with me or knew them in other places.

One colleague lived in Workington in Cumbria, another was **Donald Blair** and he came from Glasgow. A third called **Peter** (?) **Hastie** came from Peterhead and the last was also a Scot called **Cpl White.** I know it is not much but maybe someone may know them or know where they are now. Please write or phone the address above.

Yours…

From: Mrs Freda Cook

Dear Sir,

It will be 5 years since my husband, **Cpl Pete (Jock) Cook** (137) died on 25 August and I don't know if anybody still remembers him. He join the Army in 1956, first in the RASC as an ambulance driver and then he transferred to Royal Signals in1960 in Denbury. His career was:

61 – 63	Posted to Bahrain
63 – 65	Worcester
65 – 67	Aden
67 – 68	Catterick
68 – 73	Hereford
73 – 76	Bulford
76 – 78	Minden

If anyone remembers him I would like to hear from you. My forwarding address is below as I am leaving England to go and live in Spain.

Albir Caravan Club
Calle Eurim 23
Alfaz de Pi
03580
Alicante. Spain

From: **Mrs BT Cawthorne**
Lilac Cottage
80 Chapel Rd
Tadworth, Surrey.
KT20 5SE

Dear Sir,

During WW2, before I married, I was in the ATS. As **Sgt Bowers BEM**, I served in No 2 Coy ALFSEA. We were the girls to take over from the signalmen at Changi, Singapore in 1946. I would love to hear from anyone who served in ALFSIGS at that time. The article below may be of interest to readers of *The Wire*.

Yours…

BEFORE I FORGET

VE Day and the war with Germany was over. 'Ack ack' was to be disbanded and we were to be demobbed. What job would I get in Civvy Street? Having left school at 14, I had never even sat an exam, let alone pass one.

However, the war in the Far East was still on and when they asked for volunteers for overseas, I volunteered and was remustered into 3 Royal Signals, sent for training on switchboards and put in charge of 37 girls.

We were issued with tropical kit – even Bush Hats – and left the north of England by train to Southampton where we boarded the troopship *SS Alcanterra*.

There was supposed to be an ATS officer to take change but she never arrived so here I was in charge of 37 girls in a troopship taking 3,000 Dutch troops to Java. The journey took almost 6 weeks, I believe. We had a rough passage through the Bay of Biscay, then on through the Med to Port Said.

Going through the Suez Canal was amazing, seeing camel trains walking beside the rail of the ship. As the weather got warmer a message came over the Tannoy: "No male was to sit within 2 feet of a female."

Can you believe it? I spent a large part of my time pulling girls out of officers' cabins. In fact, quite a few girls were sent home on 'compassionate grounds' when we arrived at our destination. We arrived in Trincomalee in Ceylon where there was a message that we had to remain on board and continue to Singapore.

Singapore harbour was so crowded we had to leave over the side of the ship and were taken ashore in landing craft. What an amazing sight it was; sampans in the harbour, rickshaws in the streets, Japanese troops, now prisoners, everywhere.

We were taken out to Changi by lorry where we worked on the telephone switchboards, taking over from the men. Our living quarters were pretty primitive, no doors or windows but Sikh guards slept outside on charpoys. We were among the first girls to arrive from the UK, so we were much in demand for dances.

Off duty we were able to wear civvies for the first time for over 4 years and could go to town and buy silk and have dresses made. After some months in Changi, we moved into Targlin Barracks in Singapore.

I loved the hot weather but a lot of the girls suffered from prickly heat. I had met the man who was to become my husband and we had got engaged and he was due to sail back to England. I was due to be posted on to Hong Kong when fate took a hand.

I collapsed and was rushed to hospital where it was discovered I had malaria. I was treated for some weeks and with much string pulling was able to sail home on the same ship as my fiancée, **Capt C Cawthorne**. Once back in England, I had two more long spells in hospital with malaria attacks before being demobbed in York.

From: **Christine Gallivan** [christinegallivan@btinternet.com]

Dear Sir,

I have been asked to write in the hope that *The Wire* can help in our quest to find information about **Frederick Arthur Valentine Farrer** who was in the Signals in the 1920s and met my great grandmother in the NAAFI in Cologne. They married and when my grandmother **Barbara Louise Farrer** was born he disappeared and was never heard of again. My grandmother who is now in her 80s is hoping to find out something about him.

Could anyone who recognises his name and can help us with further information please contact me at the address above. Any suggestions about where else I might look would also be welcome.

Thanking you in anticipation…

ADVERTISEMENTS

ROYAL SIGNALS SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008

The Royal Signals Squash Championships 2008 are being held 12 -14 November 08 at the Royal Signals Squash Courts, Blandford Camp.

POC is **Maj SA Bason** on 94371 8138.

CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (CCU) WALKDOWN (CYPRUS)

The Walkdown is an annual event held by the (CCU) and takes the form of an orienteering type race over 18 miles from the Troodos Mountains to Episkopi Station. This year's event will take place on Saturday 15 November 2008 and will raise money for the 5 Forces' charities through "The Big Salute."

The event is open to all Service personnel and dependents (aged 13 years and over). Teams consisting of 3 people can elect to enter their chosen category dependant on their composition.

Trophies are awarded to the teams with the fastest times. In addition there is also an overall prize for the quickest team on the day – a very prestigious award, obtainable by only the super fit!

To enter this competition or for more information call CCU SAT on

Cyprus Mil: 94120 Ext 3140 or 2290
Civilian: 00357 25963140 / 00357 25962290).

FOR SALE
A DIAMOND JIMMY BROOCH
£350

Mrs LP Mansergh, widow of **Brig Patrick Mansergh OBE** late Royal Signals, wishes to sell a Diamond Jimmy brooch which was given to her in 1945. Prior to that, it had been in the family since the formation of the Corps. She wants it to be enjoyed by a new owner.

Based on its insurance valuation, **Mrs Mansergh** believes that £350 would be a fair price for the brooch and the money will be donated to the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

14 Palmerstone Court.
St Ann's Park.
Virginia Water.
Surrey. GU 25 4TF.
Tel 01344 841779.

HAWTREY'S GOLD MEDAL

OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL IN ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM

After all the hype in the national media about Team GB's recent haul of medals at the Beijing Olympics, it is interesting to report that the Corps had an Olympic Gold Medal, currently on display in the Royal Signals Museum. The medal was won by **Brig HC Hawtrey CMG DSO** in the 1906 Intercalated Games held in Athens in 1906. These games came about because the Greeks claimed that as the ancient home of Olympic Games, they should be allowed to host an Olympiad every 4 years, inserted between the scheduled Olympics in other countries; hence the term "Intercalated". Although there were some difficulties in the organization, the one and only Intercalated Games was held in Athens in 1906.

In general, the games were regarded as a success but although medals were awarded, the International Olympic Committee subsequently decided not to recognize any records set or medals won. **Brig Hawtrey** won the Gold in the 5 mile (8km) race. **Henry Hawtrey** took the lead after 2 miles (3.2 km) and won easily, beating second placed runner **Johan Svanberg** from Sweden by 50 yards (46 m). The Britons used good team work to aid **Hawtrey** to win, as third-placed **John Daly** was disqualified because he blocked the Swedish runner's way several times. **Daly** was in fact Irish but competitors had to be registered by countries with National Olympic Committees. As Ireland did not have one at that time, all the Irish athletes were registered under Great Britain. In addition to the Gold Medal, **Brig Hawtrey** was presented with a marble statue of Hermes by the Athens Chamber of Commerce. This statue is prominently displayed in the HQ Officers Mess, Blandford.

EXERCISE MIDNIGHT SUN

- by Tanya Tilbury

Ex MIDNIGHT SUN was the Royal Signals Territorial Army exercise to Greenland this year. It was the biggest ever TA expedition, taking place from 2 to 31 August 2008 in 2 consecutive 2-week phases. The exercise also celebrated the 100th anniversary of the TA and tied in with a number of planned events running throughout the year.

More than 80 personnel from all units within the Royal Signals TA (including attached Arms) tested their skills in mountaineering, sailing and sea-kayaking in the remote wilderness of Greenland. The Army communication specialists were also working alongside members of the BT Emergency Response Team to set up a bespoke communications system which was put through its paces by the Royal Signals as they carried out their exercise.

Even before Phase 1 Reservists reached Greenland, the sailors had set off from Gosport on August 29. **Lt Col Richard Quinlan**, CO 10 Sig Regt and the boat's skipper explained that the weather was to be a big factor and the crew could expect to face winds of up to force 10 or 11 in the following weeks. **Lt Col Quinlan** joined the TA exercise for his level of knowledge and sailing skills. The boat he was skippering was a 67ft ex-BT Round-the-World yacht weighing 50 tonnes fully-laden. The *'Adventure'* was very robust and was designed to go the wrong way round the world. It was the 'human software', as **Lt Col Quinlan** described the crew, which he would be more concerned about.

"That's the fragile part," he said. "We are all venerable and there's lots of physical effort required for this trip. The sea is 2 – 4 degrees, there will be icebergs in the water, the air temperature will be 9 degrees maximum, with a wind chill below zero and there will be salt spray. It's going to be very uncomfortable for them and they don't realise it yet." Their plan was to sail up the east coast of the country and meet up with the rest of the expedition crew around 15 August. That crew would then fly home and another crew would sail the boat back. TA soldiers for the first phase of Ex MIDNIGHT SUN arrived at base camp on Monday 4 August. Base camp was set up along the 70km Evighedsfjorden or Eternity Fjord in a small bay called Tasiusaq on Greenland's west coast. It was a remote location, with the nearest town hour-an-half away by motor boat.

Home for the first few days, the tented camp was nestled between glaciers and the air was fresh and cold, with wind chill keeping temperatures just a few degrees above freezing. Staying warm was a priority and the key was to have a steady supply of hot drinks and meals. With fresh food limited, the soldiers relied on ration packs for the length of their 2-week phase. As well as adjusting to the climate and conditions the soldiers spent the first day preparing for their chosen exercises.

The mountaineers split into 3 groups of 5 with varying climbing abilities and were based at different points along the Eternity Fjord. As a major percentage of the peaks in the region have never been climbed before, there was no guide book information for the instructors to rely on. Using local knowledge and their own judgement, each instructor had to decide on a route to lead their group. The peaks range to about 2000m high, rising from sea level and the Arctic environment was key to every climb attempted.

The idea was for each mountaineering group to stand on at least one unclimbed summit. The group furthest away at the end of the fjord was the Christmas Tree camp, led by **Maj John Howell-Walmsley**, 36 Sig Regt. The camp had a morbid history as there is a cemetery close by. The story is told that there used to be a dwelling at the site and while the men were off hunting, 'fire from the sky' came and killed all the women and children. The bodies are buried under rocks at the site, which have collapsed over the years revealing the bones of those who lost their lives.

Maj Tarquin Shipley led the group based at Ice Camp, located half-way along the fjord along a granite cliff. It was probably one of the most visually impressive stretches, just next to a glacier that dips down into the Fjord. Every now and then great chunks of ice break off and float away. There was an eerie rumbling, growling sound as the ice broke away.

The third group, led by **Maj John Owens**, was at Igimasaq camp on a peninsula across the Fjord from the Base Camp. Although opposite the main base camp, Igimasaq is obscured from view by large, rolling granite cliffs. The area offered the mountaineers some challenging climbs. Project Officer, **Capt Cath Stephens**, 36 Sig Regt, described some of the early explorations: "The mountaineers at Ice Camp have had their first day of glacial techniques and rope work. They are off to investigate a secret German spy camp from WW2. Apparently, high in the mountains there is a bunker which still contains radios and equipment left behind by fleeing German soldiers. It was back to basics for the Igimasaq climbers. They did their glacial techniques and found the learning curve as steep as some of the slopes. They went back to some easier hills to consolidate their skills."

On the water, the first phase of sea kayakers had a relaxed few days initially as they waited for the arrival of their kayaks. When the boats arrived, the group began putting their training to the test in the bay at Base Camp. Once they found their sea legs, they then set out across the Fjord to establish a camp of their own from which to explore the area. MOD civil servant, **Pete Richardson**, who teaches outdoor activities at the RM Base in Chivenor, has been the instructor throughout the group's intensive training in the UK. Under his direction, all the kayakers have learnt to paddle to a high standard and **Pete** would oversee all the kayak expeditions for both phases.

As well as basic paddling skills, learning to right the boat if it capsizes was vital when out on the icy waterways of the Fjord. The temperature of the water, about 2 degrees, was one of the biggest hazards facing the kayakers and weather conditions will dictate whether they paddle or not. "The biggest problem is being immersed in cold water because it just sucks the heat out of you. In normal clothing in this water, you will be dead in 20 minutes," **Pete** said. "The kayakers wear a paddle suit – that's the life saver because that will stop you cooling down rapidly. They have had rescue training and should be able to roll back up if they capsize. If they can't, their mate next to them should be able to rescue them."

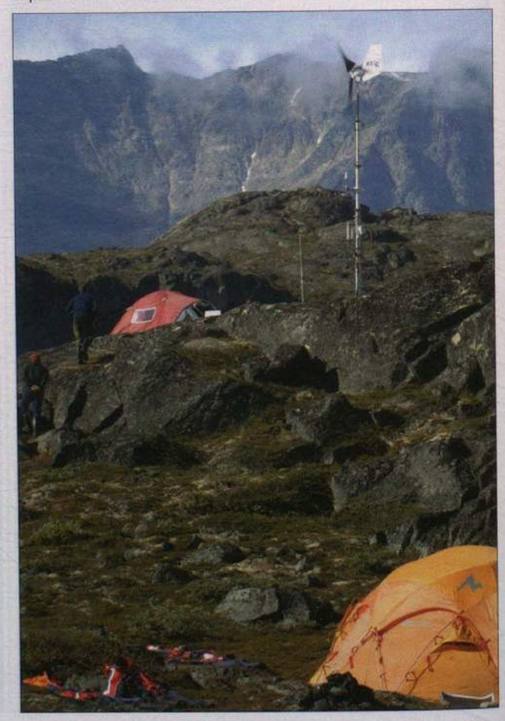
No Royal Signals training exercise would be complete without a unique communications challenge and those on Ex MIDNIGHT SUN certainly had that. For the length of the exercise, a handful of the TA soldiers worked alongside the BT Emergency Response Team (ERT), a small group of communications specialists who are tasked with setting up a network that could be deployed quickly to link essential services during a major emergency both in the UK and overseas. Their task in Greenland was to establish a wireless communications network that could then be rigorously put through its paces by the signallers as they kayaked and climbed their way around the snow-capped mountains.

Places in the ERT are highly sought after and it is acknowledge that those who make the selection process deserve to be there – not only for their communication skills but also for their problem solving abilities. TA soldier, **WO2 Kevin King**, a mobile systems solutions developer and newly recruited to the ERT, competed against thousands for his coveted place. Formerly with 36 Sig Regt, he is now part of a specialist team called the Land Information and Communication Systems Group and his IT skills make him a vital member of the BT ERT. He has already designed a system to maintain power remotely in Greenland.

Kevin, who also joined the sea kayakers for adventure training, explained: "I came out here as military comms support to assist the ERT but I've also been helping to build the base camp infrastructure. Initially the majority of the work was carrying the equipment and quite a few of the communication masts are high up. The concept was to allow the expedition teams to have a safety cover and secondly to relay their videos, photos and blogs to a central location. The strategy paid off. The ERT learned a lot from the exercise and any problems they have had helped them grow and become stronger."

If the engineers could successfully Wi-Fi the remote fjord in Greenland, the expectation was that they should be able to do it during a catastrophic emergency anywhere in the world. The exercise was fully supported by **Brig David Hargreaves**, Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, who was one of the VIPs to visit the soldiers in Greenland with Master of Signals, **Gen Sir Sam Cowan** and his wife **Lady Anne**. The VIPs were treated to a special Greenland-style banquet in the small fishing village of Kangamuit.

Speaking before the exercise, **Brig Hargreaves** said that the expectation was that: "It will be an experience of a lifetime for them. I'm hoping they are going to learn to better themselves and overcome challenges which are greater than they ever thought possible. I hope they will comeback and want to run their own expeditions in the future."



ARMY
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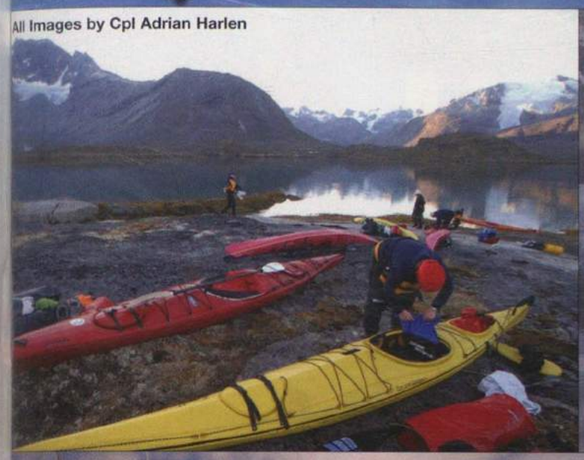
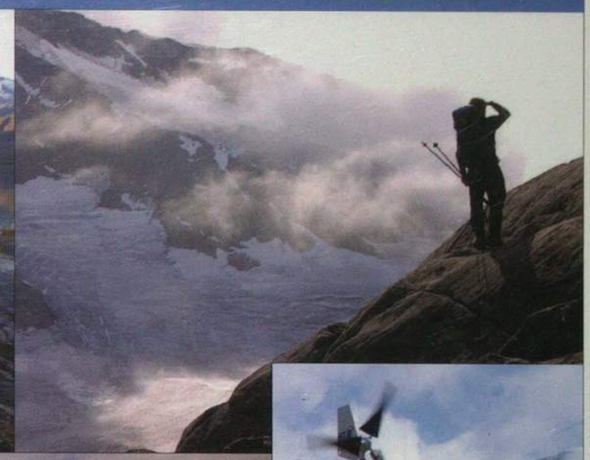
REGULAR & TERRITORIAL

Royal Signals together with BT

All Images by Cpl Adrian Harlen





THE wire

December 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

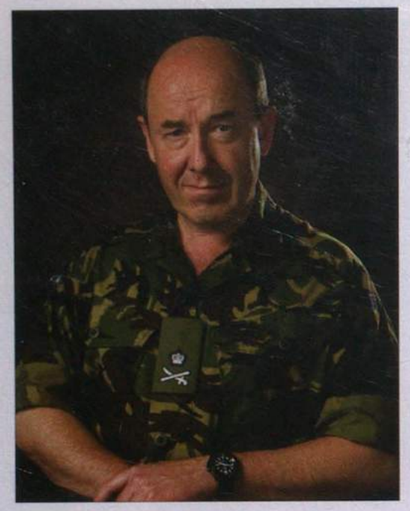
THE wire

December 2008

The Royal Corps of Signals

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER OF SIGNALS

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT BAXTER CBE



It is a pleasure and an honour to use this Christmas message to introduce myself as the new Master to you all – a first for the Corps in having a currently serving officer. I have a hard act to follow in **Sir Sam** and I hope and trust that I do not let you down.

Our work is not always obvious to the layman but as I talk to commanders and their troops in operational theatres it is obvious that your skill and professionalism are highly valued. Your versatility and adaptability in delivering CIS are well known: 32(Scottish) Signal Regiment leading a recent peace keeping deployment have taken that versatility to new dimensions.

This appreciation of what you do has added to, and reinforced, my already great pride in you all across the Regular and Reserve Corps.

My warmest appreciation and regards to the serving Corps, Regular and Reserve, our Veterans, in the Royal Signals Association, and our families who put up with so much. My thoughts at this time are especially with those who have lost loved ones; have been injured or are separated by duty from their families. Thank you all.

Good fortune and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE SIGNAL OFFFICER IN CHIEF (ARMY)

BRIGADIER TED FLINT

In the twelve months that I have been Signal Officer in Chief I have travelled extensively around the Corps to see as many units and meet as many people as possible. Everywhere I have visited, I have been hugely impressed by the warmth of your welcome and the generosity of your hospitality. I have also been struck by the way that you have maintained your energy, enthusiasm and humour no matter how busy you are. Our Corps is in good shape and good heart, and thanks to your excellent work our reputation goes from strength to strength.

On behalf of you all I should like to congratulate **Lieutenant General Robert Baxter** on his appointment as Master of Signals, and thank him for taking on this great responsibility in addition to his day-to-day duties as Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Health). I should also like to thank **General Sir Sam Cowan** for his tremendous service to our Corps during his five years as Master. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude and I know that you will want to join me in wishing **General Sam** and **Lady Anne** all the very best for the future.

Finally, I should like to join with the Master in expressing my deep pride in the Corps, my respect for your achievements and my appreciation for the sacrifices that you have made over the last year, whether you have been on operations or working long hours to support them. Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, serving or retired, I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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EDITORIAL

The year of the TA Centenary has come to an end and reading back through the six editions of *The Wire* this year, it is clear from the articles in every edition just how significant a contribution our TA colleagues make to the Corps at work and at play. Congratulations to the Volunteers, who have served on operations, exercised their Freedom of Entry in towns and cities throughout the country, played hard to win competitions and demonstrated their pride and professionalism to the general public.

I look forward to 2009, which will be my fourth year as Editor. I have to repeat the plea to all scribes to keep to the deadlines and to try to include quality photographs in your submissions. If in doubt about meeting dates, then contact me by phone or email and warn me of your concerns. If we know about a possible late entry then, within reason, we can accommodate it.

Finally, on behalf of *The Wire* office and the other members of RHQ staff associated with the subscriptions, the production and the delivery of each edition, I want to wish all our readers a very Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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FRONT COVER

Former Cpl Bert Thurling, who served as a despatch rider in the Corps from 1947 - 53, meets HRH The Duke of Edingburgh at the Corps plot at this year's opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

BACK COVER

The Royal Signals Photography Competition is still open for entries and the details are on the back cover

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

Name and Rank	Unit to which posted
AUGUST 2008	
A/Maj A Woodley	CSD APPS HQ SOinC(A)
Capt RN Wilson	CSD Nets HQ SOinC(A)
SEPTEMBER 2008	
Maj RD Cowan	21 Sig Regt
Maj GWA Johnston	2 Sig Bde
Maj BJ Spiers	BGSU
A/Maj KJ Simmons	21 Sig Regt
Capt JV Boyden	Off Cdt Sch
Capt RJ Herring	DHU
Capt JW Hooker	14 Sig Regt
Capt MR Mallett	10 Sig Regt
Capt L Potter	30 Sig Regt
Lt PJ King	C Sqn QDG
OCTOBER 2008	
Maj PC Wettenhall	HQ ARRC
Capt CP Jones	AFC (H)
Capt JD King	Fleet C4ISTAR
Capt F Pearce	1 (RBY) Sig Sqn
Lt JM Cunningham	12 Mech Bde & Sig Sqn
Lt CP Goslin	215 Sig Sqn

Name and Rank	Unit to which posted
NOVEMBER 2008	
Lt Col AP Hudson	COS, HQ SOinC(A)
Capt J Chatman	2 Sig Regt
Capt GP Drake	RHQ 10 Sig Regt
Capt KJ Griffiths	HQ ISAF
Capt RS Jacques	DLO
Capt MR Mallett	COB Sp Unit
Lt SJ Rice	ATC (P) 2 Regt
DECEMBER 2008	
Lt Col JM Gale	RSS
Maj RS Gibson	HQ ISAF
Capt I Ahsan	HQ UKTF
Capt SR Bennett	ECM Tp
Capt RL Clifford	MITT
Capt JA Markendale	MITT
Capt Mandeep Singh Rai	10 Sig Regt
Capt JC Wilson	Maternity Leave
JANUARY 2009	
Maj TP Waites	NATO - Shape - NCSA
Maj AJ Large	6th (UK) Div
Capt SR Bennett	ECM Tp

NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS
COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS

CI	**Lt Col AR Knott MBE**
Trg Adjt	**Capt Prembahadur Ale**
DSM	**WO2(SSM) Kevin Dade**
DSM(G)	**WO2(SSMG) Shankar Gurung QGS**

'NEW' COMMAND SUPPORT DIVISION - *by Lt Col Andy Knott*

Everyone from 'Siggy' to 'Star' has a view on command support training, not just for the more obvious courses such as Tp Comds and Supervisors, but for our recruits and also those who will pioneer our foothold in the Infantry Regts. Recently, the C-in-C gave us the green light to direct our efforts to training soldiers to meet the demands of the modern operating environment, declaring that the Field Army will have to concentrate on fighting 'The War'. Making the necessary changes has meant that the notional 4pm Blandford Camp traffic jam fixed in the minds of those that do not actually work here has had to slip to 5pm, giving our instructors the time to massage, modernise and move forward with new, more relevant training that is more in line with the SOinC's vision of our Corps. So what have we done?

Firstly, we have written a scenario that reflects the realities found in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is being used on about 80% of my exs and also more widely within the RSS. It uses the nomenclature of modern operations, CIS and C2 structures within the Joint and Coalition environment and is focused on fighting against the Insurgent. Secondly, we are withdrawing Ptarmigan; only retaining that which will be incorporated under FALCON. Instead of replacing this training like for like with different equipment, we will use the time to shoehorn in a varied programme that will look across equipment capability and CIS support to modern ops. This training has previously lacked the simulation (or even the feel) of that excellent capability found in somewhere like the Jt NETCEN in Kandahar for example, or a Bn Tactical Operating Centre (TOC) in Iraq. We are attempting to re-create this in our existing COMSIM; building a LAN and replicating some of the ICS services likely to be encountered on ops. From here we can start practising our systems and networks approach, which are *de rigueur* in the real world beyond our own camp gates. Don't simply expect to see sand bags and desert cam when you next pass the Old School here – we can all use our imagination on this; it is the CIS and its effective support of the bayonet that really counts. All of the above we have done with the close support of our partners in PJHQ, HQLF, HQ SOinC and the goodwill of our units.

This is the essence of it, although there is so much more going on in the background. This year we have travelled the globe, from the Falklands, to Nepal (and at the time of writing, hopefully to Afghanistan) to name but a few. We have raised tens of thousands of pounds for charity, enjoyed survival exs and fighting insurgents hand to hand (in Copehill Down that is), as well as all manner of adventure training, sports and socials. At work, teaching has gone on regardless and other projects have ranged widely from improving Piddlehinton Camp to moving our Cormorant facilities. Life in this training division is more akin to that found in a Regt, except we are probably better manned right now. At the end of their tenure, Instructors will leave here with the broadest views of modern Defence Comms, having also enjoyed the stability of the training environment. If you have made it to this, my last line, then you might be interested enough to join us yourself; but don't expect to be home at 4pm!

EXERCISE RIVIERA RELAY – SOUTH COAST CHARITY RUN 2008 - *by Capt SJ Maben*

In June, after months of preparation by the ex organiser, **SSgt Jim Thisby**, over 30 members of Command Support Division (CSD) took part in a 150 mile relay race along the South West Coastal Path in order to raise money for Help for Heroes. After a send off from the DCCIS staff in Blandford, all the runners completed the first leg, a 10 mile leg in the middle and the final leg on to Plymouth Hoe; accruing individual mileages in excess of 30 miles in 30 hours.

The terrain varied from flat roads, to hilly coastal paths and sea walls with plenty of spray. Even with some pretty horrendous weather at times, all runners completed their legs in the allotted times and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Morale was boosted by the ever present smiling faces of **Sgts Mick Raine** and **Rachel Allen** who ferried the runners to the various start locations, no matter how unsociable the hour.

Special thanks should go to the support staff from Ex Training Tp who facilitated the whole ex, transported runners between legs and provided the 2 admin points where runners could recover with hot drinks, food and most importantly a place to sleep. It is certain to say that without their help the event would not have been as much of a success and the worthy cause would not have benefited as it did.

In all, the ex raised just short of £3,500 through a collection on camp, individual sponsorship and even some collection from members of the public along the route – suffice to say, the latter was on a paper currency only basis! Along with that raised by CSD in the 3 Peaks Challenge, we totalled over £4500 to go to 'Help for Heroes'.

Handing over the cheques – or a spot of career planning with Brig Watts – Commandant DCCIS

NEWS FROM FORMATIONS

1st SIGNAL BRIGADE
RHEINDAHLEN

Comd	**Brig I Hooper**
DComd	**Col G R Norton**
COS	**Maj J Caesar**
DCOS	**Maj T Blackmore**

Brig I Hooper – the new Comd 1 Sig Bde

Firstly, we welcome **Brig Ivan Hooper** who took command of the Bde on 11 July.

He joins us with his family from the Bowman Tactical Comms project team. He has wasted no time in test driving **Maj Andy Lowe's** wheels, as he considers his choice of tax free car!

HQ 1 Sig Bde continues to be a hive of activity, co-ordinating and providing that all important guidance and direction to 7 and 16 Sig Regts in Elmpt Station, Sp Bn HQ ARRC in JHQ, 22 Sig Regt and 12 Sig Gp HQ in Stafford. Over the summer period there has been a significant changeover in personnel and the inevitable tears (of the people posted out – not in!)

Congratulations go to both the DCOS, **Maj Tim Blackmore** and ex-COS **Maj** (now Lt Col) **Al Long**, the "Pink List buddies", on their promotion (we always knew they were close). Also to be congratulated is **Maj Russ Manning** on his acceptance into the Australian Army.

We also welcome the new COS, **Maj 'Julius' Caesar**, who has travelled from just down the corridor in ARRC G6 and doubled the ginger contingent in the HQ! New additions in the Ops Room are **Maj John Harrington**, **Capt Paul Carpenter**, **Sgt Steve Lowery** and **WO1 James Turner**. We welcome back **Capt Caroline Anderson**, **WO1 Pete Levick** and **Sgt Leon Pears** from Afghanistan.

The G1/ G4 world has also seen endless comings and goings and new faces include, **Capt Sally Calland** in the G1 Discipline chair, the BCWO, **WO1 Jim Goreing**, BOWO, **WO1 Roger Hill-Harding** and Chief Clerk, **Sgt Martyn Nixon**. We will shortly wave goodbye to **Maj Jim Richardson**, **Capt Jo Wilson**, **WO2 Amanda Crosbie** and **WO1 Dave Evans** and wish them good luck in the future.

The Bde HQ is embracing the Corps Recruiting Plan, in particular **Capt Liz Mortimore** who has recently had a baby girl and **Capt Jo Wilson** whose baby is imminent; future SOinCs in the making – perhaps!

Recently on a trip back to the UK, the DComd **Col Norton** arrived to collect a hire car. The firm involved had received a corporate booking in the name, **Mr Graham Norton**. Presuming it was **'The Graham Norton'**, they upgraded the standard Vauxhall for an SLK Mercedes soft top! It was only when the DComd questioned the allocation of the Merc that the firm explained!

The Bde has a busy year ahead as it continues to force generate troops to fill the Op HERRICK CIS role, with soldiers spread disparately over Afghanistan, from the relative comfort of Kandahar to the hostile and primitive FOBs in Helmand Province. As we enter our 3rd rotation of the tour, you would like to think that it has become easier to manage; the ever evolving situation in theatre however manages to keep everybody on their toes. Congratulations go to 16 Sig Regt on a job well done over the last 6 months. They returned to Germany in mid August and after a well earned break have turned themselves round quickly in preparation for the main ARRC ex season. While they have been away, 7 Sig Regt have been holding the fort in Elmpt and with some not insignificant support from 16 Sig Regt, successfully managed to satisfy the demands of the ARRC Staff over DEPLOYEX in May – no mean feat!

The unsung heroes of the piece, Sp Bn HQ ARRC have provided the continuity and stability throughout this busy period with several sterling performances and builds, not to mention a significant contribution towards Ex UNITED SHIELD, a Battlefield Tour encompassing more "stars" than you could shake a stick at. While comms may be considered by some to be the "sexy" side of the Bde, it can be stated that portaloos, transport, defences and tentage however are definitely not - no, not even by the RLC contingent. The Staff would soon get very upset if they weren't available or didn't work, so the hard work is appreciated.

The ex season kicked off with an intellectual twist in the form of Ex ARRCADE FALCON including guest speakers from HQ ARRC, 12 Sig Gp and HQ SOinC. Some of the greatest minds from across the Bde joined to tackle meaty scenarios pertinent to the upcoming months upon which to develop future Bde policy.

Shortly afterwards and back in the fresh air again, Ex WARRIOR CHARGER took place on Elmpt Station and was deemed largely to be a success after some initial teething problems. The Germany based element of the Bde now faces Ex ARRCADE FUSION in Sennelager, Ramstein and Sardinia and inevitably the plethora of ICS and RLS challenges that go with it. 22 Sig Regt is currently carrying the Op HERRICK torch and nearly 2 months into the tour. All is going well and R&R is on the horizon for some already. The Stafford based element continues to provide much needed support to UK based training and of course the FALCON Implementation Team.

Over the next year, the HQ will pick its way through the challenges and opportunities posed by Op HERRICK, NRF, BCIP 5 Conversion, REACHER and FALCON Implementation to name but a few. It's going to be busy and following the implementation of a new, gruelling PT regime for all in the HQ on occasion, fairly exhausting too!

11th SIGNAL BRIGADE
DONNINGTON

Comd	**Brig CJ Thackray**
DComd	**Gp Capt SA Richardson**
COS	**Maj I Blower MBE**
DCOS	**Maj A Jenkins**

HAIL AND FAREWELL

The HQ has seen a few comings and goings over the past 6 months. We bade farewell to **Maj Sharron Nesmith** who departed on promotion to Lt Col; **Capt John Evans** left for a Gucci posting in London (penthouse suite included apparently!); **WO2(SQMS) Andy Wilkinson** moved to Beaconsfield and will attempt to learn to speak the Queen's English whilst serving at the Defence School of Languages; **Capt Taff Owens** left to become the OC BGTU in the sunnier climate of Warminster; **Cpl Emma Brett** RAF moved to Shrewsbury. The HQ wishes you all well in your new appointments.

We welcome the following into the HQ; **Maj Ian Blower MBE** the new COS; **Capt Tom Moran** in the SO3 J3 Ops post; **Flt Lt Russ Barnes** filling the seat as SO3 J6 Eng Ops; **WO2(SQMS) Taff Jones** the new Staff Assistant to the HQ. **Cpl Nicky McConnachie** is the new RAF Clerk who decided, once the HQ were familiar with the spelling of her surname, to get married and change her name to **Gristock** – many congratulations on your recent marriage. We welcome you all to Donnington and hope you and your families have settled in.

Finally we must say a special welcome back to **Capt Hodge Arthurs** who returned to the Bde after a 2 year spell away, then spent the first 6 months on Op HERRICK with 30 Sig Regt.

FAMILIES BBQ - *by Cpl Si Emmett*

The Bde BBQ was a rare opportunity for all members of the Bde and their families (past and present) to come together to relax, eat, drink a few beers and play some games. We all prayed for the sun and were not disappointed; the day was a scorcher and we were glad we had tents erected to act as a sunscreen as the summer this year has been so unpredictable.

The COS, **Maj Ian Blower MBE** arrived in style by dragging a cartload of beer from his house; it was a feat to match the strength of Goliath.

The Bde Comd, **Brig Jake Thackray**, started things off by "selecting" his dream cricket team. Things really started to heat up when DComd, **Gp Capt Simon Richardson** was picked as the opposing Captain. There were many "howzats" and howls of laughter as **Maj Steve Short** was bowled out for a duck by the Comd's youngest son. To save any more blushes, the cricket was abandoned for the more sedate game of rounders.

Kerry Richardson was a bit of a dark horse and managed to score a few runs. It was also an opportunity for **Cpl Chris Davies-Morris** to show us how good he is at rounders, even though he didn't actually take part in the game; he preferred to do the "coaching" from the sidelines. The Comd's dog **Kit** had a fantastic time as there was lots of spare food; namely sausages floating around. At the end of the day, he was just lying there unable to move. All in all a fantastic day was had by all.

ADVENTURE RACING - *by Flt Lt Russ Barnes*

Adventure Racing...heard of it? Nor had the Bde HQ. They thought it was another Crab Air venture; but **Flt Lt Russ Barnes** descended on the Nation's Capital and competed in the annual London Rat Race which tests fitness, nerves, teamwork and stamina. The 2-day event saw budding runners, mountain bikers, tri-athletes, extreme sport junkies and adventure racers, from around the world, race across 14 London boroughs and gain unprecedented access to some of the most famous city sites.

This event is a physical feast, similar to orienteering, which seeks to cram in activities and challenges, ranging from the overtly adventurous to the downright surreal; from epic free-hanging abseiling off the stands of Twickenham Stadium to donut eating with Homer Simpson at Liverpool Street Station.

Day 1 – from the outset and the initial briefing pack, Day 1 appeared be a walk in the park. How difficult could a civilian NavEx around London be? All you have to do is navigate to a series of checkpoints (CPs) on foot around central London, collect points and return to the event village in the shadows of Tower Bridge for tea and medals. Little did we know! First the route is a closely guarded secret and the locations of CPs are only published, with an accompanying London A to Z, 1 hr before the race starts.

Second, in true Rat Race fashion not all CPs are genuine. And as for the CPs, they're not your standard stands you would find on a military ex. There was rock climbing in the grounds of St Paul's Cathedral, sumo wrestling in The Strand, boxing circuits in the East End and a butcherous hair cut in Bank, to name but a few.

Day 2 – With the unsociable start time of 0645hrs on Sunday, Day 2 was not welcome and once again we were presented with another London A to Z and a long and well-known series of CPs. It wasn't until we started plotting the new CPs did the scale of Day 2 dawn upon us.

In short, we were presented with navigating ourselves west from Tower Bridge to the M4 and then criss-cross the Thames, all the way back to Tower Bridge. Thankfully, Day 2 was predominately on bicycles but today's kit list made reference to running, climbing, abseiling and 'water-activities'.

Over the subsequent 10 hrs, we covered a distance in excess of 90km on bike, foot and canoe, through central London and numerous surrounding boroughs undertaking a plethora of activities testing everything from your physical stamina to sense of humour. The highlights of which were a 90ft abseil off Twickenham Stadium, a BMX time trail, Parquor (free-running), a river crossing and a visit to Fuller's Brewery.

Look! – Flt Lt Russ Barnes cannot walk on water

In sum, Adventure Racing, specifically urban Adventure Racing, offers an unparalleled ticket to venture out of your comfort zone right into the streets and waterways of the UK's metropolitan playgrounds; offering competitors an opportunity to race in a multi-disciplined challenge of navigation, endurance and skill. Get involved!

LOOK FORWARD

The next instalment of *The Wire* will include articles about Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS which was a huge Theatre Troops ex involving all elements from the Bde. We'll also be able to report on Ex JOINT VENTURE which is the UK's biennial Tier 3 Joint Force ex in the planning and conduct of joint ops, scheduled to take place in Cyprus for those lucky few taking part.

NEWS FROM THE REGIMENTS

2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT
YORK

CO	**Lt Col JJ Cole OBE**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) JA March**

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Anderson**
SSM	**SSgt D Roberts**

Life continues at a pace in Sp Sqn. As well as managing all the in-barracks daily routine we have also provided administrative and logistical support to both Ex ROMAN COHORTS and Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS 08. With the autumn exs now under our belt, we are looking forward in anticipation to the Combined Inspection Week at the start of December, great! This will be a testing time as we will have the ECI, LSI, PSI and SPS inspections all in the same 5 day period. Time to dig out last year's reports, I hear the SMEs say!

There have been the inevitable comings and goings of personnel over the summer months with special congratulations going to **Maj Slack** who has recently been promoted and posted to Catterick as SO2 BOWTAG(N). Fond farewells also go to **WO2(RQMS) Les Tobbell** and **WO2(RQMS) Kev Crawford**, both into civvy street, we wish them well in their future chosen careers. Congratulations go to **SSgt Daz Roberts** on his recent selection for promotion to WO2, **Cpl Billy Davison** on his selection for promotion to Sgt, **Sgt Muzzy Musgrave** on his promotion and posting to Cyprus (some people have a charmed life) and to 3 of our female soldiers: **Cpl Belcher**, **Sig Fahey** and **Sig Lewins** on new additions to the family. We welcome all the new personnel to a busy Sqn and hope you settle into life in York quickly whilst wishing all those that have moved on all the very best in their future employments and postings.

POSTINGS IN AND OUT FROM AUGUST – OCTOBER

Postings In	Postings Out
Maj Bosley	**Maj Taylor**
Lt Copson	**WO1 (ASM) Deakin**
WO1 (ASM) Eckersley	**SSgt (Art Veh) Porteus**
WO2 (RQMS) Graham	**Sgt Belshaw**
SSgt (Art Veh) Light	**Sgt Yam Gurung**
SSgt Pargin	**Cpl Carter**
Sgt Kennaugh	**Cpl Dickinson**
Cpl Bates	**Cpl Golding-Smith**
Cpl Burnell	**Cpl Knibbs**
Cpl Lomax	**Cpl Shaw**
Cpl Rizza	**LCpl Colling**
Bdr Wilson	**LCpl Jackson**
LCpl Chapplow	**LCpl Jones**
LCpl Cook	
LCpl Dau	
LCpl Jordison	
LCpl Laidlaw	
LCpl Priest	
LCpl Shevill	

Cfn Sadler
Sig Bagshaw
Sig Haddow
Sig Munetsi
Sig Sharp
Sig Stather
Sig Caven
Sig Nicholls
Sig Pigan
Pte Varey

REGIMENTAL TRAINING WING

All the Training Wing staff would like to say a fond farewell and good luck to the Training Officer, **Capt George Hume MBE**, **WO1(YofS) Ian Rutland** and **Cpl Chris Brown**. With pre-deployment training and PNCO around the corner, the new Training Officer, **Capt Brendan Plant** takes up his throne at the head of a very busy Wing. Filling the Training Yeoman position is **WO2(YofS) Mitch Mitchell**. No more skiving in Sqn Ops for you **Mitch**! Another addition to the team is **Sgt John Kennaugh**, recently arrived from Blandford.

The Wing has just completed another pre-deployment live firing package in Barry Buddon for 214 Sig Sqn who deploy to sunny Iraq in the very near future. This package was enjoyed by all firers from the OC Sqn down to the first tour Sig. Also taking part in the package were some of the JFCIS team including the CO. **Sgt Mick Partridge** who stepped up as SRCO was relieved to have no blinds this time round on the grenade range, compared to the 7 blinds on the last pre-deployment package. Many thanks to all those who provided admin support which was headed up by SSM and SQMS of 214. This made the life of the range staff as easy as possible.

The next thing on the Training Wing's busy calendar is the first of many Potential NCO courses which replace the old cadre course Ex KEY LEADER. This will be headed up by **Sgt John Kennaugh**, using the experience he gained from 4 Military Training Sqn in Blandford. The first course starts on 27 October 2008.

Congratulations to **Sgt Jim McGrory** on passing selection to attend the Sandhurst Instructor Cadre, nice one **Jim**!

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Randell**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) A Hayes**

LIVE FIRING AT BARRY BUDDON - *by Cpl Robb*

On an unusually warm September morning, 214 Sig Sqn deployed to Barry Buddon to commence a week of live firing in preparation for Op TELIC 13. On arrival in Scotland we were spilt into our respective sects and briefed as to what to expect of the next 4 days.

Day 1 consisted of no rain which surprised everyone and then the training started! Top cover shoots from the Snatches gently eased us into the ranges, followed by the casualty evacuation range. After that range was done and dusted, **Sig Lyndsey Manche** decided to become a casualty herself, thanks to a rabbit hole, a hill and forward momentum; for her the ex was over.

Day 2 started quietly too with the Pistol APWA with **Sgt Mick Jennings** upsetting **WO2(FofS) Sanderson** by beating his score by a measly one round. Next was the extraction from an immobilised Snatch. Thanks to a great demonstration from **Cpl Marty Sloan**, **Sgt Mick Jennings**, **LCpl Wayne Sturdy** and **Sig 'Dono' Donoghue** of how not to do it properly, the range staff all excited. It all went swimmingly!

On Day 3 there was the Sqn parade to hear the results of the IS Engrs Sig to LCpl Promotion Board. After all the back slapping was over, it was time to board the TCVs once again to take the fight to some sneaky Taliban looking Figure 11s. Day 3 was quite a relaxed day with a Pistol CQB and a GPMG shoot, with a little taster of OBUA thrown in for good measure. Day 4 started just like the previous day with the Sqn forming up to hear the Sig to LCpl Promotion Board Results. Congratulations to those from 214 who were selected for promotion.

Unnamed soldier defends Snatch from angry Fig 11!

The last day saw us on the Grenade Range which was an experience for some and practice for the rest of us. Then there was the range we all were looking forward to; the Sect Attack Range. This was the only range left to complete before Endex was called, so with what seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of ammo, smoke and Chorley grenades we set off to take the fight to those pesky figure 11s. The first assault went well and then my sect rotated to being the fire support for the second assault. I came to realise we were assaulting the Shetland Islands and the poor Norwegian Exchange Officer thought he was going. Luckily those of us who were in the fire support sect were running extremely low on ammo, so when the third position popped up we expended our remaining rounds and then we heard those glorious words "Stop! Stop! Stop! Unload!" and for us the training was over. All that was left to do was clean the weapon systems and get ourselves back to York the following day.

All in all the Sqn had a fantastic time on the ranges. All those who partook thoroughly enjoyed themselves and learnt a great deal. Thanks must go to the 2 Sig Regt Training Wing staff for a great range package and also to all the support staff who sorted out all our admin while we were on the range.

THOR TROOP – THE ONES THAT ARE LEFT BEHIND
- by LCpl Parvin

September has been a busy period for the Tp. It has been reformed as Thor Tp (Viking Troop is no more) and is preparing to take over the rear-details duties while the rest of the Sqn deploy on Op TELIC 13.

Thor Tp has said goodbye to **Lt Gray** and has a new OC, **2Lt Barter**, who introduced herself to the Tp by falling off her rather expensive racing bike on the way to work. We have recently said goodbye and best wishes for the future to: **Sgt Crutchley**, who was successful in being selected for the YofS course, **Sgt Steve Armstrong**, **Sgt Mickey Lake**, **Cpl Mac McCulloch**, **Cpl Al Young** and **Cpl Rob Dilger**. The new arrivals are **Sgt Stu Street**, **Sgt Lee Lyon**, **Cpl Craig Eden**, **LCpl Matt Parvin** and **Sig 'Rhino head' Rourke**. The lucky people returning to sunny York from a tour in Tampa Bay, Florida will also boost the Tp in numbers.

A number of us have been nominated to help 20 Armd Bde fill spaces for Op TELIC 13, so to that end they have been busy getting ready for deployment for a 6 month tour in Basra. As of the end of October, they will have returned from an arduous ex in the deepest valleys of Bavaria with 20 Armd Bde and will be fully trained for deployment. **Sgt 'Tiz' Tyrrell** would like to thank them for their hard work and co-operation in the preparation for the deployment and wishes them all good luck for the future. Having handed over the ICS Detachment (R1) to 246 Sig Sqn, the Tp is looking forward to taking charge of the Sqn's Cormorant Dets, which involves AS Operators being retrained as Cormorant Operators, Ex KEY LEADER (PNCO), ECIs, as well as assisting the deploying elements of the Sqn with the final preparations for their Op tour. While the majority of the Sqn are away, those of us left will be filling our time with career courses, AT and maintenance of the Sqn's comms assets.

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Clixby**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) J Kielty**

BAGHDAD COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (BCU)

OC	**Lt G Sayner**
SSgt	**SSgt S Young**

THE CORMORANT HAS LANDED..... IN BAGHDAD

Cormorant has previously deployed to ops in Cyprus (Op HIGHBROW 2006), MND(SE) (Op TELIC 2006/07) and Kosovo (Op VALERO 2008). Additionally, it is currently deployed in Kuwait (Op GRIMES). Now, with the planned move of UK military from the Republican Palace in Baghdad, Cormorant has been deployed for the first time ever to Baghdad!

- by LCpl 'Frenchy' French

When members of 219 Sig Sqn, currently deployed to Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) were called on to provide some additional comms in Baghdad, there was an air of anticipation as Cormorant had never been to Baghdad before...and it was only the 5th deployment of the system! When **Sig 'Chino' O'Callaghan** and I were told that we were moving the det up to FOB Union III in Baghdad, we thought it would take a total of 24 hours to get to our final destination – how wrong we were!

The first part of our journey was driving from Camp Buehring, Kuwait to Kuwait International Airport. The 2½ hour drive in temperatures up to 45 degrees and no air-conditioning felt like a lifetime. After a few hours waiting around it was time to drive the vehicle onto the C130.... let's just say it was a tight squeeze. We finally arrived at Basra Air Base thinking that we were just dropping some passengers off until the air movers told us that the weather in Baghdad was too bad to fly and that we had to stay the night.

With nowhere to go, the movers kindly put us up in their brew room. We woke the next day thinking we would be flying to Baghdad, but then the guys came in and told us the bad news..... we had to stay another 3 days to wait for another flight. After 3 long days of stagging on in the det and with **Sig O'Callaghan** sleeping for Allied Europe on a couch, it was finally time to leave Basra and fly to Baghdad.

Actually arriving in Baghdad was a relief but we were both shattered and morale was low. We thought that all we had now was the road move to FOB Union III but as usual we were wrong. We inched the CLASp off the plane and headed for the US compound where the vehicle would wait to be loaded onto a KBR road move. So we would have to stag on again and the Americans would not let us stay in their compound, so we had to park up outside Brit House and await confirmation of our road move. At least at Brit House we were looked after by the BCU Sig Det from 219 Sig Sqn.

We had accommodation, a few bevvies and even did a spot of fishing, so things were starting to look up! After 4 days, news came that we had to get the vehicle ready for the road move. The OC Sqn, **Maj Alex Clixby** decided to come along for the ride, just in case the Yanks needed someone to man the .50 cal and off we all went for a US Army mission brief.

Cormorant on route!

Well, I don't really know how to explain what went on in the briefing but not much of it made sense; you couldn't actually hear what they were talking about! We got geared up, jumped into armoured US vehicles and set off for the Cross Swords within the IZ in Baghdad. Following an uneventful road move along the notorious Route IRISH as part of a 40 vehicle resupply convoy, we arrived safely and got the vehicles unloaded and moved to FOB Union III, where **Sgt 'Jono' Johnson** and **LCpl 'Ash' Ashfield** were eagerly waiting for us.

Sgt Johnson and LCpl French setting up

Since arriving we have been busy setting up the det. **Sgt Johnson** has been scaling 12ft blast walls with a ladder in one hand and a saw in the other to chop branches off trees to clear the path for our Talon shots and at least now we can see a satellite! We are now ready to establish comms and push out another 2 months until home. Happy days.....

KUWAITI SUPPORT FACILITY CIS TROOP

OC	**Lt J Corns**
Tp SSgt	**SSgt S Sweeney**

The Kuwait Support Facility (KSF) CIS Tp provides J6 services to the UK personnel in Camp Buehring and other locations in Kuwait largely based on Cormorant and Talon systems. The UK presence in Camp Buehring is ever growing as units migrate from the COB in Basra. Force Support Elements largely made up of the Logistics and other support units have been moving South at an ever increasing rate placing a lot of pressure on the Tp to provide the comms infrastructure and facilities here. We have also been involved in some other key projects supporting the Baghdad Communications Unit (BCU). When we're not at work Camp Buehring offers a range of welfare facilities courtesy of the US military. This helps the time go by. The gym facilities are excellent and there are regular organised sports tournaments. The Tp has taken full advantage of them, coming away with a lot of silverware.

Recently we were visited by the CO, **Lt Col Cole OBE**, accompanied by **Capt (TOT) Brown** and **WO1(YofS) Faramus**. We would like to thank the CO for taking the time to come and see us. They seemed to enjoy their stay and it was good to hear news of the rest of the Regt. As the tour carries on, we now only have weeks to push and our thoughts are looking towards a good HO/TO with 214 Sig Sqn and then bring on Christmas!

Having already had plenty of hands on Cormorant experience in KSF, I asked the Tp Comd if I could get attached to 207 Sig Sqn in the COB. I went for a month to gain more Bowman experience, get my first medal and to break up my tour. I was nervous because this is my first tour and I didn't think I would know anyone there which would make it harder to settle in, but soon as I landed I was met by **Sig Stokes** whom I knew from Blandford – good start. I was taken straight down to the SQMS to sign for my kit and move into my new room in Allenby lines, very cosy unless your claustrophobic!

From there I was taken up to Div HQ, my work place for the next month. There I met **SSgt Smith** and **Sgt Beerling** as well as some of the lads in RADCON from 207 Sig Sqn. I knew some of the lads from Blandford so that was a bit of a relief. From there I was taken to the ranges to zero my rifle and there I met someone I had thought I would not see again **SSgt (YofS) Green**; he was a big help in Blandford and now I was at ease. I had been here for half an hour and already done so much and met a few friends I had not seen in a while.

Talk about skill fade, on my first night shift, my VP was shocking, going from Blandford with **Mr Strawn** talking you through it and then in unit exs, where it's relaxed. But real time, everything was at 100mph and I really thought 'what the hell have I got myself into and I forgot how to speak at one point! As the night went on things got better, I got up to speed and things went nicely. Night shifts were always quiet but on the 3rd night after I finished my stag on the radio, I went into the main hall just to relax, when suddenly the IDF alarm went. Prior to this I didn't know what it sounded like but I jumped out of my skin thinking that doesn't sound good. Looking around I noticed people had hit the deck, so at that point I thought I should too – welcome to the COB!

While I was there I was shown the Tacsat and DSC 506. I took on more on the Tacsat because to me it resembles Bowman and will be more widely used in the future. All in all, my month's experience at the COB was well worth it. I was glad I went, seeing how another Sig Sqn works and being able to fit in. After my month was up, I came back to Camp Buehring to finish my tour. Thanks to all of 207 Sig Sqn for their hospitality especially RADCON. As for me, I can't wait till the end of tour.

HELLOS AND GOODBYES

While here at Camp Buehring we have seen people come and go, first off **Lt Jones** who was posted to AFC Harrogate as a pl comd, we wish you all the best there. **Lt Corns** has taken over the Tp. **LCpl Braithwaite** broke his wrist playing football and was flown home. **LCpl Gee**, **Sig Houghton** and **Sig Usher** have moved to BCU and will finish their tour there. Soon to follow them with the H308 Det is **Sgt Johnson**, **LCpl French** and **Sig O'Callaghan**. Have fun lads and see you all in December. **LCpl Harrison**, **Sig Dau** and **Sig Jepson** came in to join the fun from Baghdad and we have also had **LCpl Mercer** arrive to provide cover for **Sig Hill** while he is on R&R.

246 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B G White**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Dhirbahadur Pun**

HARRISON TREK – A CHARITY FOR THE NEW FUTURE NEPAL - *by Cpl Barun Sherchan*

Over 20 personnel from 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, mostly Kowloon Tp departed to Castle Howard, on 21 June to support "Harrison Trek", a fund raising charity organised by **Mr Collin Culley**, a key member of New Futures Nepal. The Trustees of New Futures Nepal have been working to help homeless, disabled people and support vulnerable street children in Kathmandu.

After setting up, we had a brief from **Capt Ganesh Gurung**, OC Kowloon Tp. Amongst us were also Gurkha ladies, many of whom were dressed in Nepali traditional dress, which added a touch of magic to the event. Over 200 walkers took part in walks of 2.5 or 15 miles around the grounds of Castle Howard and the surrounding Howardian Hills. We were allocated to different marshalling points within the walk route. Fund raising was further aided by selling raffle tickets and delicious and fragrant Momo and Aaludam, prepared by Gurkha ladies. Gurkha soldiers donated the prizes for the raffle draw, which were of Nepalese origin. This was also an ideal opportunity to sell and promote Gurkha Fine Food products, which has been supporting the Gurkha Welfare Trust. The day succeeded in raising a great deal of money for the Trust.

Finally, on behalf of 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn and families, we would like to thank those people who committed their time and efforts to such a noble cause.

CORMORANT DISPLAY AT EADS NEWPORT
- by LCpl Kishan Ale

On 15 August, ICS Det 2 was deployed to EADS in Newport to display Cormorant and MITRAL (satellite communications) for an EADS family open day. We arrived at Newport on the evening of 15 August and did a quick site visit. The following morning, we set up our dets (CLASP & MITRAL) and anxiously waited for the visitors. The weather was cloudy and drizzling throughout the morning and afternoon but there were other stands as well. Among them Cardiff Blue (Rugby) managed to attract many youngsters, mainly due to the staff/players from Cardiff Blue giving away club merchandise and autographs.

The visitors, members of EADS, friends and families started to arrive in the afternoon. Many of the EADS staff worked on the Cormorant programme and they were very proud to be able to show their friends and family the product and the deployed capability. They were all very pleased to see Cormorant/MITRAL as well as the soldiers who operated it and were very pleased to see and hear of its performance, capability and 9 months Op TELIC deployment in 2006. They were very happy to see their equipment in the good hands.

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron at the EADS Open Day

SENIOR BRITISH MILITARY ADVISOR (SBMA) REAR

Sek Kong Tp has now completed its staggered take over of the SBMA Rear HQ within the US CENTCOM in Tampa Florida. The 8-man team provides the vital CIS to **Maj Gen Thomas** and his staff allowing them to liaise with the UK and the US military on a variety of systems. A peach of a post, it affords the det the opportunity to work hard and play hard in the Florida sun. The HQ is well established on the MacDill Air Force Base right in the

heart of Tampa. The HQ is fairly dynamic as the staff often deploy to SBMA Fwd in Qatar at short notice. The base itself is about the same size as Wales and boasts two 18 hole golf courses. The fairway is where you are most likely to find **Sgt Chandra**, who has earned himself the nickname **'Bandit'** amongst the HQ on the count that he claims to be rubbish but then wipes the floor with anyone. Unlike **Lt Harrison** who is more likely to be found in a bush! The social life here is very good and the det is usually found at the heart of it, hosting the HQ for Gurkha curry nights and BBQs. It's not all margaritas; there is an element of danger here. It could be being eaten alive by mosquitoes when searching for a golf ball in a swamp, dodging 10ft alligators kayaking on the Hudson river or avoiding cougars at the local watering holes. The cougars are quite partial to the British accent! The 6 month tour is a great opportunity to experience American culture and their way of life. The det has integrated well, with many playing for local soccer teams. The recent passing of Dashain saw members the det celebrate the festival in South Florida along with the local Nepalese community. **Cpl Akash** went back to his roots as a pop star and sang a few songs to an adoring crowd, much to the amusement of the rest of us. **Cpl Chaityana** and **LCpl Nishan** believe they are starring in an MTV soap spending all of their free time at 'the mall' in fancy coffee shops and boutiques. They are probably the 2 best dressed Gurkhas around. The now **Sgt Kishan** had the honour to be promoted by **Maj Gen Thomas**. Congratulations to him!

10th SIGNAL REGIMENT
CORSHAM

CO	**Lt Col SL Copley**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) D Rayson**

VIEW FROM RHQ - *by Maj Alex Senneck*

RHQ returned from summer leave and hit the ground running. The new CO and Regt 2IC both started on the same day and immediately deployed on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS in command of CP10 with the Ops team. Subsequent to the deployment of CP10 the Ops Team redeployed with the Bde Staff to help out with the ex and put the TA elements of the Bde through their paces. A good ex was had by all and the remoulded CP10 performed well throughout and to the satisfaction of the Bde Comd.

Lt Col RJ Quinlan handing over command to Lt Col SL Copley

241 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj G Pardew**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Morgan**

SHQ

I would like to begin by formally welcoming **WO2(SSM) Mark Morgan** into the Sqn. He comes from 14 (EW) Sig Regt with much experience and has already had a significant impact on our training regime for the benefit of all members of the Sqn. Two Installation Technician Surge Teams are poised to deploy to Ops TELIC and HERRICK. The Sqn also remain committed to numerous exs within the UK, Germany and Cyprus. Testament to the professionalism of the 241 Mechs and benefit of the 'Brigading Plan' are the results from recent promotion boards. Congratulations go to the following Sqn personnel: **SSgt Matt Stowell**, **Cpl Keen**, **LCpls Caisley**, **Cook**, **Johnson** and **Duggan**.

LIMA TROOP - *by Sig Mike Thorbinson*

OC	**Capt A P Manley**
SSgt	**SSgt S Reeves**

LANYARD TROPHY TRAINING AND COMPETITION

It has been yet another busy month in the Tp with Lanyard Trophy, NARO exs, Ex IRON TRIANGLE, an excursion to Brunei as well as all the other normal tp and sqn activities. **Capt Manley** successfully led the Regt Lanyard team, capably backed up by the willing and eager **SSgt Reeves**. Training commenced at SENTA Camp, Sennybridge early on 25 August and after 2 weeks intensive and arduous training, we felt we could take on the world and wouldn't let anything stand in our way. How wrong we were.

We managed to complete the course in 15 hrs 14 mins, but more importantly, we did it with all 10 team members. Although this was mainly due to our sheer grit and determination it wouldn't have been possible without the help of the admin team headed up by **WO2(SSM) Morgan** with his minions from the other two Tps, **Sgt Green** and **Cpl Lane**.

LIMA TROOP ROLL OF HONOUR

The Tp would like to say welcome to **LCpl 'Alfie' Moon** who arrived this month on completion of his Class 1 at Blandford. Also from Blandford came **Sig Purcell** who had just completed his Class 3. The Tp says a big farewell to **Sig Stu Cardy** who begins his termination leave later this month. Lima Tp would also like to congratulate **LCpl Caisly** and **LCpl Johnson** on their recent selection for promotion to Cpl.

KILO TROOP - *by Cpl Damo Williams*

OC	**Capt SLR Gray**
SSgt	**SSgt M Stowell**

EXERCISES CHELSEA SCORPION AND LAST POST SCORPION

Due to August being a maximum leave period, the Sqn organised a number of cultural exs, one of which was a visit to the National Army Museum in Chelsea. Because of the Sqn's high operational tempo, the Museum kindly conducted a number of presentations on the three Afghan Wars, which was of particular interest; offering an important background to the current conflict in which a majority of the Sqn has had much involvement. It was a very interesting day out which I would recommend to anyone.

A week later on 13 August, the Sqn visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire for Ex LAST POST SCORPION to pay our respects to the members of the Armed Forces that have fallen since WW2. This was made all the more poignant with the sad news of the death of **Sig Wayne Bland** from 16 Sig Regt, who was

killed in Afghanistan on 11 August 2008. After finishing the daily act of remembrance in the Millennium Chapel, we all took a walk around the extensive grounds stopping at the Royal Signals Memorial where we all had another 2 minute silence ceremony conducted by **Capt Simon Gray.**

On 1 September, the Tp took over responsibility for Op HERRICK surge tasks for the next 4 months. **Sgt Glen Sunderland** along with a team of 6 are deploying on Op HERRICK in the near future to install internal communication infrastructure to a number of sites.

ARRIVALS AND FAREWELLS

This month we say a few farewells; firstly to **SSgt Matt Stowell** who leaves to go to Op TELIC as WO2 SCIDA and then is posted to 30 Sig Regt as an SSM. Also to **Sgt Steve Mesmer** who departs us on posting to 11 Sig Regt as an Installation Technician instructor and lastly to **LCpl Marc Lewis** and **Sig 'Cindy' Crawford** who are leaving the Army and heading for Civvie Street – best wishes to all.

HOTEL TROOP - *by Sig Jamie Gillespie*

OC	**Capt James Perring**
SSgt	**Sgt Lee Green**

DEPLOYMENTS

Over the last few months Hotel Tp have been ever so busy deploying several times to very dangerous places within the UK, such as Catterick, Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain and Sennybridge.

MISSION REHEARSAL EXERCISE (MRX) 9

These deployments were due to Hotel Tp being part of the support team for 3 Cdo Bde's Op HERRICK MRX, which took place over the period 21 – 31 July 2008, with **Cpl Jackson** as 2IC. Although being the enablers for the ex, we had to be there weeks before it began to provide the comms infrastructure that would allow the ex to run smoothly.

EXERCISE SCORPION CHILL

The Tp, including **Cpl Jackson,** was rewarded for their efforts by an excursion to the Imperial War Museum, followed by a BBQ outside the block (great fun!) and finally a night out in Bath, chosen because the boss, **Capt 'Pez' Perring,** lives there and didn't want to go anywhere he would have to pay for a taxi home!

FUTURE DEPLOYMENTS – OP TELIC

Still hard at work, the Tp is preparing to deploy once again to Op TELIC with **Cpl Jackson** leading the team. Well at least some of us are, the remainder of the Tp are pretending to be intelligent on their Class 2 – 1 crammer course. Others are putting all the required kit into deployment boxes and bundling rifles, so it can all be posted, ready and waiting for when they arrive.

233 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Owen Finnie**
SSM	**SSgt Dale King**

The Sqn has been poised to react to any incident in NI requiring high readiness Military ICS support. It has not been required this summer but training of newly posted in members of the Sqn continues. The arrival of 19 Lt Bde has accelerated the change process occurring in NI and in particular on Thiepval Barracks. The Sqn has been busy with general ICS support tasks to assist with this move and the enduring ICS support for HQ NI and 38(I) Bde. The Sqn would like to welcome the new Ops Offr, **Capt Jim Skimins** and congratulate **Capt Pete Emsen** who was awarded the GOC NI's commendation for his service during the reformation of 233 Sig Sqn at the end of Op BANNER.

Capt Pete Emsen receives his commendation certificate from GOC NI, Maj Gen CC Brown CBE

ALPHA TROOP - *by Cpl Gunn and LCpl Adcock*

OC	**Capt Jim Skimins**
Sgt	**Sgt Mick Wall**

The Northern Ireland trade fare took place on the 31 August. 233 Sig Sqn sent out its recruiting team in support of the annual event at Kinnegar Camp. Headed up by **Sgt Mick Wall**, supported by **Cpl Daz Broderick**, **Cpl Kirsten Gunn**, **Cpl Dave Moorhead** and **LCpl Rob Adcock**, we set up a Royal Signals stand displaying Bowman and Cougar radio equipment and various brochures on the different Trade groups within the Corps. The display showcased to the public the various capabilities provided by the Corps. This was a good opportunity for **Cpl Moorhead** to show off his numerous medals, as he wore his No 2 dress with his immaculately bulled boots, courtesy of **Sgt Wall** who is an ex-Guardsman. Several members of the public demonstrated an interest in joining the Royal Signals. Particular interest was raised for the IS trade resulting in a least 20 people signing up for more information on the Corps. **Cpl Gunn** displayed her expert knowledge on the Bowman radio system, with **Cpl 'Old Man' Broderick** sharing some of his war stories. It was a good opportunity for soldiers from the Royal Signals to interact with the public in Northern Ireland and resulted in a lot of interest in the Corps.

BRAVO TROOP - *by Sig Dalzell*

OC	**Capt Rick Gorman**
SSgt	**SSgt Arnie Renforth**

233 Sig Sqn boldly went where other land lovers feared to tread, i.e. water, at Bangor Marina on a team bonding fishing trip. The weather looked unpredictable and not surprisingly, as we set off, the rain started. On arrival, we selected our weapons of choice. **Sig 'Stu' Dalzell** who organised the trip had first choice and selected what he believed was a fine fishing rod. The experts within the Sqn noted his confusion and advised he should have selected the one with the clear line and not the rope-like stuff. However **SSgt Dale King** was quick to point out that it was down to wrist action not equipment. Once we were out in the middle of the Irish Sea, the boat rocked greatly, much to the dismay of **Sig Vicky Wade** who was feeling a little ill.

Setting anchor, we cast our lines to see who could catch the most fish. **Cpl 'Ski' Milevsky** caught the first fish and had a certain smug look about him. After an hour, with our haul of only one fish, we moved on to try our luck somewhere else. The rain pounded us horizontally but this didn't get us down, morale was high and many an old seafarer's voice could be heard in the storm, although most believe it was Sqn personnel 'yah-haring' in pirate like voices and referring to each other as 'me heartee'. Soon **SSgt King's** wrist action kicked in as he started reeling in lots of fish followed by others and soon the nets were bulging. A special mention goes to **Cpl 'Jase' Giles** and **Sig 'Barf' Wade** who were unlucky on the day.

SUPPORT TROOP - *by LCpl Wilkinson*

OC	**Sgt Pullen**

On 26 June, **Cpl 'Johno' Johnson** and **Cpl 'Ski' Milevsky** organised the 233 Sig Sqn's summer function, based on a Western theme. It was a fantastic night, including DJs, guest singers, a BBQ and many an eye-catching costume on display! Some fantastic prizes were won on the evening with special mentions going to **SSgt(FofS(IS)) Waterworth** who was delighted at winning the George Foreman grill, which he is already putting to good use for midnight snacks in the mess. **Cpl Milevsky** won the IPod shuffle, amidst claims of a fix by **SSgt King** who soon shut up when he found that he had won the surround sound system. **Sig Lawson** walked away with the money tree prize. The prize for best fancy dress was decided with a 'dance off' between **Cpl 'Apache' Potts** and **WO2(SSM) Lilburn**, with **Cpl Potts** finally being declared the winner after performing various weird dance moves cumulating in leapfrogging over a bale of hay. The SSM still thinks he was the best dressed and the dance off was a set up! On the whole it was a fantastic function which was well organised and well supported, leaving many nursing a sore head the following day.

243 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj GJH Maloney**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) JG Manley**

The Sqn would like to take the opportunity to welcome **WO2(FofS(IS)) Yvonne Austin**, **SSgt(FofS) John Ashman**, **Cpl Warren Evans**, **LCpls Kerry Arnold** and **Greig Saddington** who have all recently been posted in and also say farewell to **WO2(FofS(IS)) 'Daz' Turner**, **Sgt Gary Smith**, **Sgt Ade Williams** and **LCpl Andy Barr**.

OPERATIONS SUPPORT TROOP

OC	**Lt AP Foot**
SSgt	**SSgt Penngelly**

On 30 August the Sqn entered 'Bruno's Braves' in a charity run 'It's a Knockout'. The charities involved were 'Help a Local Child' and the 'Naomi House Hospice', a charity very close to the Regt, which has had ties with it for a number of years. The Sqn team consisted of 10 personnel, each of whom collected in excess of £100 by being sponsored by friends and family.

The day was spent tackling a number of obstacle courses, generally transferring water from one end to the other; thank goodness it was the only sunny day of the summer. We excelled in most of the events, especially with the ingenious ideas of **SSgt Steve Penngelly** and our 'Leading from the Front' OC, **Maj Glenis Maloney**. We clinched our place in the grand final on the last event after a little bit of skulduggery by **SSgt Penngelly** – it's only cheating if you get caught!

As to be expected there were many laughs, most at the expense of the Tp OC, **Lt Ady Foot**. First was his impressive dance to the song 'YMCA' while unknown to him, the rest of his team had walked away which allowed him to do a rather impressive solo dance. Second was the amazing, painful looking dive into a pool of water, helped along by a trip from a certain SSM, not to mention names. With the event drawing to a close and a few burnt faces Bruno Braves had reached the final. Thanks to the 3 man team of **Sgt Martin Campbell**, **Cpl Steve 'Gooch' Lawrence** and **LCpl 'Matty' Evans** we excelled, especially with **LCpl Evans'** slamdunk of the basketball on the inflatable course at the end.

We had done it! Bruno Braves had won 'It's A Knockout' and was awarded a trophy along with individual medals and a self certifying certificate! We looked just like the GB Olympic Team up on that podium with our gold medals; shame all the other teams and spectators had already gone but the people tidying up gave us a clap.

251 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Alun Crapper**
SSM	**WO2 (SSM) Kev East**

The Sqn would like to welcome all those that have been posted in. We have enjoyed the challenges of Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS where we deployed TYNDALE for the first time in support of the Bde Ex. We are now ensuring things are shiny ahead of the upcoming Winter Ceremonials.

1 TROOP - *by Sig Webster*

OC	**Sgt Chris Brady**

A handful of 251 Sig Sqn personnel; **Sgt Melia**, **Cpl Harvey**, **Cpl Williams**, **Sig Dickinson**, **Sig Hadlow** and **Sig Lee** recently took part in a 2 week paragliding AT course in Bavaria. **Cpl 'Andy' Harvey** loved big timing paragliding and just how good he was at it, so the remainder took great pleasure at his misfortune after he ended up in a tree for over an hour before the rescue team got to him.

LCpl Robinson was by far the most scared person on the course, constantly repeating the phrase "I don't want to do this" or "I'm not doing this". This was up until his first mountain flight where I believe he spent more time on the toilet before the flight than he did in the air! The first thing he said on landing was that he loved it and wanted to go again.

Despite the fun of the 2 weeks, it was on the return ferry were we laughed most. This was due to **Sig Adam Hadlows** comment when he received his ferry ticket and was informed of the departure time. He began to panic and ask everyone for cash as he believed that the departure time was the price he had to pay. Overall the 2 weeks were enjoyed by all and would be recommended to anyone considering paragliding.

2 TROOP - *by Sig Dickinson*

OC	**Capt James McClean**
SSgt	**SSgt Bagstaff**

On 29 July, 2 Tp went on a Tp development day to London to watch the Army v Navy annual cricket match at Lords. We had to keep a close eye on **SSgt 'Baggy' Bagstaff** in case he got lost or became sidetracked on one of his notorious underground adventures.

Once we arrived at Lords cricket ground, we made our way inside the historic stadium and found some front row seating for a great view. The cricket started and the Army batted first and batted well declaring at 265 for 4. We were then treated to the half time entertainment, which was a military band. They put on an outstanding performance for the crowd and they were given a standing ovation as they marched off. Then it was the Navy's turn to respond to our great start, they made a noble effort but simply were not as good as the Army on the day and ended up being restricted to 163 for 8 .The Army dominated the whole match batting and catching well with our Adjt, **Maj Alex Senneck**, putting in a very solid performance as bowler.

Following the cricket we all went into central London for dinner and drinks before making our way home after a great day out together.

638 TROOP - *by Cpl Giltrow*

OC	**Lt Alice Curtis**
SSgt	**SSgt Owen**

Always time for more sailing…Ex TIGER SOLENT BEAR started with 3 days training for the 2 yacht skippers **Cpl Amanda Giltrow** and **Cpl Joanne Thomas** and the 2 mates **Sgt 'Al' Smith** and **Cpl 'Jim' Gollop**. In the 3 days we achieved some good training, managing to get ourselves out of a rather sticky yacht parking

situation and doing lots of man overboard drills ready for the rest of the crew to arrive after the weekend.

Early on the Monday morning, the remaining crew members from 10 Sig Regt arrived at the Joint Service Adventure Sail Training Centre in Gosport, ready and eager for a week of sailing in the Solent. The weather was not the best with strong winds and a substantial swell. On Day 2, **Maj 'Charlie' Roberts** saved the day and kindly joined us to skipper yacht *Placuna*, much to the delight of the crew **Cpl Gollop**, **Cpl 'Smurf' Murphy**, **Cpl 'Krusty' Weller** and **Sig 'Webby' Webb**. We sailed out of Gosport narrowly avoiding the massive fleet of yachts taking part in Cowes week. Much to our entertainment, we watched the Army Yacht and her crew do their thing (don't worry guys; we won't mention the fluffed spinnaker drop which lost you about 5 places in the race!).

While sailing on Day 3, **2Lt Kennon** discovered the yacht's depth instruments measure depth from the hull and not the keel. Unfortunately he discovered this the hard way. Thankfully the tide was still rising and it wasn't long before the yacht was away and sailing again. Both yachts headed for Lymington where we would spend the evening.

Day 4 started with a relaxed breakfast while we waited for ideal tides to help us on our way back to Gosport. Again we sailed in to the mass of other yachts taking part in Cowes week. The 2 yachts went their separate ways, making the most of the small amount of wind in the Solent. Yacht *Placuna* and her crew ventured to Newtown Creek to drop anchor and take in the lovely scenery while *Nerita* and her crew sailed around the fleet of racing yachts, enjoying the spectacular sights of hundreds of racing yachts, hoping to witness a spectacular collision or upturned yacht. That evening the crews from both yachts met up in Gosport. Everyone was well and couldn't resist the lure of the "all you can eat Chinese" apart from **Cpl Murphy** and **LCpl Madgewick** .

Cpl Giltrow and the crew on Ex TIGER SOLENT BEAR would like to say a massive thank you to **Maj 'Charlie' Roberts** and **2Lt 'Stu' Kennon** for helping out at the last minute, without there help we could not have carried on with the ex.

LCpl Madgewick, Sgt Smith, Cpl Hallums and 2Lt Keenon loving it in the Solent

ELECTRONIC COUNTER MEASURES (FORCE PROTECTION) ECM (FP) SQN

OC	**Maj B M Bingham MBE**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) S Kenny**

ECM(FP) Sqn provides continuous support to deployed units in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Providing a life saving capability, their mission is to ensure that all the ECM (FP) equipment is serviceable and that the units remain fully trained and refreshed on how to use the equipment.

ECM (FP) TROOP IRAQ

24/7 is the name of the game within ECM Tp here on the COB. With a greater tempo of ops, new platforms coming into theatre which require testing and commissioning before they hit the ground and the continuous work arriving at our compound on an hourly basis, the team is never short of things to keep them occupied. With a greater need to maintain a footprint on the ground the team are having to develop ingenious ways of fielding the capability onto an array of vehicles – this has even included quad bikes. Providing a service to the deployed units has seen a number of the team moving out of the comfort of the COB to the remote FOBs and PBs within MND (SE), armed with a tool box on top of their personal kit and weapon systems. These saviours have ensured that the capability has continued to work, no matter what. This leaves little time for much else in life, let alone a little "morale boosting" trip for the lads to OSD. ("Not even a few days Boss?")

ECM (FP) TROOP AFGHANISTAN

The ECM (FP) Tp in Afghanistan has 3 dets, Kandahar, Kabul and Camp Bastion. All 3 are kept extremely busy with large and complex areas of responsibility. Members of the Camp Bastion det are always on the road, constantly flying around Helmand province in 2 man teams, providing continuation training, giving advice to comds, equipment health checks, fault finding and conducting routine maintenance and repair when needed. This is especially important for the more remote static locations and units that do not roll through Camp Bastion on a regular basis. The det is also responsible for the RSOI presentation and training of new personnel into theatre. The Replacement in Place has seen an increase in new personnel arriving and so an increase in workload. The det has been busy with its own internal training, not only on the equipment we use, but with basic military skills. We have got SMEs from outside units to provide different lessons and training. The topics have included medical training and foreign weapon shoots; with the Canadian Diemarco and .50 Browning HMG proving most popular.

However, it's not all work and no play. The det have a few keen sportsmen who maintain a high level of fitness; regularly using the gym facilities and getting to know the various running routes around camp. Members of the det have completed the Bastion 10km and Bastion 5km race series, all in the aid of charity. For the race series the team runs under the name of "Scaley Backs". We are currently running a respectable 4th. Especially impressive since with the deployment cycle we never have the same 3 people in the team!

Cpl Hallsworth and LCpl Royal with Diemarco rifles in Afghanistan

EXERCISE FIGHTING FINN

Despite supporting 2 operational Theatres, the Sqn remains committed to hard and realistic training for these ops. Ex FIGHTING FINN was a 2 week Sqn Battlecamp and range

package based in Magilligan Training Area in Northern Ireland. The 2 weeks centred on building up to live firing sect attacks and a grenade range. The exercising troops had to endure some of the best of Northern Irish weather while in their harbour area but were 'comforted' to know the OC Sqn, **Maj Bingham,** was sharing the same wood! The training was realistic and challenging, with the troops practising live firing contact drills, defence of a FOB and casualty extraction. There was also time for pistol and MP5 ranges, culminating in a grenade range, which, for some, was the first time they had thrown a grenade. The SSM, **WO2(SSM) Kenny,** even ensured that some MATT training was ticked off by the troops. The ex culminated in the Para Cup, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was an excellent ex, which tested the administration of the troops and prepared them well for their future deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Sqn. Congratulations to **LCpl Brown** for winning Best Rifle Shot, **Cpl Holmes** for winning Best Pistol Shot and **LCpl Yaxley** for winning the coveted Best Field Soldier.

EXERCISE PARA FINN 2 - *by Sgt Routledge*

Members of 10 Sig Regt deployed on Ex PARA FINN 2 on 18 – 28 August. **SSgt Bob Lindley**, **SSgt Sammy Seal**, **LCpl Tom Sawyer**, **LCpl Blacky Blackwood**, **LCpl Thomas** and **Sig Tony Luckman** all deployed to the Alpine mountains, Bavaria to take part in a Paragliding Elementary Pilots Course. **Sgt Mike Routledge** deployed as an Assistant Paragliding Instructor.

The week got off to a good start with fantastic sunny weather which remained for most of the week. After a couple of days of hard work, all students graduated from the training slope to attempt their first mountain flight. All the training paid off with all pilots successfully launching into the air, and with the guidance of the German Instructor **Karl Augstburger**, a safe landing was achieved by all. With everyone landing in the correct landing field except for **LCpl Blackwood**, who misjudged his height, over-flew the landing area, tripped over a wire fence and landed face first in a field of cows, sending the Instructors and students alike into fits of laughter. Having achieved their objective of Elementary Pilots Qualification with 4 days of the ex remaining, students started working towards the next level of Paragliding Club Pilot.

By the end of the ex, an average of 15 flights was achieved by all Pilots with some students even gaining height through the use of thermals. Most notably, **Sig Luckman** almost disappeared through the cloud base before flying back down to earth. Overall, Ex PARA FINN 2 was a very successful ex with all personnel achieving their main objective of paragliding Elementary Pilot and **LCpl Sawyer** en managed to qualify for the next level of Paragliding Club Pilot.

Sgt Mike Routledge showing how it is done on the training slope

11th SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD

CO	**Lt Col JAG Langley**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) TJ Bickerstaff**

LANYARD TROPHY 2008

After months of hard training the 3 Lanyard teams from 11 Sig Regt made their way to the Black Mountains for the competition on 11th September 2008.

The teams were a male A and B team and a female team, half of which were Phase 2 soldiers. The male A team put in an outstanding performance winning the 2008 Lanyard Trophy. The B team was placed 3rd overall and were the first complete team home thereby winning the Saxon Trophy. Not to be out-done by the blokes, the female team won their competition, coming in an hour ahead of their nearest rivals.

Each team winning a trophy was the just reward for months of training and 40 long miles on the hill.

1 (OUSTON) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj John Morrice**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Gash Doe**

The Phase 3 soldiers are vital to the running of the Sqn and we say farewell to SEUR 07/04. They have been an 'entertaining' course getting fully involved organising military training exs, Sqn functions and Harrogate Cup sport; we wish you luck in your new units. Having a Canadian OC the Sqn recently hosted a visit from the Canadian Signals School and we are all hoping a reciprocal visit will be necessary!

THE BIG BREW

To raise money for SSAFA's Big Brew week the permanent staff of 1 Sqn nobly delivered tea in bed to the Phase 2 soldiers for a small fee on Monday 6 October. The Sqn raised an impressive £121.60 for SSAFA.

BATTLEAXE TROOP

OC	**Capt Chris Anderson**
SSgt	**SSgt Ross Harmer**

EXERCISE OUSTON FREEFALL - *by Sig Jones*

Bravery, discipline and keeping cool in the face of danger are all traits you would associate with model soldiers and Battleaxe Tp proved that they have all of these qualities when nearly 30 of them threw themselves out of a plane that was travelling 3500ft above ground.

We left camp on Friday evening and travelled to Netheravon to complete a weekend course in static line parachuting. On arrival, a member of the training team gave us a quick brief on the plan for the weekend and then it was off to the bar for a few sociable drinks.

The next day it was a 0800hrs start and we headed over to the classrooms to begin our training. This took us through all the basic drills needed from the moment you left the plane until the point that your feet touched safely back on the ground. All the groups were more than competent with these drills and at lunchtime everyone seemed very much at ease considering they were going to be parachuting in a few hours. The nerves were

helped by the continuous stream of people falling from the sky and landing gracefully on the drop zone. It all looked pretty simple.

After lunch we moved onto the safety aspects of the jump; what could go wrong and what to do if it did. The mood changed slightly, especially when we were told it would take just 20 secs for us to hit the ground if both parachutes malfunctioned. We were however assured that accidents were not very common and that we did have a reserve parachute should our main parachute not open. Eventually it was time to kit up and jump. The plane journey up to 3500ft is pretty scary; it is here that it all starts to hit home! As you reach the right height the door is opened and the wind rushes in. Then the first person is told to move to the door, they look up, smile to the camera and then they jump. You fall for around 4 secs before your parachute fully opens. Then it's the control checks to make sure it all works. At this point you calm down a little and take in your surroundings as you slowly descend to earth.

Overall it was a fantastic weekend and I would like to thank **Cpl 'Spoon' Langley** for organising the jump and the Tp staff for coming along and jumping with us, and the training team at Netheravon who managed to get every single one of us up and down safely.

1 Squadron on Ex OUSTON FREEFALL

REGIMENTAL TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT TEAM (RTMT)
- by WO1 AC Torrington

Phase 2 Soldiers have seen a change for the better in recent months with the introduction of Regimental Training and Management. Soldiers arriving from ATC Pirbright and AFC Harrogate are delivered directly to **WO1 Torrington** and his team for Regimental Induction, military refresher training and pipeline management.

Each soldier is now carefully managed through Phase 2 training, limiting the amount of waiting time in order to deliver a trained Royal Signals soldier to the Field Army with the minimum of delay, while saving the Crown a few pounds in the process. The spreadsheet with more formulas than a food shelf in Mothercare, enables the Training Team to juggle resources against individual soldier issues, in order to limit the amount of "Soldiers Not Undergoing Training" (SNUT) time. The system has proved invaluable with the DST(S) and the BSM Driver Training contract that, in just a few months, show significant positive results across the training environment.

Another tool in the box for RTMT, is the CO's Challenge; a concept designed to track, encourage and consolidate activities conducted by the soldiers throughout their time in Phase 2 Training. Ranging from the basic standards of room inspections to the leadership challenges of a battle ex, the Challenge has it all. It concentrates on known deficiencies ranging from shooting to physical fitness, providing the soldier with an opportunity to gain a commendation based on effort.

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj A Wilson**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Peace**

THE GORDONS CUP COMPETITION - *by Cpl C J Woollon*

On Saturday 4 October, 4(Mil) Training Sqn organised and ran the latest Gordons Cup; a military skills event consisting of 12 stands. It proved to be a real mental and physical test for the 36 teams who took part on the day. I was fortunate enough (perhaps unfortunate) to be roped into being a team mentor.

I didn't really fancy the idea of being up at 0600hrs on a Saturday but I think everyone really enjoyed the day and it certainly opened a few eyes as to the sort of events that these young soldiers will face when the join the Field Army. My team consisted of **Sigs Andy Marlow**, **Nic Ineson**, **Dave Coupe**, **Matt Maxwell**, **Damon Dixon** and **Mick Lythgoe**. Although none of my team was over 21, after a little motivation from yours truly, they were ready to get stuck in and this obviously paid off on the day.

The competition was run with extremely tight timelines. Each team had 7mins 30secs to navigate to each stand, 15 mins to complete the stand and 7mins 30 secs to get back to the start/finish location. This was run with webbing, weapons and kit on the airfield behind Blandford Garrison which meant that the nearer stands were easy to get to but more distant stands including the log run were a real heartache to reach in time to compete. Needless to say, by the end of the day everyone was knackered. The 12 events were target shooting and kit check on range, superstars-style race, observation, blindfolded stripping and assembling of the L85 A2, vehicle recognition, BCD, DCCT range, stretcher race, log race, short term memory observation task, command task and assault course. On the day, only 4 teams out of the 36 made it to the log race in time to compete.

Points were awarded according to the place in which you finished the event; 3 points for 1st, 2 for 2nd and 1 point for 3rd place. Each team had a joker card which they were able to play and receive double points for one particular event. By lunchtime my team were feeling very confident; we had come 1st in all our events bar one and had played our joker card on the assault course earning a whopping 6 points. We were at the top of the leader board but things were close.

By the last 2 events of the day, we knew we had to make it to the stands in time and perform well in order to win. The big man, **Dave Coupe**, had picked up an injury and everyone was shattered. We really pushed it to make it to the log race at the far end of the area, with only seconds to spare. The last event was going to be a nail biter. We had to test our memory using a 5 min clip from Dad's Army and afterwards answer questions. I found myself not concentrating but instead laughing my head off at the clip but after a quick self delivered slap, I started to take it seriously.

We managed a 2nd place on the event and had a very nervous wait while all the scores were collated. Then the results were in and we had won by the skin of our teeth, securing the Team Trophy and helping 2 Sqn to win the Gordons Cup. A truly outstanding effort by all involved in our Sqn and especially by my team – I'm really proud.

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Rhid Jones**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Jase Lawer**

The Sqn has had a turn around in hierarchy and would like to say good bye to **Maj Matt Bosworth** who is off to Staff College and also to **WO2(SSM) Guy Padfield** who has moved on to 3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt. A warm welcome goes out to our new OC, **Maj Rhid Jones** and our new SSM, **WO2 Jase Lawer**. We would also like to welcome **Cpl Gaz Lower** to the permanent staff team, Ulster Tp.

EXERCISE HARROGATE FOCUS (PHASE 2 MILITARY SKILLS EXERCISE) - *by Sig Sweet*

On Friday 26 September, 3 Sqn deployed to Bovington Training Area on Ex HARROGATE FOCUS. This weekend was to prepare for the Gordons Cup, the biggest calendar event in 11 Sig Regt. However the ex was not just about preparation for the cup but also a refresher of military skills and training which is always enjoyable! It was organized by **SSgt Mark Anderson** and **Cpl Grant Shipley** of Lightning Tp. The Sqn was split into 3 Pls, 9 Sects of roughly 7 Phase 2 recruits with a Cpl as Sect Comd.

During the first evening all the safety briefings were given and everyone got settled. The weekend's activities began at 0700hrs on Saturday morning. Scattered around the training area were 9 stands to where each Sect would navigate and then be given a military related task to complete. Our Sect started off the morning with a nice 4km log run – nothing better to wake you up! Other stands included: camouflage and concealment, observation, map reading, skill at arms, tactics, command tasks, CBRN and BCDT.

The day's tasks finished at 1630hrs. After all Sects managed to successfully find their way back to the Bivi Area, everyone learnt of a certain Sect's blunder! 3 Pl, 3 Sect under **Sig Parry** managed to get lost on the way to the map reading stand (their first stand) and ended up in Monkey World!

Later that night, a night navigation task was set. Start point was at the map reading stand at the other end of the training area (which was handy) and the finish point was the Bivi Area. Each Sect was given a compass but no map. We had to navigate to the next checkpoint, given only a bearing and a distance. Every team managed to find their way back, with only a few getting "geographically challenged" for a while. The weekend was finished with a 4 mile march and shoot on the Sunday back at Blandford Camp. The shoot was taken on the DCCT range at 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn. The weekend was an enormous success, with all participating feeling confident of their chances on the impending Gordon's Cup and also thoroughly enjoying themselves!

The winning Sect was;
2 Pl 2 Sect **Cpl Bikash**, **Sig Nelson**, **Sig Suman** (Best Shot), **Sig Vijay**, **Sig Man**, **Sig Tejkumar**, **Sig Kailash**, **Sig Kabin** and **Sig Narendra** who had a close running battle with 2 Pl 1 Sect **Sig Sweet**, **Sig Taylor**, **Sig Burton**, **Sig Locksom**, **Sig Fairhurst**, **Sig Bulman**, **Sig Hughes**, **Sig Mcguire** and **LCpl Herbert** who were a close second.

LIGHTNING TROOP

OC	**WO1 Liam Tosh**
Tp	**SSgt Mark Anderson**

Currently Lightning Tp is running about 100 Phase 2 and 3 soldiers strong. The Tp has now stopped receiving Technicians and IS operator courses and is now bringing in the new Communication Systems Engineer Basic (CEBR), which is a combination of the 2 old courses.

We have had quite a busy period in the Tp with **Cpl Grant Shipley** getting training started for the Inter-Tp boxing competition as well as the normal Tp commitments. A few are listed below:

EXERCISE TOPHAM HAT - SWANAGE RAILWAY PROJECT
- by Sig Taylor

On Saturday 14 September it was an early start for Lightning Tp as we set out on a 2 day ex to Swanage Railway. This is an ex that has been going on for many years with the long term aim of refurbishing the steam railway, which is still in use by locals and tourists all year round.

It was a fine summer's morning, marking the end of the summer which added to the fun. The ex started lead by **Cpl 'J' Copland** accompanied by 3 JNCOs and 12 Phase 2 soldiers. We were broken down into small groups and given tasks such as rebuilding a new fence at one of the entrances for public access to the railway platform. At the top of the pathway in the hot sun, **Cpl Morgan**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig Nelson** worked hard to remove and rebuild a replacement fence. Hopefully our efforts will be there for many years to come! Down on the railway tracks **Cpl Copland**, **Sig Loksom**, **Sig Hughes** and **Sig Wignall** had the task to refurbish one of the old carriages which is on show along the side of the railway platform. Having replaced a few broken panels and given it a new paint job, the old carriage now looks as good as new. **Cpl Fisher** and **Sig Taylor** and the ex co-ordinator, **Mr Frank Roberts** helped the local police by installing a new cabling system to deal with the security of the Swanage Railway.

Sig Loksom, **Sig Wilcox-Sampson**, **Sig Sweet** and **Sig Fairhurst** undertook various tasks maintaining the railway's natural beauty by cutting back overgrown hedges and painting the fences. A difficult task to undertake was the installation of a lamp post to illuminate the railway at night, **Sig Whyte**, **Sig Parry**, **Sig Taylor** and **Frank Roberts** dealt with this task finishing the weekend on a high note. After a hot and sunny weekend everyone went away with a sense of pride and job satisfaction. We were glad to get out of the class rooms and get our hands dirty while helping out with the Swanage railway.

ULSTER TROOP

OC	**WO1 Tony Caulfield**
SSgt	**SSgt 'Flo' Watts**

HARROGATE CUP – RUGBY 7s - *by Sig Routely*

After a number of hard training sessions, it was finally time for the Harrogate Cup Rugby 7s. There was a varying standard of players in the Ulster Tp team, ranging from those who had never touched a rugby ball before to those who had played a lot. The team was looking strong and stepped onto the pitch with confidence! Lightning Tp were our first opponents. We took the lead after starting with enthusiasm but Lightning made a strong come back to bring themselves within 2 points of us. Ulster Tp then stepped it up and protected their try line with an aggressive defence. With some excellent commitment and attacking play Ulster Tp pulled away and won the match.

Sig Wilcox-Samson gets taken down by 2 Squadron

Then came the final in which we faced Beaufighter Tp of 2 Sqn. Under huge pressure Ulster's tactics crumbled and we were convincingly beaten but we never let our heads drop and we kept our pride with some brutal rugby which clearly rattled the Beaufighter team and coaching staff. However, the spirit of rugby was upheld and both teams showed true sportsmanship leaving the aggression on the pitch after the game. Well done to **Sigs Doherty**, **Tann**, **Kerrigan**, **Waller**, **McCoy**, **Renouf**, **Routley**, **Wood**, **Parker** and **Miles** for representing Ulster Tp and coming a well placed 2nd.

4 (MILITARY TRAINING) SQUADRON

OC **Maj HI Macpherson** RRF
SSM **WO2(SSM) M Darby**

POTENTIAL NCO CLM - *by Sig S Aprea*

Our PNCO CLM commenced on Monday 6 October at 0800hrs sharp! We were straight into the classroom for our Senior Instructor's, **Sgt J P Hanks**, opening address. Immediately it became clear that all the challenges we would face over the next 2 weeks would be leadership orientated. Each day we were to take it in turn to be appointed as the duty commander and responsible for ensuring that all course members' personal administration was of the highest standards at all times.

We began our first lesson, Basic Leadership Theory. The lesson was clear and concise and we were taught all about PBCSIE and the principles that we should practise applying when engaging a leadership role. The majority of the day was death-by-power point, but was nevertheless useful and educating.

Day 2 crashed in with heavy rain and a lot of anxiety, which brought us all back to the reality that we would be enduring a lot of physical training over the early hours of the morning. The first of the practical leadership development (PLD) programs consisted of a burden retrieval where we had to do 6 laps of an 800m field as a sect of 6, picking up a new burden on each lap and racing against the other sect. We were given 2 mins to devise our plan of how we were going to manage the 5 burdens and then we were lined up and the race began.

Our different fitness levels were always going to cause some kind of divide and it didn't take long for the less fit soldiers in the sect to fall behind. The PLD task was definitely challenging; in fact it was absolute agony. Immediately we had to change our plan so that the less fit soldiers could take the lighter burdens on the final laps, which meant having to heave the 20kg mortar base plate and the 9 ft log around for most of the race. Yet despite the pain, we all finished with high morale!

Wednesday was full of command tasks. We were taught several simple rope knots and then all day we were hammered with problems and given a time limit in which to find a solution. A commander was appointed for each task by our respective Sect Comds; **Cpl Gibson** for 1 Sect and **Cpl Peart** for 2 Sect.

As the commander, we were charged with the delegation of responsibilities and ensuring the aims were fulfilled. We were strictly scrutinized on every decision we made, which meant it became a very fast learning curve and we each picked up little tips here and there on each other's mistakes. By the end of the day we were doing pretty well, smashing the times set and working well as a team.

Euphoria was short lived though, as Thursday was upon us! The second of the PLD programs was here, and in its wake, more anxiety. Breakfast was a hard enough challenge, trying to force an appetite was like eating cold corn beef hash from a ration pack. We all thought we knew what was coming... the stretcher race.

This was a stretcher race with a twist. The DS had dotted command tasks throughout the route, which had to be completed in order to progress onto the next area. Not only did each 6 man sect have the burden of a stretcher to carry but also a bergen that was full of the ropes and karabiners which we were using in the command tasks on the previous day. In addition there was an ammo crate that was 30kg, not to mention that each of us had webbing and day sacks weighing 12kg each. Not only did we manage to survive but 1 Sect managed to redeem themselves by winning convincingly, much to the approval of **Cpl Gibson**.

Still smiling an hour later, we were back in the classroom, showered and clean, each of us taking it in turn to present a lesson to our respective Sect Comds. The subjects we had been given varied from the likes of "Catfish" to "The Flushing Toilet" but we had been researching and rehearsing for the past 48 hrs so each of us felt prepared. Presenting our lessons was a simple test of confidence, in which we had to give a 10 min presentation in front of the DS and the remainder of our Sects.

The days were long, usually 10 hrs from 0800hrs to 1800hrs but the nights were just as packed. Homework assignments that tested planning skills, preparing a presentation for the Thursday, and of course, scrambling around like busy bees trying to pack all the kit required for the 3 day ex the following Monday.

As a group we are all feeling the benefits of the course already, confident that we will be better prepared to go out to the Field Army as Junior Commanders, and not just a soldier with a stripe.

One more week to go, there is light at the end of the tunnel ...or maybe it's just a steam train coming the other way.

MAJ GEN TG INSHAW VISIT - *by Cpl R Gibson*

On Friday 3 October, the Regt hosted **Maj Gen TG Inshaw**, Director General Training and Education. During the week leading up to his visit the Sqn had been extremely busy preparing a demonstration to show how we conducted Basic Close Combat Training.

Maj Macpherson had directed that the demonstration was to display vehicle anti ambush drills, something which the Sqn has been tirelessly working on to enhance the Basic Close Combat Skills of both Phase 2 and Phase 3 soldiers.

The demonstration was to consist of a 3 vehicle patrol engaged in a contact left situation. In order to add a little flavour we decided that **Maj Gen Inshaw** should get involved himself. A Close Protection Team consisting of **Sigs Scott** and **Dick** was added and rehearsals for their part in the demonstration began. The scenario was that the middle vehicle, which was transporting the Gen (now code named DIAMOND) and his CP team, would become immobilised and all personnel would have to extract back to the rear vehicle while it and the lead vehicle gave covering fire.

Phase 2 soldiers provide the demonstration troops, one of whom gained the 'promotion' to the rank of Maj Gen! He was briefed on the sequence of events and after confirming that he understood he was sent across to the Sqn OC so a rehearsal could take place.

The plan had been that the Sqn OC would introduce the 'fake' Maj Gen to **Cpl 'Gibbo' Gibson** who would then introduce DIAMOND to his CP Team. We would then continue with the lesson and go straight into the scenario. When our illustrious 17 year old Maj Gen approached the Sqn OC however he failed to do one thing...salute! Immediately **Cpl Gibson** asked him if he didn't salute commissioned officers. His reply: "Yes Corporal...but today I'm a Major General!" Genius!

The day of the visit saw the MSTT course completing a CFT before promptly getting changed and rolling straight into the demonstration, blisters and all. Ammunition was distributed and the Media Ops team were set up. **Cpl Gibson** was nervously going over his lesson plan thinking that he had a little time left, after all Maj Gens are allowed to be late and often are, aren't they?

Not this one, he arrived right on time and so began the demonstration. It went like clock work and as the CP Team started peeling left dragging the Gen behind them, **Cpl Gibson** could be seen looking over at the OC more than a little concerned. When he saw that he was smiling, any fears of a swift court martial and firing squad were soon swept away.

With the visit was over it was straight back to the grindstone as the Sqn were also organising and running the next day's activities, the Gordons Cup – but that's another *Wire* note!

14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) HAVERFORDWEST

CO **Lt Col TL Carmichael**
RSM **WO1(RSM) G Topps**

HQ SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Palmer**
SSM **WO2(SSM) M Collins**

HQ SQUADRON LIFE - *by Sig Simmons and Sig Maganatagane*

While the rest of the Regt has been busy preparing for Ops and Ex GIFFINS FOCUS, the LAD has been exceptionally busy working on the Green Fleet. The aim is to minimise the Regt's fleet, decreasing the burden to an already overworked Regt. With **Sigs 'Martin' Allen** and **'Simmo' Simmons** working alongside the REME boys, pushing out some 'hard graft' 12 hr shifts, missing out on the Regt's 4 day working week by working Fridays, while their so called mates ran away home.

Over the past few weeks we have learnt a great deal about how the REME work and will definitely appreciate the work they do from now on. Overall it was a very helpful few weeks. Yes it was hard work but we both enjoyed our time as REME VMs. It was a hard strenuous time and especially with my boss **Sgt 'Col' Steers** away having his new plastic leg replaced.
Meanwhile to escape the work, **LCpl 'Irish' Young**, **Sigs 'Nasa' Maqanatagane** and **'Plank' Davies** risked life and limb with another 158 people from other various cap badges in playing different roles trying to improve 22 SAS tactics in combating terrorists. Finally a big congratulations for **Sigs Allen** and **'Bradders' Bradshaw** for coming off the board and actually getting the beers in for once!

224 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Roberts** Int Corps
SSM **WO2(SSM) R Howe**

PAINTBALLING - *by Lt Tom Turtle*

The RAF Regt sect at RAF Digby recently purchased paintballing kit. **LCpl Rose** decided to utilise the new facility and organised an outing, both as force development and mil skills training. Coincidentally, it fell on the same day as **SAC(T) Chris Hallam** was leaving the Sqn. We tipped up at Beckingham Ranges early in the morning with the Sqn raring to go. **LCpl Alex Rose** purchased £700 worth of kit for the occasion (geek)!

First of all we had a 5 min warm up free for all. This allowed us to get used to the feel of being hit by fast flying plastic balls of paint! There was a lot of shouting "Oh **** I've been shot" mostly when **LCpl Rose** let off a burst of his 50 cal paintball gun.

Once we had become accustomed to the pain, we had some scenarios organised for us. The scenarios were designed to put **SAC(T) Hallam** directly in the firing line alongside **LCpl Rose** who every one wanted to shoot purely because he had gone the extra mile by purchasing his own kit. **SAC(T) Hallam** had a set of white paper coveralls (with hand drawn bulls eye targets painted in strategically important places) given to him by **LCpl Sprogis**. Surprisingly enough, he managed to last until the end buton his way back, everyone who had previously been killed opened fire on him. Let's just say that blood was drawn from multiple places! **Sgt Michelle Denham** managed to "borrow" ammo from almost everyone that had been shot. Luckily on the last scenario, she managed to shoot **LCpl Rose** on the cheek making him quickly wish he hadn't made himself a target.

EXERCISE GRIFFINS FOCUS - *by Lt Tom Turtle*

Ex GRIFFINS FOCUS is the biennial capstone directed training ex for all Theatre Tps, where the overarching principle is that, where possible, each unit or formation enables another unit's or formation's training. So to that end, personnel from 224 Sig Sqn had the unenviable task of participating in Ex GRIFFINS FOCUS

Members of 224 Signal Squadron gathered at Lincoln Castle

08. After initial recces to Stranraer earlier in the year, the ex area changed to STANTA after a reduction in ex enablers to support the Regt.

The day prior to deploying to STANTA, we received a phone call informing us that 224 wouldn't be required for the full duration of the scenario run ex due to visitors wanting to check out the wonderful world of EW. Anyway I digress, the very next day we set off for our 2 hr journey to STANTA – sometimes it can be a blessing living at RAF Digby.

Arriving at West Tofts Camp we were duly met and directed to our set up area. After setting up our massive complex of two SPICE vehicles and genes we were informed that the building set aside for our operations area was being utilised by the RCMO to carry out a pre-LECB course. Not a problem until we found out that the CO and other senior officers from the Regt were carrying out interview and discussion groups for the pre-LECB course and we would be delayed slightly longer. After several cigarettes, brews and chats with the Danish EW Coy, 6 hrs later we were able to occupy our building.

The next day headphones at the ready the scenario kicked in. After a slow start we managed to produce the goods and even in this modern age of digital comms, we delivered tactical tip offs by walking round to the BEWC with a piece of paper! Although the ex traffic was in English it did prove quite interesting due to the unique way the Ghurkhas delivered the text.

Sgt Hauxwell managed to lose his beret on Day 1 of the ex and then proceeded to try and dodge every officer at West Tofts Camp for the rest of the ex. Thankfully **Cpl Makinson** found said lost beret on the last day, swearing blind he had nothing to do with its disappearance!

Three days later ENDEX was called with 245 Sig Sqn (EW) Gp and 224 Sig Sqn saving the day and winning the war! The ex was a good "run out" for 224 providing us with invaluable training and enabling us to refine SOPs. This will be the last time 224 Sig Sqn will take part in Ex GRIFFINS FOCUS as the Sqn is being disbanded in the future, a shame for all serving members but sometimes change has to happen.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B Fitch**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) P Hounsell**

CHARITY BAND CONCERT - *by Cpl Cowley*

Having reached the point of year when the Pembrokeshire sun shines for all of 3 days, the thoughts of the Regt fell to only one thing – charity fund-raising in support of the ABF. As ever, 226 Sig Sqn took the lead in organising the event, held this year in the grounds of the historic Bishop's Palace of St David's.

The challenge was somewhat greater this year with most of the Sqn deployed on Op HERRICK but **SSgt Nick Lean** sprang to the fore in organising the team. The aim was to build on the success of the previous year and raise the profile of the event further. This was achieved by a combination of posters throughout the area, local radio and newspaper advertisements. When selecting his lead ticket-sellers, **SSgt Lean** selected his 2 "men of the people", **Cpl Cowley** and **LCpl White**, known far and wide for their "granny-magnet" charm. The ticket selling and publicity began in earnest 2 weeks before the event and with a number of the rear party seconded, was a resounding success; the concert being a near-sell out days before the event.

Thursday June 26 came with blue skies all-round but as everyone knows Brawdy has a "unique" weather system. After several hair-raising trips in the DAF to St David's – a route ideal for the occasional Sunday driver, but not suited to the 4-tonners – the mass of equipment was laid out and we were ready to go. Ready, that was, until the Met Office announced a severe weather warning for South Wales and at 1502hrs, the rains began. With the wet-weather programme being called at 1503hrs, up went the tents, the bar was moved to a dungeon and the chef was resigned to the crypt. As expected, the winds picked up and the rain assumed a horizontal angle. Despite the horrendous weather, a further 50 tickets were sold on the door!

The concert itself was a great success, and went off without a hitch, despite a low-flying light making contact with one poor man's head but he was sporting stitches to the head already! The TA Band of the Royal Corps of Signals was excellent and the crowd in St David's gave a standing ovation after the British National Anthem and of course the Welsh National Anthem were played. Over all, the event raised £3058 from ticket, bar and food sales, in addition to the collection pots. Another successful charity event for the Regt!

Maj Lovell, WO1(RSM) Topps, Sig Smee, Cpl Cowley, Sig Goddard, LCpl Burtonshaw, Cpl Hundon, Cpl Harle, Sig Skeldon, Cpl Heron, LCpl Gullen and Flt Lt Salmon. Holding the cheque Regional Director Fundraising, Lt Col Charlie Nutting and SSgt Lean

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj W Holbrook**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Fairclough**

EXERCISE FOXES FOCUS JUNE 2008 - *By Cpl Tucker*

At the end of June 2008, the Sqn started Ex FOXES FOCUS. The aim of the ex was to do something different over a working week that was still loosely work based, rather than do vehicle maintenance in the rain.

The week started off with a bit of Sqn advertising in Blandford and Chicksands. Two SLE dets were sent to the 2 camps to show young officers and soldiers what capabilities the Sqn has, how we do our job on ops and give a bit of an insight to what soldiers can expect if they get posted to the sunshine haven that is Brawdy. The 2 days spent showing off our equipment went smoothly, with only one exhaust falling off a Pinzgauer in Blandford, which their LAD managed to fix – cheers fellas!

Day 3 didn't go as smoothly as planned though. Wednesday had been planned for ages as a 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn briefing day but not just a power point brief, the lads brought down some of the weapons they use and were going to put on a range so the lads in the Sqn could try them out. Unfortunately, the CDT team decided that that day was for random drug testing and most of the lads got called to be 'willy watchers' and give samples.

While they were away drinking water and trying to pee into a cup, we found that we couldn't have the ammunition that **YofS Samuel** had booked (verbally). And thanks to a 245 ex, he wasn't about to help out. In the end all the lads from 1 (RBY) Sig Sqn could do was deliver their presentation to 20 guys while the rest were enjoying half a day in the gym.The last day was a bit of AT to finish of the week. Due to limited funds i.e. it being the end of the month and no one having any money, the activities decided on were deep sea fishing and paintballing. Deep sea fishing started badly, when the boat and skipper never turned up at the dock. Luckily though there was another boat that offered to take us out for the same price. After catching quite a few mackerel each, we headed back to camp to pick up the lads for paintballing.

This turned out to be the only successfully activity of the week, everyone was there on time, they all had money, nothing broke – success! Before starting we had to have a 20 min safety brief on do's and don'ts of paintballing, which was ignored by everyone because squaddies know best. We played a couple of games of the normal stuff hiding in woods etc but I think the staff knew we were bored with the health and safety stuff.

For the last game they said being squaddies, we could do a no rules game in an open field, good stuff. Everyone spent what they had left in their wallet and stuffed their guns with all the paintballs they could. The game was carnage with no one escaping, even spectators who were skint managed to get a few bruises on the legs.

Two of the lads discovered that hiding in the back of a scrapped Land Rover that only has one door to escape from, is not the best idea in the world. After everyone had acquired sufficient bruises that would last for the next fortnight, it was home for tea and medals or if you were single, the M4 dash back to England.

EXERCISE FIRST FLIGHT - *by LCpl Miller*

It was 0200hrs and 14 Sig Regt's Spearhead Land Element (SLE) Tp, currently in the hands of 237 Sig Sqn, were finishing their final vehicle checks and preparations before making the 5 hr journey to South Cerney with only **LCpl Black** and **Sig Bailey's** version of Dirty Dancing to entertain the participants of Ex FIRST FLIGHT.

Just before 0700hrs, the convoy arrived in South Cerney and proceeded to the main hangers where the rest of the SLE comprising of the Irish Guards BG and their attached arms and services including the RE, REME, 30 Sig Regt, EOD, and DHU were gathered. The BG then received a brief from **Lt Col Ben Farrel**, CO of 1 Bn IG, on past SLE deployments, the importance of the SLE to the UK's capability and likely future ops. After the brief was completed the entire SLE organisation was moved through MCCP to check that all the proper paper work had been completed in order to allow for immediate deployment – this was eventually completed, the delays being caused by the apparent desire of each unit to impart there own and tradition and character onto this process with few actually bringing the same documents. Luckily as the lead BG came from the Guards it appeared they were more than happy with us all for just arriving. The process continued with a line up of all vehicles to be inspected and weighed for loading onto the necessary air frames, followed by a Bowman plug-up. When this was completed it was time for dinner in the mess hall before we moved to our superior, well spacious anyway, accommodation – 50 man rooms set up in the hangers. After the required rest for the drivers, the Tp began the long journey back to Brawdy.

16th SIGNAL REGIMENT
ELMPT

CO	**Lt Col J Hodges**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) B Sheard**

As the Regt nears the end of another busy year, there is a lot to reflect on: the completion of a difficult yet successful op tour; the reconstitution of the Regt; the fulfilment of our commitments towards the major ARRC exs for this year and the successful completion of a major adventurous training expedition to Canada.

As this edition of *The Wire* goes to print, members of the Regt are preparing to scatter to the four winds yet again as part of Ex ARRCADE FUSION, where we will be sending dets as far afield as Ramstein and Sardinia. On completion of this the Regt's skiers and snowboarders will head south for the snow before a well deserved Christmas break.

Life at the Regt has been best described as being like a train. Everybody gets on and gets off at some stage; all at different times and at different places, but the train will carry on no matter what. However, I don't think British Rail has anything that goes at quite the same speed as life in this Regt.

THE REFORMATION OF 252 SIGNAL SQUADRON
- by Capt Haines

252 Sig Sqn, part of 16 Sig Regt fully re-formed on 29 September this year. 252's re-formation had been in the pipeline for several months but with the Regt returning from Afghanistan and due to reconstitute it made sense to put it together at this point. 252 was initially formed on 15 February 1960 in Hong Kong.

The Sqn became part of 16 Sig Regt in 1994 in a fixed comms role but became independent in 2002 and then soon after was amalgamated into DCSA.

The new Sqn provides close Information and Communication System support to HQ ARRC. We are based in Javelin Barracks, Elmpt, and working between there and JHQ in Rheindalen. The support consists of training on the systems and software for the staff provided by Javelin Tp; Singapore Tp runs the back-end of all the deployable comms used by HQ ARRC and Kowloon Tp provides a deployable Point Of Presence for control of this on ex.

252 Sqn has formed from manpower from 255 and 230 Sqns, some newly posted in individuals, as well as those already serving in a number of posts in HQ ARRC.

We are also due to be reinforced over the coming months as more elements of HQ ARRC's close support come under our care. **Maj Steven**, a veteran of previous incarnations of 252, has the job of commanding the new Sqn and the man responsible for making sure the Sqn's 'boots and haircuts' are as smart as our support to HQ ARRC is the SSM, **WO2(SSM) Watson**.

EXERCISE JAVELIN SPEAR - CANADA EXPEDITION
– by LCpl Chan and Sig Chapman

As the date of our expedition to Canada neared, everything was going according to plan but then with a few days to go, the airline we were due to fly on went bust. With the expedition at risk of being cancelled, the CO came to the rescue and managed to get 16 new tickets just in the nick of time.

Because of the last minute flight changes, we were in for a long journey before we arrived at our final destination, the first leg of which involved a coach trip from Elmpt to London Heathrow with an overnight stay at the airport. Luckily we all came prepared with our roll mats and sleeping bags and set up camp around WH Smiths. The next morning we boarded our flight to Houston where we would have to make a connection flight to Canada.

On arriving at Houston we had a few hours to spare, so we made full use of the many fast food restaurants available as we knew we wouldn't be eating that well for our time on the trail. After the flight to Calgary, we had an draining coach ride to the Jasper hostel where we would be staying before hitting the trail. So after nearly 36 hrs of buses, ferries and planes we finally arrived at the hostel.

The team started sleeping rough before they'd even reached Canada

Our first day was spent in the town of Jasper, filling up on food and buying any final pieces of equipment that we needed including our bear bells, the only protection against any bears that we might come across. The aim of the expedition was for 2 groups of 8 soldiers, led by **Sgt Ryan** and **Sgt Whitehead**, to complete the North Boundary Trail, a 163km route through the Canadian Rockies, in 9 days. This involved carrying everything that we would need, from clothing to sleeping systems, and of course 9 day's of food.

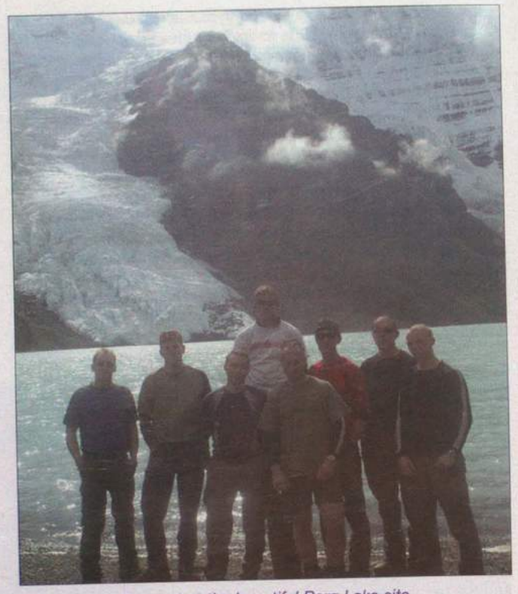
Water was taken from rivers and streams and purified using purifier pumps. The first group consisted of **Lt Ross**, **Sgt Ryan**, **LCpls Ronner**, **Gardner** and **Chan** and **Sigs Conway**, **Hayes** and **Metcalfe**. This group was to hit the trail a day earlier than the second group consisting of **Sgt Whitehead**, **LCpls Brown**, **Jones** and **O'Conner** and **Sigs Jared**, **Chapman**, **Metcalfe** and **Thurkettle**.

The first day of the expedition was planned as a short one to ease everybody into the trail and, with everyone excited to finally get into the Rockies, we raced to our first campsite after only a few hours. We spent the first night at camp familiarising ourselves with the equipment that we would use on the trail including our tents, which we had an interesting time putting up having only received them a few days prior to travelling. We saw **Sig Thurkettle** and **Sig Metcalfe** snapping a tent pole and ruining their tent.

This familiarisation also included learning how to put all our food up into the trees to avoid attracting bears into the centre of camp. The rest of the night was spent preparing for the next day, as it was planned to be the hardest day in both distance and elevation. It didn't fail to live up to expectations either!

The morning saw us climbing 1700m over the space of a seemingly never ending 4kms but it was all worth it when the ground started to even out for the next 22km and the scenery played out in front of us. One of the most stunning mountain ranges in the world was nearly a stone's throw away as we passed huge waterfalls and ancient glaciers; one of the most spectacular of which was at Berg Lake where we stopped for lunch.

The route started in the province of British Columbia but slowly crossed over into Jasper national park in Alberta and with it a new time zone. When we arrived at our next camp site it was evident that the trail was taking its toll on people's bodies, particularly their feet and having only walked about 40km some of the team were starting to feel the burn.



Group 1 at the beautiful Berg Lake site

Day 2 was difficult, but from Day 3 things were meant to start getting easier. However, as we set off, **Sig Hayes**' blisters saw him in a lot of pain and it was decided that it was best to relieve him of his bergen. As it was near the beginning of the trek it still contained most of his food meaning it weighed well over 20kg. A makeshift stretcher for the bergen was made from a couple of felled pine trees.

Carrying the stretcher became an adventure in itself as we travelled along dry riverbeds, crossed raging rivers and scrambled over rocks in order to avoid the narrow trail. We eventually did rejoin the trail but we were still far from the camp site and took it in turns as pairs to carry the stretcher on a trail that seemed never to end.

The day turned into an epic 25km stretcher race and one we would not soon forget. We arrived at the camp in the early evening just before the daylight started to fade and were completely drained of energy. Fortunately the advance party had already arrived and we had the welcoming sight of fire and food waiting for us.

Sig Metcalfe feels the burn

As we headed deeper into the wilderness, we passed fewer hikers along the route and after a few days we were the only people on the trail. We started to settle into a daily routine starting with porridge being cooked, or ruined, on the fire. **LCpl Brown** burning himself in the preparation of said porridge, **Sig Conway** applying his Vaseline south of the border, **Sig Thurkettle** burning holes in his boots and **Sgts Ryan** and **Whitehead** taping up people's feet in the hope that they would

last the rest of the expedition. This was all followed by the morning whinge about the distance left to be covered and the retrieval of our food from the trees. Although we were deep into bear country, we did not see any during our trail blazing, although we did see fresh signs along the way and no one really complained about not encountering one.

Wildlife was pretty sparse over the duration of the expedition but as optimists, prior to setting off we had purchased some basic fishing equipment in the hope of catching extra food! At each of the camp sites we laid out fishing lines in the rivers in an attempt to land something. Every morning we would go out to check the lines only to be disappointed. We were doubtful that there were any fish in the rivers until on the penultimate day, 2 fish were spotted. We suspected that these were the only fish in the whole of the Rockies!

During the planning phase of the expedition, the distances between camps that we would be walking each day were given to us by the park warden. These were soon found to be inaccurate by quite some distance and so each day we were walking for distances much longer than anticipated. Some members of the team handled this better than others. With such long distances to walk each day the main subject of conversation during the walk revolved around food and how much we would eat once the trek was over.

On the last day of the trek we made an early start in order to catch the transport booked to bring us back to the hostel. As it turned out this didn't make any difference as the route was completely different to the one the map put us on.

Racing against time we set off on a bearing, scaling the sides of mountains, avoiding cliff faces, walking down rapids and through swamps in order to meet the civilians with the vehicles. In the distance we saw a blue Nissan which we knew to be our transport; everyone let out a sigh of relief as we realised we had just completed the North Boundary Trail.

When we recovered to Jasper we took over the local Laundromat and their showers and all piled into the local Subway and gorged ourselves on as much fast food as we could!

We then returned to the lodge where the evening meal for everyone was **Sgt Ryan's** cooked steak and home made chips, something that had been heavily salivated over when discussed since the first day of walking.

There is always one joker

With the North Boundary Trail completed and with a new sense of belief in ourselves, we had a few days to relax and reintegrate ourselves into the night life of Jasper before heading out to hit the sights and sounds of Calgary for our official R&R. Stories of our time there are not for the faint hearted and will remain burned in the local Canadians' memories for years to come.

LCpl Gardner survives his encounter with a Canadian bear

THE BERLIN MARATHON - *by Lt Collins*

Having just returned from ops in Afghanistan, I was looking forward to some well earned rest, relaxation and certainly catching up on some thoroughly missed social drinking time during my post tour leave. However this would only be the case for the briefest of periods. This was because I had forgotten that during my tour I had agreed with **Capt Parton**, Elmpt Station Dental Officer, that I would accompany her for a 26.2 mile jaunt around Berlin.

I had been training during the tour, but there is only so much running you can do either on a treadmill in a gym with no air conditioning or outside at dawn; the only time where the conditions are hospitable enough to run. I did not feel fully prepared for the mammoth event that was ever looming. That being the case, **Capt Parton** and I travelled to Berlin and booked in to receive our race entry numbers.

It was finally the day and, after a healthy and energising breakfast of a Subway sandwich and a protein bar, we made our way to the start area. Walking to the start point we couldn't help but feel that we may be out of our depth with the sheer volume of, what seemed like professional runners who were wearing a plethora of running equipment: knee high stockings, arm and headbands, various electronic heart rate devices and even stockings for the arms.

None the less we were as ready as we were going to be at this point and couldn't wait to get started. It was a slow start with the hordes of people all pushing and shoving their way across the start line, but we were finally off. The first 8 miles were simply glorious, no aches and pains and we were just swept up by the excitement of the crowd and the bands that were lining the street playing every kind of music imaginable: Jazz, Heavy Rock, Reggae and even a Classical Orchestra.

However, after those first 8 miles it was down to business, just concentrating on where you were putting your feet so as not to slip on any of the thousands of plastic cups of water that were lining the parts of the course with the water stands. After 16 miles the constant pounding of the road started to take its toll on the muscles and joints but after a very welcome fruit and energy drink, we were just about ready to push through. As we came up to the last 6 miles I actually found myself saying; "Come on its only 6 miles, only 6 miles!"

Before long the very welcome sight of the last mile banner was visible. However this was by far the longest mile I have ever ran. I thought the finish would never appear but then suddenly there it was, the Brandenburg Gate. It was a long way off but definitely there. Crossing that finish line gave us both a feeling of relief and complete euphoria feeling. That soon wore off as **Capt Parton** and I hobbled to collect our bags which we had left at the start.

At the time we were both in agreement to never, ever do a marathon again; but you know, I think I just might.

REGIMENTAL FOOTBALL - *by Sig Mackie*

As the Corps development Regt, football is taken extremely serious at Elmpt Station and the Regt has some exceptional players. Following a disrupted end to last season due to op commitments, this season will hopefully see the Regt get the success on the pitch they are due. Pre-season training gave us the opportunity to include some new faces which has given us strength in depth. The Regt had just returned from Afghanistan and on the conclusion of POTL saw some old players return to the team. Amongst them being key players such as **WO2 Kidd**, **Sgt Sheath** and **LCpl Briggs**.

We started training under the ever watchful eye of **WO2 Walledge** and future manager **WO2 Lythe**. Coach, **Cpl Hanbury**, had the boys working hard on fitness and stamina training as **WO2 Walledge** stayed on the sideline planning strategy surrounded by a cloud of smoke.

Our first pre-season friendly against 7 Sig Regt ended in a disappointing goalless draw, despite 16 being on top for most of the game. We then played the WOs and Sgts Mess in a friendly. A clean sheet was on the cards before **WO2 Kidd**, on this occasion playing for the Mess, lobbed the goalkeeper from his own half. Despite this the Regt, minus WOs and SNCOs, won with a comfortable 5 – 1 score line.

Shortly after these matches the team played 21 Sig Regt in the Elmpt Station "Cage", welcoming back our former goalkeeper **WO1 McBean**, who led out 21 Sig Regt where he is now RSM. The final score was 2 – 0 to us with the scorers being **WO2 Kidd** and **Sig Usher**.

The Regt recently entered 2 teams into the Corps 7-a-side tournament at Elmpt Station. The 2 teams met each other in the quarter finals of the Plate competition with the A Team victorious with a 2 – 1 result. 30 Sig Regt were the overall winners, despite being beaten by our A team in the group stages. However the day was enjoyed by all and we were pleased to have reached the semi-finals.

As we reach the halfway stage of the season, the team are back into training for its forthcoming fixtures. With the remainder of the season looming, we hope to improve on last year and get our hands on as much silverware as possible.

Sgt Whitney takes the ball off a 21 Signal Regiment player

21st SIGNAL REGIMENT (AIR SUPPORT) COLERNE

CO	**Lt Col D Craft**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) McBean**

Now that the maximum leave period is over, is it right back into the thick of it and the majority of the Regt has been focused on preparing for and running the Lanyard Trophy. This event challenged the entire unit, be it through the provision of safety comms, manning of checkpoints, catering and even building tented accommodation! All involved thoroughly enjoyed hosting the event and 21 Sig Regt very much look forward to entering next year's competition. After a couple of years in the Army, we would like to say goodbye to **Capt (TOT) Dave Coffey**, who in reality has just completed over 24 years of service and has decided that it is now finally time to give civilian life a go. With that, we would like to welcome new arrivals into RHQ, **Capt Simon Crowther**, the new TOT and **Capt Jase Cade**, who has assumed the gapped RAF Benson Liaison Officer post. Good luck to you both!

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj B Bryan**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) B Baynham**

GOLF TROOP - *by Sig Maguder*

OC	**2Lt Meite**
SSgt	**SSgt Jones**

It has been a hectic time at 21 Sig Regt despite the quieter August period. We have recently lost **LCpl O'Mara** and **Sig Rice** to civvie street and we wish them success. Recently attached to Golf Tp was **2Lt Meite**, posted in was **Sgt McClaren** from Nato Comms Latina, **LCpl Alderton** and **Sig Washington** from 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt.

The bulk of Tp work has involved preparing for Ex RED SCORPION 2, as we look to build on the first RED SCORPION ex. This ex sees Golf Tp deploying to Cornwall to link up with other Sqn assets in Morocco and Germany in a '2 continents, 3 countries ex' as the Yeoman excitedly puts it! The ex will really test the Bowman knowledge in the Tp while hopefully allowing scope for development. Despite not being a tactical ex, the guys will get the chance to practise some basic military skills and will 'rough it' in comparison to the other Tps. So that means no duvets and no breakfast in bed!

Equally as important as the ex is having some fun in the Tp and to that end **LCpl Alderton** will be donning the lycra as he auditions for 'Gladiators' and we will be supporting him all the way.

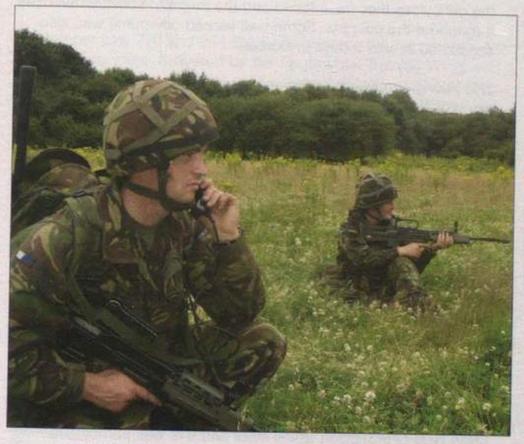
HOTEL TROOP - *by Cpl Crayton*

OC	**2Lt Holmstrom**
SSgt	**SSgt Stiff**

It's been an extremely busy period for the Tp in the last few months. We had to say goodbye to the Tp OC, **Lt Alice Curtis**, who left us to go to Aldershot and hang around the Palace doing ceremonial comms and we welcomed **2Lt Libby Holmstrom** from Blandford. **Sgt Weatherstone** also left us to go to Ireland on promotion, and joining the Tp we had **Cpl Shepherd** from Blandford, **Cpl Hewitt** from 102 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and **LCpl Butcher** from 7 Sig Regt.

In July the Sqn embarked on Ex RED SCORPION, during which the whole Sqn deployed all over the country. The majority of the Tp went to the beautiful Bramley Training Area while the rest went to Aldershot. The SSM, SQMS and MT were on the ground acting as enemy which seemed to send the fear of God into the dets at Bramley, especially **Sig Kez Potter** who seemed to call 'Stand-to' every 2 minutes. I'm sure the deer in the area didn't understand the cry "Army…Stop or I'll fire" but the dets at Aldershot didn't really seem to mind that enemy were out on the ground.

They even found time to go shopping in the local Tesco much to the delight of the SSM who caught them out. We spent a lot of the time on the ex using helicopters with myself having to marshal in a couple of Merlins, **Sgt Holroyd** gave up after a Gazelle literally chased him across the ex area; he's defiantly sprouted a few more grey hairs since then! The ex as a whole went well but not very tiring – thank goodness for drivers' hours. On return from Ex RED SCORPION, we then had another ex to support an MRX in Luggershall.



Sig Kez Potter speaks to the incoming Puma crew

The Tp is now preparing for another big Sqn ex with Hotel Tp deploying to an Army Camp in Germany and India Tp deploying to a 5 star hotel in Morocco! It could be worse, the rest of the Sqn are deploying to Cornwall for an HF comms ex. The Yeoman wants comms between the 3 different countries; Morocco, the UK and Germany…….good luck troops!

Finally our congratulations to **Cpl 'Jules' Tucker** who recently finished second in the Corps individual orienteering championships and went on to win the W21 competition.

INDIA TROOP

OC	**Lt Tremeling**
SSgt	**SSgt Atwell**

July saw dets from India Tp deploying on Ex RED SCORPION in order to improve the Sqn's capability with Bowman HF comms. Dets deployed throughout the country from Otterburn the furthest North to Davidstow in Cornwall. It was also a good chance to get some practice in with the RAF with ground to air comms and rigger marshalling skills. The ex was hailed a major success and thanks go to everyone involved. The Tp also said goodbye to **LCpl Sam Hall** and **LCpl Tammy Williams** who are now at Blandford in the Bowman trials team. Goodbye also to **Sgt Dawn Oakes** who has now been posted to 102 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and to **Sig Jay Henry** who has left the Army and is doing well in his new job.

On a brighter note we have welcomed some new arrivals to the troop, **Sig Daniel Swanson** and **Sig Rachel Wheatman**, also **SSgt John Atwell** who has taken over from **SSgt Phil Cooper**.

It's going to be a busy end to the year for India Tp as the majority are set to deploy on Ex JEBEL SAHARA, which will take place in Morocco. This ex will give the troops taking part as close to real time ops as can be done. For the remainder, they will be deploying either to Germany, the HERRICK MRX or to Davidstow on Ex RED SCORPION 2.

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj P Hale**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) McMullan**

It has been a very busy time for the Sqn over the last couple of months mainly focusing around the organisation for the Lanyard Trophy. This large event required the whole of the Sqn's manpower and the preparation for the ex was as exhausting as the route itself. The Sqn has also been sad to say goodbye to several key players over the recent period: **WO2(YoS) Martin-Woodgate** to NATO CIS Naples (some people get all the luck!), **SSgt Steve Brown** promoted to SSM, **Cpl Preston** and **Sig Jones** to 19 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn and **Sig Whelbourne** to 16 Sig Regt. 244 also says a big welcome to **WO2(YoS) Tucker**, **SSgt Cowley**, **Sgt Flay**, **Sig Pople** and **Sig Thompson** who have all recently come to the Sqn.

The new focus for the Sqn is the forthcoming comms ex, Ex RED HAND, while we also look forward to welcoming back our soldiers currently on Op HERRICK and Op TELIC and wish all those going the best of luck.

JOINT HELICOPTER FORCE (IRAQ) - *by Lt Gareth Jones*

Bob Dylan once sang: "The tours they are a changing". He didn't actually sing that but I'm sure he would had he just returned from Iraq. UK troops are back in Basra supporting the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in their new role as Military Transition Teams (MiTTs); supporting and instructing Iraqi Army troops out on the ground and helping them develop into a more effective force. The hard work of the MiTTs has meant that the ISF has grown more and more confident in its own ability and has started to carry out full ops on its own. With the improved security that this has brought, things are looking up for the region as a whole.

Joint Helicopter Force (Iraq) [JHF(I)] continues to provide vital aviation support to Multi-National Div (South East) such as: troop and equipment movement around the AO, Counter-Indirect Fire ops and provides the Incident Response Team. JHF(I)'s role is vital to facilitate the move to Iraqi Self-Reliance and of course it goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that the JHF(I) J6 Det is making itself busy while all this is going on.

As for the Det: well as its OC for 6 months I've had some interesting times and worked with some even more interesting characters. I'm not sure whether it was listening to **Cpl Nick Cole** doing and an impression of a leaky roof (terrible) or **LCpl Cook** pretending to be Dr Zoidberg (even worse) but I've definitely become more of a listener, not a bad thing with speed dating over POTL being a real possibility.

LCpl Matthew Cook and **Sig Will Pickering** helped the Trenchard Lines' team by scoring a few tries each in the Contingency Operating Base (COB) Rugby 7s tournament in support of 'Help for Heroes'. **Cpl Nick Cole** kept himself entertained by trying to turn the entire staff of JHF(I) into physical monsters and if that wasn't hard enough, he even tried it with the RAF. While all the while, **SSgt Daz Culver** and **Sgt Duncan Excell** did their best to keep my more ludicrous suggestions under wraps. It wasn't all about work though as some of the guys got to enjoy some of the local culture by having a go at camel racing. They may have been 2 ft tall and made of cardboard but **Cpl Bri Clark** certainly enjoyed himself despite being thrown at the last post.

This being my first tour I learnt quite a bit, such as what not to say during the CO's evening brief and how much "fun" it was to get comms to helicopters. I kept pretty busy and so always looked forward to a bit of lie down but unfortunately **LCpl Waters** kept insisting on taking me out for runs at 0500hrs! As well as being OC J6, I also "double-hatted" as the JHF(I) Adjt.

This mainly involved making the brews for visiting dignitaries and such but I did get the odd random task thrown in too. I let my artistic flair loose when asked to design an Iraqi Army Air Assault Badge but this was shot down after it was pointed out that "lions don't fly"!

After many farewells I left the Det in the capable hands of **Lt Rachel Clayton** who has assured me that physical stuff is going to double and she'll soon sort out the mess I've left her. For a first tour it wasn't too bad. As a matter of fact I really enjoyed it but before I get too sentimental, I think I'll have another beer before I'm out there again.

JHF(I) Troop – Cpl Adam Flatman, SSgt Daz Culver, Lt Gareth Jones, Sgt John McLoughlin, Cpl Eddie Hart, Sig Darren Chapman, LCpl Matthew Cook, Sig Bianca Parris, Sig Dean Sheldon, LCpl Martin Waters, Sig Will Pickering

EXERCISE DRAKENSBURG MOUNTAIN TIGER – SOUTH AFRICA - by *Lt R Clayton and LCpl J Wiltshire*

After months of well planned organisation, mainly on the part of **SSgt Steve Brown,** and fund raising, a 14 strong team left for 2½ weeks of adventurous training in South Africa. Once we had arrived in the country, our acclimatisation period saw a battlefield tour to Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana, both sites of notable historical interest. This opportunity was relished and proved an excellent start to the trip.

Thereafter we travelled to the Drakensburg Mountain range to embark on the first phase of walking. This involved a route up to some of the highest ridges in the area, culminating in an attempt at ascending Cathedral Peak.

It was a challenging route and group members found it hard going at first but were soon distracted by the amazing scenery and magnitude of the mountains surrounding us. After a night in some dubiously named 'caves' (more of an overhang really) we continued upwards and soon found ourselves below the final peak. The braver amongst us attempted the ascent but after a few near death experiences and serious time constraints, we carried on our route, slowly descending the mountains.

Phase 2 of the walking was completion of the 65 mile Giant's Cup Trail, a lower level track traversing a range of smaller mountains. Some long days saw us facing some equally challenging conditions and by the 60th mile, we were ready to stop walking and definitely looking forward to some down time and decent food – with nothing to do with milk-based pasta sauce when you don't have any milk.The remainder of the expedition returned to the battlefield tour and cultural side, with visits to the Apartheid

Group Jimmy at Cathedral Peak

Museum, Soweto and a hugely insightful guided tour of one of the impoverished townships of Johannesburg. All members of the group learnt a great deal about the culture of South Africa, the difficulties they have faced and the range of social differences throughout the country. Some well earned downtime was also scheduled in with 2 days in Durban.

This saw group members doing a range of activities, including sky diving, deep sea fishing, scuba diving (and sleeping for the less adventurous – did **Capt Dave Coffey** go fishing in the end?) and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. All in all, the expedition was a huge success and was an unforgettable experience for all members of the group.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

OC	**Maj R Cowan**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) M Pollock**

During recent months the Sqn has seen a number of changes of personnel, not least **Maj Grant Johnson** has moved on to his new appointment of DCOS 2 (NC) Sig Bde and **Maj Rod Cowan** has moved across from QM (G) to OC. This in turn led to **Capt Kev Simmons** moving from QM (T) to QM (G) on promotion to A/Maj, congratulations. As ever the Sqn continues to provide first class Real Life Support to the Regt and this was particularly proven during the Lanyard Trophy Competition where the G4 Team set up and ran an impressive tented camp for the competitors and admin staff from across the Corps.

Thank goodness for Loan Stores, they provided the tents – without them we couldn't have done it! Everyone worked extremely hard to ensure that the Regt provided the best possible service to the Corps and it was an ideal opportunity to carry out some team building during the process. We offer our congratulations to **LCpl Pimm** RLC who has just been selected for promotion to LCpl, an outstanding chef! As ever the OC looks forward to another story from the QM, **Maj Kev Simmons** about falling off his mountain bike and crashing into a tractor and the fact that his pay has not been right for years!

TM TROOP – ROTARY HORSELESS TRIALS
- by LCpl S Marshall

Two teams of 5 competitors, from HQ Sqn and 244 Sqn, arrived at Little Badminton with high excitement, which was soon to be destroyed by the morale soaking rain. We only had a short amount of time to prepare ourselves before the 25th anniversary Rotary Horseless trial started.
The event itself is a 9-mile cross-country run over various terrain, jumps and water features held every year to support local charities. This year there were over 300 participants who either walked the route or competed in either a 5 or 9 mile race.

As soon as we were ready we headed over to the start line where there were all sorts of fancy dress characters ranging from fairies,

cowgirls, nuns and Scooby Doo. The race to end all races began as we started on what was to be a gruelling 9 mile cross-country run. We encountered several large obstacles on our journey including fallen trees, hurdles, walls and horse jumps, which we had to traverse in order to carry on.

We hit the 5 mile point where most of the competitors finished but for us our 9 mile adventure was not yet over. We finally came to the final mile marker, which was a beacon of light, and as soon as we crossed the finish line a medal was gracefully placed around our necks.

The award ceremony shortly followed. 21 Sig Regt won most of the awards including **Sgt Sean Dinsdale** who came first in the Male 9 mile, **Sig Kate Delauro** who came first in the Female 9 mile and our TM Tp team comprising **Sgt Dinsdale, Sgt Stu McCluskey, Cpl Lewis Hayde, LCpl Si Marshall** and **LCpl Johnny Wiltshire** who collectively won the Military team event. All the money raised for this event was split between 'Hope for the Future' which is a local chemotherapy charity and 'Help for Heroes'.

REGIMENTAL MATTS TRAINING PACKAGES
- by Sgt Bernie Clifton

September saw 220 and 244 Sig Sqns undergo the 'all new Issue 2' MATTs package, delivered by the Regimental Training Wing. The Regt was one of the first units across the Army to deliver the package, arousing the interest of the Directorate of Training (Army) and a visit to the Regt to discus the training with the soldiers.

Highlights of the 2 weeks included a substance misuse presenter who stared like a Cyberman in *Doctor Who*, some enthusiastic coaching from **Lt Tremelling** and **Cpl 'Mac' McGregor** on Warminster ranges and the smoke coming from the keyboard of **Mrs Eileen Robinson** who spent her every working hour inputting the results of the MATTs onto individuals JPA records.

HQ MT

MTO	**Capt M Gilbert**

Having worked tirelessly over the Lanyard Trophy, the Regt MT has returned to camp to be launched straight into Whole Fleet management and LSI prep. Summer leave already seems a distant memory, with a very busy 3 months until Christmas. We would also like to say welcome to **Sgt Sean Dinsdale** and his family, congratulations to **Cpl Tony Annetts** on his recent selection for promotion to Sgt. And, last but not least, congratulations and goodbye to **Sgt Kate Hopkinson** who has deserted us for 7 Sig Regt on promotion.

SIKH RECRUITING - *by Sig Singh*

From 24 April to 8 May 08, I was attached to the ACIO in Coventry to assist in the Sikh Festival called Vaisakhi, which takes place every year in Coventry, Birmingham and other cities in England. Our aim is to recruit members of the Sikh community into the British Army. The majority of the Sikh community of Coventry and Birmingham are British Sikh, whose forefathers served in the British Army in both World Wars in Burma, Germany and Africa.

We visited numerous communities and Gurdwaras (Sikh temple) in Coventry and Birmingham and participated in the "Proud to be British – Proud to be Sikh" annual march through the streets of Handsworth. This event is aimed at promoting the understanding of how the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force are manned and also to promote diversity and multicultures throughout the 3 Services and mainly to promote awareness and to stress that we are an equal opportunities employer.

Many of the youngsters do not realise that as a British Sikh they can join any of the Services and serve full careers, while still maintaining their proud religious background and cultures. Overall we managed to achieve our aim and potentially recruited up to 50 youngsters and I am sure many more will follow.

Sig Singh taking part in the parade

LANYARD TROPHY SUPPORT - *by Pte Walsh RLC*

I recently deployed on Lanyard Trophy Competition 08. During my time in the Army I have deployed on many exs providing catering support but this one was quite different! This ex was all about the Royal Corps of Signals getting together to do a 40 mile orienteering and speed march competition carrying weight.

The route was set all around the Brecon Beacons and was administered by 21 Sig Regt. Unfortunately, the nearest training camp, SENTA, could not accommodate the large numbers expected to enter the competition. This lead to the Regt deploying early to set up a tented camp to accommodated 400 personnel. Great, I thought, and only my first week in the Regt! The first couple of days were busy, and canvas seemed to be everywhere! We had a lot to do, from setting up cook sets to putting down flooring.

The teams were expected to arrive on Day 4 of our deployment, so the catering department was as ever hard at it, working as a team and doing all the prep for the 400 personnel that were expected to arrive for dinner. We were really busy and I expected to panic that we would run out of food, but somehow it was all plain sailing. We all knew exactly what our jobs were, under the supervision of **Cpl Helen Goodall.**

We finally finished feeding the teams at 1930hrs on the Wednesday evening and it was straight to bed, as we had to be back up at 0200hrs the next day. The competitors received an early breakfast at 0330hrs prior to being set off at staggered timings from 0530hrs onwards. The competitors seemed in good spirits considering the task that lay ahead. As a department, we made sure that all teams set of fully nourished and with plenty of carbs.

The first team arrived back at the tented camp at 1600hrs. I could not believe how quickly they had covered the arduous 40 mile course. They looked like they had done a walk in the park! I drew the short straw and manned the kitchen to feed the last team in, which was at 0100hrs the following morning. They looked absolutely knackered and didn't want much food. I wasn't offended as they probably just wanted their beds.

During the ex I felt like an integral part of the team. Not just in the catering troop, but with the unit. From peeling potatoes with fellow Ptes to unloading tables with the QM (G), **Maj Cowan** we all worked together and made the job easier and a lot more fun. I feel that now I have made some good mates in the unit and feel the ex was a success. There were complements about the food

and the whole administration of the competition. I generally enjoyed myself and had a good week.

43(WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON (AIR SUPPORT) (VOLUNTEERS)

OC **Maj Britt Haggerty TD**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Cameron**

EXERCISE HOT FUSION 16 - 18 MAY 08 - *by Sig Lye*

In general, aside from faulty generators, scaly-backs like to keep away from things that go bang. We're more into things that go beep rather than boom! This weekend however was all about things that did indeed go bang and boom as 43 Sig Sqn took part in its annual Mil Skills ex.

This year's ex would be a bit spicier with regards to patrolling and contact drills but also we would have a real live enemy – to be known hereafter as the 'Saxonia Action Group'. After kit and weapon issues in the TA Centre, we deployed out to the Training Area late Friday evening.

Friday night was spent in an old barn on Salisbury Plain Training Area. It was up nice and early on Saturday morning for a top breakfast from our unit's heroic chefs to set us up for the day's challenges.

This was then followed by various practical lessons and instruction on military skills that we would use and encounter throughout the rest of the weekend. This included the use of pyrotechnics, basic patrolling and contact drills.

The highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly the chance to ride (I mean recce) the enemy's area of ops in a Gazelle helicopter kindly provided by 668 Sqn AAC (V). Descents, flying backwards, hovering, all were covered during the journey. Everyone enjoyed the experience and we all hope to get given the chance to sample more of the same in the future.

A visit by the DComd Joint Helicopter Command, **Air Cdre Falla DSO CBE** RAF allowed us timeout for lunch and the opportunity for the DComd to meet some of the Sqn and have an informal chat.

A quick practice at patrolling in our respective sects then it was down to business! One sect had to deal with a casualty from an IED and the Patrol Commander, **OCdt Richard Howman** thought he was the only one that needed to talk! Later on in the night 2

Air Cdre Falla meets the troops on Ex HOT FUSION

Sect were sent to meet the Secret Agent! This then turned into the obligatory ambush! After scaring the Salisbury Plain Mountain Bike Club with bangs and lights, we did a fighting withdrawal to our HQ.

The PSI, **SSgt Link**, swore that we would not move from there during the night. Various probes from the enemy during the night made sure we used loads of ammo and the Gucci Night Vision kit from the Forward Air Control Tp to good effect. First light and the enemy attacked for real this time and we bugged out to the ERV and then into another friendly HQ.

We then decided to take the fight to the enemy and put a hasty set of orders together as they were getting ready to move out. The attack went in and everything was going well. **Sig Cooper** took the warning cry of "Grenade!" as an order to run to it and over it. Well done to **Cpl Ives** and **Cpl White** who tried to knock out the enemy with their grenades (pull the pins next time guys!). An enjoyable ex was enjoyed by all and thanks to **WO2(CSM) Sean Shanahan** and his guys from the London Rifles for helping out as enemy.

GOODBYES

Lastly we to say goodbye to **SSgt Paul Chambers**, our PSI who is leaving for civ div after 22 years service man and boy – t hanks for everything. Hello to **SSgt Simon Link** who has taken over the reins.

30th SIGNAL REGIMENT BRAMCOTE

CO **Lt Col Ford**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Morris**

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj Alan Balsdon**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Hodgskins**

SQUADRON DEPLOYMENT TO THE ISLAND OF ALDERNEY

The association between Alderney and the Regt began 20 years ago in May 1988 when the Island officials granted the Freedom of the Island to 30 Sig Regt, confirming its right to march through the town with pennants flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed. Elements of Support Sqn recently deployed to Alderney to assist with a number of important community projects as part of its Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) commitments. The Regt marked the occasion of the 20th Anniversary, confirming our Freedom of the Island, by marching from the church gates back up to the Royal Connaught for an inspection by **Maj Al Balsdon** and the Island President, **Sir Norman Browse.**

Member of Support Squadron on parade outside the Alderney State Building

The winning team posing for a photograph with the Green Goddess on completion of the 10km fun run

2Lt McPhun and SSgt Culling supervising the painting of the play ground

LCpl Burnham-Packham , Sig Walsh and Pte Lewis painting the Church gates

31st (CITY OF LONDON) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) LONDON

CO **Lt Col Simon Walker TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Mick Concepcion**

REGIMENTAL EXERCISE

This year's Regimental ex was a combined Regt and Bde level training event. Ex DARTMOOR CHALLENGE was the Regimental phase which took place at Okehampton Camp in Devon. This was a challenging and varied week which included: comms training, command post training, Warrant Officer training, driver training and ranges.

The week culminated with the Duchess of Gloucester Cup, a military skills competition between the Sqns. The Adjt and RSM, although not competing as part of a Sqn team, took the opportunity to go for a canter round the assault course.

The Adjt was only slowed down slightly by the weight of the RSM slung over one shoulder towards the end, although a successful go at the monkey bars led to a round of applause for **WO1(RSM) Concepcion.** After a hard fought day of events, the final placings would be determined by the infamous Ops Maj's challenge.

After an arduous burden carry and navigation ex, 56 (QOOH) won the competition, beating 82 (Support) Sqn by the skin of the teeth. The trophy was awarded by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, who was very pleased to see his local Sqn win. The Regt then deployed on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS to be put through its paces by the Bde Staff.

56 (QOOH) Sqn win the Duchess of Gloucester Cup

A few cobwebs were blown away and everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves, while learning a great deal in the process.

REGIMENT ADVENTURE TRAINING – PENHALE

With the vast majority of the Regt on an FTX, **Maj Terry Crosby** was dispatched to Penhale to occupy those who couldn't be employed on the ex.

Our American guests were introduced to the power

kites on the beach; several hours of a kite pulling your arms off on nothing more than a skateboard!

With 2 instructors on hand, climbing and abseiling was high on the agenda and it didn't take long to find the 'spider men'; **Sig Tom Moreland** and **SSgt John Atherton** scampering up the crags as if they weren't there. No so easy abseiling though over a vertical drop into the sea!

You take the strain...I'll just watch

It wasn't all work though, as the competitions kicked in: how many hen parties were spotted in Newquay on a Saturday night? They were up to 15 and best not to say over what time period!

The .22 indoor shooting competitions were rigged (well done **Chadders**) and **SSgt John Atherton** and **Maj Terry Crosby** left the rest standing as they lapped everyone else on the very fast and exciting Go-Kart track.

EXERCISE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT – 2 OCTOBER 08

On 2 October, the Regulars and Non-Regular Permanent Staff of 31 Sig Regt, embarked upon Ex CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT. This consisted of a trip to the National Gallery followed by a sociable round of 'golf'! The group arrived in London and made their way to the National Gallery.

Why the National Gallery, you ask? Well, this whole little jaunt was organised by the Adjt, **Capt Matthews**, who as it turns out, knows a thing or two about art. After a brief interlude, everybody reconvened in the lobby. Everyone had now spent a couple of hours looking at various paintings and so were tasked with choosing a personal favourite each and explaining why.

An hour and several explanations later, the group emerged blinking and thirsty and ready for a fun round of, ahem, golf (thanks to **SSgt Hawker** for recceing an excellent course). Everyone paired off and play got underway with **Capt Matthews** and **Maj Griffiths**, setting the precedent with an eagle and birdie respectively, closely followed by **Sgt Lee** and **Sgt Westmoreland** on a pair of birdies.

As the contest went on, the 2 pairs opened up a sizeable lead on the rest of the field, however **Sgts Lee** and **Westmoreland** were unable to pull back that one shot lead afforded by **Capt Matthews'** eagle and after going (quite literally) shot for shot with them, the contest ended with **Maj Griffiths** and **Capt Matthews** winning by one shot.

Congratulations, Sirs. All in all it was a fun day out and it dared be said that a few of the group even learned something about the world of art.

5 (QUEENS OWN OXFORDSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj CL Murison**
SSM **WOII M Taylor**

TA 100 EVENTS

Through out the year the Sqn has been taking part in TA 100 events. This included the Army Show at Aldershot, TA100 Buckingham Palace Garden Party and Wearing Uniform to Work.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY – 10 JULY 08
- by Cpl Green

Her Majesty the Queen was kind enough to open up her garden on 10 July to a hoard of TA personnel and their guests to celebrate 100 years of the TA in association with SaBRE.

The garden party was attended by **HRH The Prince Edward** and **HRH The Princess Royal** and was a way of thanking employers for supporting reservists over the past 100 years. The invitations arrived in late April after which a mad panic ensued to obtain No. 2 Dress and posh frocks and hats.

After several fittings and visits to the tailor uniform we were ready for the big day. Entrance to the Palace was via the main gate with hundreds of tourist looking on, wondering what was happening but taking photos anyway.

Through the Palace and out onto the terrace and lawns. The obligatory cucumber sandwiches (no crusts) were consumed along with many other tasty morsels plus cups of tea.

The weather actually managed to stay dry and the sun made an appearance as we strolled around the garden. It was hard to believe we were actually in the centre of London. Two bands, including the Royal Signals Band, played a variety of tunes along with all the pomp and ceremony as the royal guests arrived and left. My work colleagues, **Amanda Rendell** and **Kate Chorley**, thoroughly enjoyed the day however the most chuffed was my Mum.

TA 100 – WEAR YOUR UNIFORM TO WORK DAY ON 16 JULY

Across the UK many TA soldiers wore their uniform to their 'normal' day time job. This not only was part of the TA 100 celebrations but was a good way of colleagues finding out what the TA soldier did in their spare time. Several soldiers in the Sqn took part in the event including the OC, **Maj Murison**, who for part of the day was at No 10 with her Chief Executive. There she met the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister.

CAMP 2008

Camp this year was busy! In the first week we were at Okehampton where the Sqn took part in the Regt training which included range work, SNCO and WO training, comms and driver training. This put all members of the Sqn through their paces in the build up to the Bde FTX the following week.

One of the highlights of the ex was when the Sqn team won the Duchess of Gloucester Cup. This was the traditional team competition of military skills, fitness, team work and the will to win.It was a tough and long day but all worth it as the team managed to beat the rest of a very good field to retain the trophy.

The whole event was made even better with the support of the visitors who had come to see the Sqn in action this included **Col Mieville** from SE RFCA, the Hon Col, **Col Bridgeman** and **Brig Ian Inshaw**, High Sherriff of Oxfordshire, the latter presenting the prizes to the triumphant team of **Capt Cornick**, **SSgts Allan** and **Goodwin**, **LCpls Greenaway**, **Wragg**, **Brown** and **O'Sullivan** and **Sig Ascott** (who is in training for the 2012 Olympics with his attempt at a backwards flip – or did he just slip off the monkey bars into the water tank backwards and head first).

The winning team with the Cup

In the second week the comms phase was in full swing with the Dets being tested up and down the UK. It was a test for all, challenging and rewarding, as the Regt and Bde responded to the disasters befalling the UK. It was a bit surreal however for the Sqn Command team with the RHQ Ops being based in the Banbury TAC – home of the Sqn. **Capt Jelfs**, the PSAO made the team feel welcome and showed his concern for the Ops Maj, **Maj Griffiths** providing him with some head gear to keep him warm.

Congratulations to **Sigs Ascott**, **Elliott** and **Hollis** for surviving Ex SUMMER CHALLENGE and completing their basic training and also to **Sgt Green** and **LCpl Brown** on their recent promotions and **LCpl Simon Machin** on his successful transfer to the Regulars.

41 SIGNAL SQUADRON

FREEDOM OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON PARADE – 12 OCTOBER 08 *- by Capt Harris*

On a bright and sunny Sunday morning, the 41 Princess Louise's Kensington Sig Sqn (V) joined other local TA Units to exercise their Freedom of the London Borough of Croydon. **Maj Jason Fensome** led the Sqn with bayonets fixed and medals shining, to the sound of the Yeomanry band, through the streets of Croydon. We paused outside the Town Hall for the Mayor of Croydon, **Cllr Jonathan Driver**, to inspect the parade. Then the parade moved off, down the streets to the Fairfield Hall civic centre, with members of the public clapping and cheering.

At the hall we were joined by family and friends to listen to a very supportive speech from the Mayor. We all then tucked into a wonderful buffet lunch, during which time the Mayor took his opportunity to meet all the Sqn and pose for photographs. The sun was still shining as we returned to the TA centre in Coulsdon with a bounce in our step. Thank you Croydon for a great day.

EXERCISE SHARP SHOOTER – 7 OCTOBER 08

After being approached by our PSI **SSgt Evans**, I had to put my name down to assist and run a stand for something going on up in the centre of London called Ex SHARP SHOOTER. I didn't really know what it was, just that myself, **Staff Evans**, **Capt Harris** and **LCpl Shand** would be running a comms stand showing people the wonder of a piece of our radio kit – the Chirpsounder. We left the base at about 1500hrs and I had a very enjoyable hour and a half being carved and cut up by London traffic before we arrived.

We all grabbed the boxes of kit and got them into the hall of 3MI's TAC and set up before a nice cup of coffee to prepare us. We were sharing the hall with some Marines (weapons, weapons and more...), some RNR (ropes) and some FANY. Chatting with some others around the hall and building, I picked up that this was a SABRE event, letting employers of City of London TA soldiers see what their staff got up to at the weekend. Then, the hordes descended! 10 teams of 4 people being escorted around, going to and competing at each of the 10 stands. The first team arrives, **Capt Harris** introduces us, the Regt and the Sqn and then I take over to show them the kit.

This team seems to do OK and I thought we did rather well also until we get told off and the team get dragged off as we overran the 15 mins allotment. Oops. Over and over again, a new team arrives, and we work and refine the babble, cutting out the gab until we have it – the undiluted, pure essence of comms on the Chirpsounder. Perfect. Now they'll see a thing or two, and we won't run over again. What's that? Oh, we've run out of teams. Oh well, we've still got the free curry before we risk the traffic and roads of the capital again.

83 SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj Terry Crosby**

EXERCISE WHITTINGTON FUN

With the Board of Officers approaching in October, 83 Sp Sqn disappeared into the Forest of Dean hoping to lose themselves and never return. Eleven miles of forest tracks was first on the agenda with everyone not quite knowing what to expect around every corner. Eventually arriving at a cycle hire centre, a team of 20 proved to be a potential nightmare for the bike man who proceeded to size everyone up for bikes! Tires blown up, off we went into the Forest again, up some 4km of incline, which just about killed a few! And then it rained.

Some were now blind through glasses completely masked with rain – great! **SSgt Loxley Trype** now realized he couldn't ride a bike anymore, **Cpl Yarde** came off unable to steer the corners and **Sig Tim Roberts** had a major tire blow out (literally) negotiating a corner. Miles away from the centre, the sensible decision to load the bikes in a truck and move them back en mass was good!

We headed off to the Forest of Dean via Wales, (even though we did have to pay to get into Wales and then swiftly drive back into England!). We started off by doing a gentle 10 mile hike and then off to a 10 mile bike ride, which wasn't without incident with **Cpl Yarde** doing a downhill stunt ride and flying off into the bushes on a corner, luckily no broken bones only some damaged pride.

Sig Roberts then cooked an evening meal for the whole Sqn and this time was within budget! This was then followed by a round of quoits in the local pub, with **Rct Nairn** showing all how it was done. All in all a stunning weekend with some excellent scenery, and great company.

LAD REPORT *- by LCpl Mclaren*

It has been a busy few months for the LAD which culminated in this year's annual camp. After a busy start in which got off to a busy start with several breakdowns on route to Okehampton where we to be stationed for the first week.

This week saw the LAD attend to a number of minor repairs and provide training for the Regt on vehicle care and maintenance. This included how to carry out a first works inspection and basic driver responsibilities. All this training was then put to good practice on the on the Duchess of Gloucester Cup where the LAD organized a stand and each team was given a defective Land Rover to inspect and rectify. A special mention must go to **Sgt Stone** and his Oscar winning performance as a grumpy and unhelpful MT Sgt.

Other notable events included a promotion for both **Cfn McLaren** and **Cfn Magill** to LCpl, a tour of the air sea rescue facility and a flight in a Westland helicopter for **LCpl Wragg** and **Cfn Phillips**.

There was also the LAD camp dinner for members past and present that was hosted in a local curry house where the waiters' conversation included monkey's rights and why they should be allowed in hospitals.

The second week saw the Regt's vehicles deploy all over the UK as part of Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS and included REME LAD setting up a temporary workshop in Stafford. From here they were able to assist 22 Sig Regt REME LAD in the workshops with **LCpl McLaren** carrying out repairs various and on more modern equipments. **Sgt Paine** also carried out some further trade training from the comfort of the mobile workshop as the LAD remained on standby for taskings from the Regt that was spread all over the country.

The ex ended on Friday morning and REME were there to ensure everyone from the Regt made it back to their respective TACs safely. With several vehicles breaking down including our own Bedford, we were stretched to provide convoy cover but with a little bit of good fortune from a retired REME AQMS who stopped and replaced a fan belt, we were able to attend to the rest of the Regimental fleet and an additional Land Rover from another TA Regt we managed to pass along the way. With our Bedford now repaired and all vehicles safely home, we were able to enjoy some well earned liquid refreshment and curry back in the TAC bar. Overall it was a thoroughly good camp testing the LAD and building on their knowledge and expertise of both vehicles and monkeys. The LAD now looks forward to the Annual REME dinner this coming December.

33rd SIGNAL REGIMENT MANCHESTER

CO **Lt Col PS Cubbin**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) D Icke**

TRAILWALKER 2008

It all started on Saturday 19 July at 0600hrs on an overcast and damp morning, the team from 33 Sig Regt set off from Queen Alexandra Park with the prospect of another 100km to push. We all started in good spirits, even though we had 2 and bit marathons to complete that day. As a team, we set ourselves a realistic target of finishing it in 14 – 16hrs.

We had a game plan to get through the 100km and it was working well until we hit the halfway point. We did the first 50km in 6hrs so we were motoring along a bit faster than expected and it was starting to take its toll on our legs. That's when our game plan went out of the window, as we were walking more and more and the 'shuffles' were occurring less and less. But we persevered onto each checkpoint where **SSgt 'Poppit' Green** and **Cpl Steve Homer** were ensuring that all our needs were taken care off.

We had to endure all the elements that the South Downs could throw at us; rain/sun and a lovely breeze that was cooling us down a wee bit. We finished the event in exactly 15hrs which was a really good effort and we came a very creditable 16th out of the 502 teams that entered this year. So it's back to bashing the tarmac for next year and break the 14hr mark!

SNAJPER 2008 – POLISH INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION 19 – 22 SEPTEMBER 08

Sig Bresnen, Maj Wyper, WO1 Williams, Sig Ostler, LCpl Williams, Cpl Ferguson, LCpl Cavanagh, Cpl Harrison and LCpl Cavanagh

The wind was blowing and the clouds were heavy as elements of the Polish, Czech, Latvian, German, French, Dutch, Italian and British Reserve Forces made their way around the Biedrusko range complex in Poznan, Poland on 21 Sept 08. There were two teams from 33 Sig Regt, made up with members of the shooting and military skills teams. The teams included: **Maj Bill Wyper**, **WO1 Paul Williams**, **Cpls Tommy Harrison** and **Liz Ferguson, LCpls Trish Cavanagh** and **Sarah Williams** and **Sigs Matty Bresnen** and **Rick Ostler.**

There were a total of 10 stands which meant 8 new weapons to fire. The majority of our 8 strong contingent had limited experience firing the new weapons systems, which included PKM light machine gun, AK 47 assault rifle, Glauberyt submachine gun, a .22 target rifle, the Vist pistol and the SVD Dragunov sniper rifle.

Two of the weapons fired dated from WW2: the PPSH submachine gun and the 7.62mm Tokarev pistol which were in pristine condition. We all relished the chance to fire the weapons and it was a great challenge for the team members to get these weapons on target. The competition was strong with lots of experienced shots from countries that have fired these types of weapons before.

Some good shooting was recorded by the team members and **Maj Wyper** came away with the Gold AK Snajper badge and **WO1 Williams** and **Sig Rick Ostler** came away with a Silver AK Snajper badges. **LCpl Trish Cavanagh** finished 3rd in the International Women's Competition and was presented with another trophy to add to her cabinet. The team finished in 15th position overall out of 60, which was a great achievement. The team are now looking forward to Corps OSC in April 09 and the possibility of competing in Arizona against the US National Guard later that month.

LCpl Cavanagh with her trophy for 3rd best International Female

42 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj AJ Quinn**
SSM **WO2 K Westall**

TA IOO CELEBRATIONS

As part of the TA 100 celebration events, **Her Majesty the Queen** visited Manchester at the end of March to meet TA and Regular soldiers in the Manchester URBIS Centre. The purpose of the visit was to provide **Her Majesty** with the opportunity to meet and talk to Regular and TA soldiers from across the North West of England, who had served their country recently on op tours. The 42 Sig Sqn contingent was represented by the Sqn SPSI, **SSgt Dean Wilkinson,** and **Cpl Stuart Green**. **SSgt Wikinson** was posted in to the Sqn following a year's deployment in Afghanistan with 7 Sig Regt and **Cpl Green** completed a tour in Iraq on Op TELIC 6 in Basra with 12 Mech Bde HQ & Sig Sqn.

SSgt Dean Wilkinson and Cpl Stuart Green chat to Her Majesty flanked by WO2 Tim Parkins, the Regimental Yeoman and the CO, Lt Col Cubbin

LORD LIEUTENANT'S AWARD – WO2(SSM) WESTALL

In his first year of office, Greater Manchester the Lord Lieutenant, **Col Warren Smith**, presented his Lord Lieutenant's awards. The Sqn SSM, **WO2 Kevin Westall**, was foremost amongst the recipients having been flown back from an op tour in Afghanistan especially for the presentation. He received his award resplendent in his smartly pressed desert combat kit at the function rooms in Manchester University UOTC. The citation was read by the Chief Executive of RFCA NW & Isle of Man, **Col Gerry Wells-Cole.** The citation read: "He is an excellent role model for soldiers, providing firm leadership and setting high standards. He relishes responsibility and pressure and is highly respected by all ranks. He has revitalised recruiting efforts through his unfailing enthusiasm, zeal and energy. He has helped the Sqn to raise over £16,000 for charity by taking part in sponsored walks across England. In all areas of his duties he as been a shining example to all and thoroughly deserves the award of the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate as a formal recognition of his outstanding efforts".

SSM Westall guests at the ceremony were his wife **Helen**, son **Thomas**, mother, **Catherine** and the Sqn OC and PSAO, **Maj Andy Quinn** and **Capt Gerry Whelan**.

EXERCISE NORTHERN PENNINE RAMBLER 29 JULY – 05 AUGUST 08

Ex NORTHERN PENNINE RAMBLER was an 8 day long distance walk traversing the Pennine Way from Edale at the southern end to Keld in North Yorkshire, a distance of 120 miles. The object of the ex was twofold.

To develop officer and soldier leadership and navigational skills and team work on a mentally demanding long distance trail and to raise money for the 'Help for Heroes' charity fund to pay for care and the facilities to support wounded service personnel at Selly Oak Hospital and Headley Court. Due to time restraints for TA soldiers, it was decided to walk half of the Pennine Way this year and then complete the walk next year, starting where we left off at Keld and carrying on to the end at the Scottish border.

The Sqn has established a tradition of long distance charity walks and over the last 6 years has carried out 3 coast-to-coast walks from St Bee's in Cumberland to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire, walked the route of Hadrian's Wall and completed the Offa's Dyke walk north to south along the English Welsh border. This year we were to tackle the Pennine Way, a total distance of around a 1000 miles.

This year's walk was a great success with our very own 'Mr Adventure Training ', **Capt Glen Martin** leading the 8 male and female walking team in fine style. One minor mishap was a sprained ankle suffered by **Sig Lydia Byrne**. However, this only caused her to miss one of the 8 legs and she completed the majority of the walk. The PSAO, **Capt Gerry Whelan**, had to be issued with extra batteries for his pace maker, especially on the gruelling first leg from Edale to Crowden where the extended climb up Kinder Scout got the lungs going but he was there at the end to prove that you cannot keep an old dog down for long.

This Sqn will have raised £4000 pounds on this year's walk for the 'Help for Heroes' fund when all the sponsorship money is collected in. This money will be presented to the Manchester branch of SSAFA at a suitable venue later in the year.

34th (NORTHERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) MIDDLESBOROUGH

CO **Lt Col MJ Finch**
RSM **WO1(RSM) M Tench**

ANNUAL CAMP 2008

Annual camp training, Ex NORTHERN FOCUS 08, took place during the period 12 – 27 September, attended by approximately 120 troops and staff. This relatively small turn-out is the result of the absence of members of the Regt who are currently deployed on Op TOSCA and are wished the best of luck and a successful tour. Also a high number of soldiers have attended long courses and adventure training expeditions throughout the year, therefore completing 'camps in lieu'. The exercising troops from 49, 50, 90 and HQ Sqns, under the steady gaze of the Training Maj, **Maj Guy Benson**, were tasked with the CO's aim to continue to develop a Regt that is relevant, useable, sustainable, integrated and representative, in order to better support Main Effort and ops world-wide. Week 1 centred on Ripon, incorporated Information Communication Systems training pertinent to the Regt's potential new role, which included Air Portable Pinzgauer and Trident (Switching Central) equipment. This was supported by **Sgt Deepak** and **Cpl Bruin** of the DCCIS and was met with enthusiasm and interest at all levels.

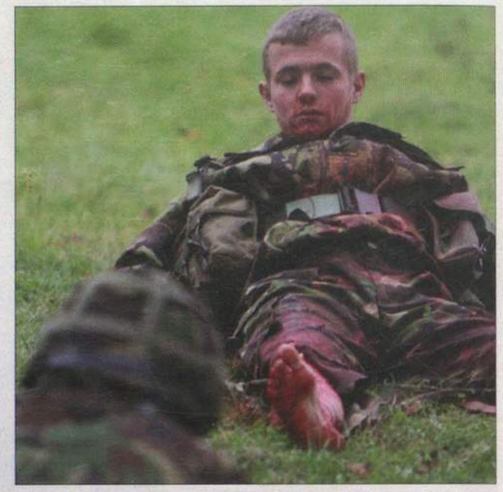
In addition there were a selection of driver training/familiarisation serials, led by the MTWO, **Mr Dobson** and was supported by staff from across the Sqns. Again, this was received very well by the troops, but not so well by **Mr Dobson**, as he saw his life flash before his eyes when **LCpl O'Brien's** vehicle careered backwards down the driver training area hills and came to a stop in a ditch as he instructed **LCpl O'Brien** to 'apply the brake' in a calm, cool manner.

Concurrently, a series of ranges were led by **SSgt Yuill** and other permanent staff to develop individual weapon handling and marksmanship skills. In addition, troops fired several serials on the Dismounted Close Quarter Combat Trainer to give their marksmanship an operational flavour.

All this training culminated in a full COMMEX, planned by Sqn Comd Teams in order to confirm the general understanding of the new kit and to allow Sqn officers the chance to practise their comms planning and to construct a new CONOP picture incorporating the new systems, equipment, vehicles and manning. As part of concurrent activity ROSO 34 Sig Regt conducted a recruiting surge in and around the area of Darlington to find, fix and secure budding new recruits to operate the new kit alongside our classic Ptarmigan experts.

Week 2, which centred on Blandford Camp, consisted of a series of military stands including Bowman training (both voice and data), a full Annual Personal Weapons Test and fired pistols, some for the first time, followed by Operations in Built Up Area (OBUA) training package.

All TA soldiers fired the 9mm Browning



LCpl Rowlands puts on a performance in the minefield

The OBUA training package was put together superbly by **SSgt 'Mo' Morrison** and culminated in a 36 hr ex at Copehill Down Village, where troops cleared insurgents from house after house, conducted snap Vehicle Checkpoints to interdict and arrest suspects, and also cleared casualties from mine fields.

Presentations were then made by Comd 12 Sig Group to **SSgt Brack**, **Lt Hartsell**, our visiting exchange officer from Indiana National Guard and **Maj Jennings**, before returning to Blandford Camp for a Regimental Smoker and exchange of war stories.

Annual Camp finished with a day's R&R in Guernsey and Weymouth, prior to returning to TACs and turning kit around ready for the next working weekend. Feedback from the troops indicates that this was a well planned, well delivered operation that had something in it for everyone, from the gun-strokers to the cone-heads and egg ops. Well done, **Guy** and team.

35th (SOUTH MIDLAND) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) COVENTRY

CO **Lt Col MG Hanson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Balmforth**

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

Dining In of the Honorary Colonel Carl Richardson

The Officers Mess took the opportunity to dine in the **Hon Col Carl Richardson** during Annual Camp at the Lamphey Court Hotel, which was an outstanding venue. The evening was enjoyed by all including **Capt Alex Rogers** who turned up with a pot on his arm and needed his prime Welsh beef cutting up for him.

Other visitors to our annual camp included Comd 12 Sig Gp – **Col Crackett**, Comd 1 Sig Bde – **Col Norton**, Comd 143 (WM) Bde – **Brig Bourne-May** and Director General of the Chamber of Commerce – **Mr David Frost**.

EXERCISE GRIFFIN MACAW

Annual summer camp took place this year at Pennally Camp in South Wales. The Regt travelled down with fine weather however with the last vestiges of 2 hurricanes predicted for the rest of the week, it didn't look to last very long. The MATTs activities over the first few days were quite hard work with PFT, ranges, BCDT and mil skills mixed in with a bergen retrieval; this gave people a good sense of achievement. The rivalry between the teams built up some solid teamwork which helped when the going got tough. The Regt was then split into 3 syndicates to rotate between trade training, adventure training and the ranges. In trade everyone

Mr David Frost, Director General of the Chamber of Commerce and Col Norton sample the range stew

spent a day on AIRWAVE which was mainly classroom work which gave all of us a good chance to rest our very tired legs before working in our trade groups. Radio Operators and those who were untraded were introduced to Bowman, which we all found very interesting.

The evenings gave some light relief to the intensive training and a sports competition organised by **WO1(RSM) Balmforth** proved both competitive and enjoyable. The games comprised 5-a-side football and volleyball. **SSgt Purdon** and **Sgt Groundsell** played an integral part in the victorious Permanent Staff football team. Not to be outdone 48 Sqn's very own **Maj Rodenhurst** excelled in the volleyball (or at least he thought he did!).

The adventure training package was organised by 58 Sqn's PSAO, **Capt John Berry** and consisted of coasteering, kayaking, rock climbing, clay pigeon shooting, mountain biking and hill walking. I can recommend the coasteering to anyone who hasn't tried it. Jumping into the sea from 30ft was an amazing experience and enjoyed by everyone. Obviously when it comes to adventure training, there is always the risk of injury and this was proven when 95 Sqn's PSAO **Capt Alex Rodgers** managed to break his arm while apparently showing the younger members of the group "how it should be done!"

The CO, Lt Col Hanson makes his jump

Back to work on the ranges the following day with the 2 mile "Fire Team Assessment" carrying 7kg, body armour, helmet and rifle was a shock to the system and we went straight onto fire and manoeuvre down the range; at one point firing with our respirators on. This was a strange experience for those of us who hadn't done this before. Day 3 of the range package consisted of firing in different positions from behind various barriers which was good fun, and the advance to contact. The day finished with a sect in defence shoot.

The highlight of the exercise was the CO's Challenge. This was in the style of a "Challenge Anneka" project where in conjunction with the National Parks Authority, a series of tasks had to be completed in 36 hrs to improve the conditions of local footpaths, build bridges and clear woodland. The heavens opened and we were wading up to our waists in water carrying bridge building materials. Despite the difficult conditions we pulled together to get the tasks completed and felt an enormous sense of achievement. The challenge concluded with a BBQ and presentations. Our very own **Pte Chris Budd** was presented with the 'Stockdale Trophy' for an outstanding contribution to the Regt by a junior soldier. To make the award even more special, **Mrs Stockdale** visited to present the Trophy. Well Done **Chris!**
For those members of the Regt who couldn't make Camp, RSIT

Mrs Jane Stockdale presenting the Stockdale Trophy

preparation continued under the watchful eye of **SSgt(FofS) Jim Burnham**. During this period **Sgt Kev Hand** decided that although he had missed camp he still wished to carry out some personal military training, and after a night out, spent time covertly in a bush! 48 Sqn celebrated not getting detention from the RSIT with a "School Disco". **2Lt Louise Smith** and **Sgt Katie Mulligan** made it a night to remember, with many "pupils" sending in dubious notes to excuse them from PT the next day.

All in all the camp was fantastic and enjoyed by everybody and next year promises to be even better so bring it on.

TA100 CELEBRATION – HAGLEY HALL

35 Sig Regt in conjunction with Richardson's Capital LLP organised a TA100 event second only to Buckingham Palace. Business leaders from across the Midlands took part in some challenges in the grounds of the stately home, Hagley Hall, including hovercraft driving, 4x4 experience, clay pigeon shooting and archery. They were then treated to a champagne reception in the Hall and a display from the White Helmets and the Royal Signals Band. Over 400 guests from more than 30 Midlands based companies then moved into the marquee for a special celebration dinner. **Maj Gen Rutherford-Jones**, Commandant of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and **Lord Digby Jones** were the after dinner speakers and issued many inspiring words. **Lord Digby Jones** said "We want to celebrate 100 years of the TA and all the hard work they have done through the years.

We want them to know their efforts are appreciated and will not be forgotten". Our thanks go to the White Helmets, Royal Signals Band and pipers who helped us create such a spectacle. It is hoped that the day served to show what the TA and the Royal Signals has to offer. It certainly was a day to remember and has put 35 Sig Regt on the map.

36th (EASTERN) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS)
ILFORD

CO **Lt Col M Lansdown TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) I Conlan**

Sadly the Regt said farewell to **Maj John Howell-Walmsley**, who has been posted to Blandford after successfully co-ordinating Ex MIDNIGHT SUN which was the TA adventure training ex in Greenland. **SSgt Jamie Slade** has been posted to 231 Sig Sqn, 7Sig Regt straight from the Regt Battle Camp in which he was a key player. **Sgt Les Longworth** has left the Regt and Corps to become a pilot in the Army Air Corp. **Sgt Mac Murray**, has also left the Regt and Corps but his was a higher calling, as he will be working for God once he finishes his training as a Chaplain.

Sgt Bryn Wilkinson has also been posted and he is off to JSSU Digby where he will be instructing the RAC, so his time in the TA will have set the scene for his new task. We also gave a warm welcome to **WO2(FofS) Indy Ind**, who has been posted in from 14 Sig Regt. **SSgt Justin Medcraft**, has also been posted in from Blandford via Op Telic 10/11and promoted to the rank of SSgt.

TA COMMISSIONING PROCESS

I went to Sandhurst in July and was extremely pleased to pass out with a pip and a good report after a fairly hectic 3 weeks, which flashed past in a blur of pl attacks, parade ground humour and heavy rain. Bristling with chorleys, irons and lumocolours, we rushed from woodland harbours through parade squares to classrooms, via drying rooms and the cookhouse and, when the ironing and reading were all done, spent a little bit of time in bed. Somewhere buried in the middle of all this was a formal dinner, a PRACTAC (the estimate and orders test), lots of PT and even a tour of Old College. Contrary to expectations, I managed to grab a pint from time to time. Somehow, the Commissioning Parade at the end came around very fast. It is now done in blues for parity with the regular parade; this course was also the first where the top student received the Duke of Westminster's Sword rather than, as had happened in the past, the Duke of Westminster's Cane. When I got home, I slept and when I woke up I was a little sad that it was all over.

It's often said, quite rightly, that TA officers are increasingly likely to do the same job as their regular counterparts. Those who commissioned with me were certainly well aware that they would deploy at some point, and most would welcome it. I was impressed that the RMAS instructors frequently underlined the operational application of the lessons they taught us, and their experiences enriched the training we received. It has frequently been pointed out to me that the regular officer cadets spend 44 weeks at Sandhurst compared to our 3. Many people feel that the TA course seems a little on the short side in comparison. This is a common and unfortunate misunderstanding about the TA commissioning course: to think that the 3 weeks' training at Sandhurst is all there is. In fact, cadets who make it to Sandhurst have already completed 3 modules of training, taking them from recruits to the nearly-finished article. Module 4 at Sandhurst, is the final testing phase but the bulk of the training takes place prior to this at regional Officer Training Wings.

The route from civilian to TA officer will take a minimum of around 90 to 100 days. That's not including unit-based training, parade nights, or attendance at Annual Camp and other courses, nor all of the unpaid and unrecorded fitness training, revision and kit preparation that all TA soldiers and officers do in our own time. Because I have been very involved in my Tp, I completed well over 300 days training from joining the TA at the end of 2004 to passing out of Sandhurst. That's over 44 seven-day weeks and I think most of those who commissioned with me, several of whom had already completed one or more operational tours, would have put in a similar or greater amount of time. Don't let this put you off if you're considering training for a commission in the TA, or are already in the process. The TA Potential Officer (TAPO) training was some of the very best training I have ever received, in the military or out. If you're serious about a TA career you'll find the process a rewarding one rather than a drag. Of course, I might not have said that while being woken at 0300hrs for stag – but a typical TAPO FTX won't involve much sleep so this unpleasantness (being woken, that is, not doing stag) is kept to a minimum.

I was also struck by the range of training provided. Contrary to popular belief, officers do indeed learn to navigate and use radios in addition to being trained to conduct a 7 Question estimate, prepare orders, shoot, run pl attacks and patrols, and develop their leadership and problem-solving skills. The emphasis is on leadership at pl level in an infantry context, so a lot of time is spent in the field – nearly half of the RMAS course and indeed almost all of Module 3. I eventually loved this part, especially the attacks, although coming from a Signals background it took me a while to get to grips with it.

Inevitably, the intense and testing training, which far surpassed any I'd experienced before, generated some amusing memories. Sleep-deprived TAPOs frequently succumbed to some hilarious hallucinations, many of which are unsuitable for publication. In the heat of a pl attack, we all took cover in some unsavoury places. Best of all may have been **OCdt Christmas** crawling through a river with her bergen on and emerging next to me like a swamp creature.

Or perhaps, looking back, the time I fell through ice during a freezing patrolling weekend at Leek may actually have been amusing. Often, we laughed at skits or (when we dared) at the humour of our instructors. Frequently, we laughed (through desperation) at our own mistakes – like getting lost and tabbing

2Lt Amanda Washbrook (in the centre) at her Passing Off Parade at RMA Sandhurst

for 7 hours in CEMO, or conducting an estimate – or worse, an attack – on the wrong enemy position. It's a steep learning curve but as you become more competent as well as more mentally robust things get much easier.

Perhaps the best thing about the training is the people you meet and the friends you make. It may sound corny, but you do indeed share blood, sweat and tears, as well as bashas, brews and stag, with the same, albeit nebulous and changing, group of people. You forego sleep to help build a model for their orders; you forgive them for leading you miles out of your way when returning from a recce; you cobble together kit to help when they've lost something; and you pick them up each time they fall in a ditch (thanks, guys!). You get to know each other very well, in a particular way. Most people you come to know very well in terms of their character, but you have no idea how they spend their leisure time, the name of their partner or what they look like in normal clothes. Others become your good friends outside of the TA as well as within it.

Now that I have commissioned, which is something I have looked forward to for so long, it's become clear that the process isn't over, it's only just beginning. I am looking forward to the challenges of commanding troops and the opportunities to organise and run training. I am faced with a lot of choices and, in time, look forward to my first op tour. For the time being, however, I have to muster my shaky and long-neglected sewing skills, to sew on my new cap badge!

45 SIGNAL SQUADRON – COLCHESTER

OC **Maj Stuart Rowson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Tara Pun**

The last few months have again been a busy period for the Sqn, combining a series of challenging exs, testing our comms skills and military capabilities, with support for local events celebrating the TA centenary. We also found time for adventurous training in Brecon, based around gorge scrambling and ably organised by **2Lt Louise Clarke** and our annual visit to southern Germany; 30 members of the Sqn training with the German Reserve over a 4 day period. The main effort in Germany was competing in Landeskommando Baden-Wurttemburg's regional military patrol competition conducted in the hills of Oberrot. Our teams again performed strongly against their German counterparts. In particular the teams led by **Lt Steve Mitchell** and the OC both finishing in the top 3.

Mention should also be made of **2Lt Louise Clarke** and **Sig Dave Wright**, who competed admirably as part of the German team from Backnang. **2Lt Clarke** making good use of her fluent German and **Sig Wright** developing his own form of sign language given his otherwise complete lack of linguistic ability. The balance of our time in Germany was spent at Stetten, attempting the extensive confidence course there over a 2 day period. Always challenging with a mixture of aerial work, climbs, descents and tunnels, the highlights for most were abseiling

Capt Gordon Bathurst abseiling into the Danube Valley

down into the Danube Valley and the second of the river crossings, which involved traversing through the steel girders of a railway bridge, desperately ignoring the frequent express trains also using the bridge as a means of crossing the river!

WO2(SSM) Tara Pun and WO2(YofS) Dave Monk on the first of the river crossings

Our thanks, as ever, go to **Oberstleutnant Gerhard Mosch** and his team at LKdoBW for looking after us so well and we look forward to returning their hospitality later this month when a party of their officers and soldiers join us in England.

The period ended with our deployment onto annual camp, which again tested both our comms skills and military capabilities. The highlight for most Sqn members was the second week's range package culminating in sect in defence and advance to contact ranges.

Congratulations go to **Cpl Craig Plant** who shot consistently well throughout the range package and took the award for best shot within the Regt. Congratulations also to **Sig (now LCpl) Dan Tyler**, who finished the JNCO cadre course, run over Week 2, as top field soldier. We wish him well on his forthcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

We also wish well to **Lt Kim Mason** and **Sig Sam Thatcher**, who deploy to Cyprus and the Balkans respectively, whilst we look forward to the safe return within the next week or so of **Cpl Jock McRae** and **Sig Leo Crumpton-Taylor** following their tour of Afghanistan with 216 Sig Sqn.

54 (EAST ANGLIAN) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj LJC Scott**
SSM **WO2(SSM) R Price**

The Sqn continues to grow and recruiting and recruit training is the main effort as the move from Ilford to Cambridge continues. We hope to be complete in Cambridge by the beginning of November; the move has turned the PSAO**, Capt Dave Watson** grey!

Congratulations to **2Lt Amanda Washbrook** who has been recently commissioned and married! Congratulations also to the newly promoted **LCpl Alan Diplock** and **Sig Ben Morris** for coming top on his Recruits Course. We also wish **Cpl Shona Peachey** a very successful Op OCULUS tour and look forward to her safe return to the Sqn.

EXERCISE GRIFFIN FOCUS 08 - *by Maj LJC Scott*

On 6 September, after many weeks of preparation, the Sqn deployed to the Catterick Garrison Training Area to participate in Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS 08. A lot of hard work had been put in by the SQMS, **SSgt Joe Raine** and his helpers **Sigs Ben Morris** and **Manny Galea** to ensure that the admin side could cope with most requests.

The only thing that could not be indented for was lots of sunshine as North Yorkshire had been subjected to flooding with large areas under water. The Echelon, under the command of the QM, **Capt Steve White** had deployed as the Advance Party and set up in Wathgill Training Camp. On reaching Catterick, a base camp was set up at Bivouac area Gandale and the RCWO, **WO2 Norma Miller Kight** and team set up a field kitchen under the cover of darkness ready for the first meal at breakfast! The Sqn, under the direction of the SSM, **WO2 Rob Price**, spent the next 24 hrs preparing and setting up the site as an operating base for the RCP and RADCON. Never have so many signs been so lovingly made and put up in such a small area!

Three days into the ex found the Regt without Reebok which had been sent to Swynnerton. Ably assisted by the Sqn, the RCP was lifted and transported into Catterick Garrison to set up an ops room in the offices of 19 Lt Bde HQ & Sig Sqn. This was a challenging time for the MT and **Cpl Gaz Walker** as the Regt were now in 3 different locations requiring transportation support to each, at all hours. Replenishment had to be carried out over distances in excess of 130 miles due to the spread of the Regt's comms assets. **Capt Tony Dale**, OC LAD had set up a week's trade training for his Tp at 5 Regt RA LAD, Catterick Garrison which was a great success. LAD cover was required early on when a 60 Sig Sqn FFR caught fire!

The second week of camp started in earnest after a day's R&R, due to the lack of driver's hours! The JNCO's Cadre started on the Monday and was to be one of the most demanding ever run by the Regt. **Sigs Diplock**, **Mark Elie** and **Baz Cobb** were the stalwarts from the Sqn and spent the next 5 days learning about the duties and responsibilities of a JNCO and assaulting enemy positions in the driving rain! **Sig Alan Diplock** was awarded the Top Student award on the Cadre and promoted to LCpl. Meanwhile the remainder of the Sqn continued to support the Regt and participate in the Range package. Having all successfully passed the APWT, the shoots became even more demanding with live fire and movement and sect in defence culminating in the mother of all battles, the night shoot! Close quarter battle was also on the menu with bayonet fighting against static targets and almost taking out the OC who got a little close whilst taking a photo!

The Regimental Skills Competition for the Mountvoy Trophy was the final major event of the camp and consisted of a 5 mile race in CEFO. Each team consisted of 8 persons and the event included treating casualties and carrying a casualty on a stretcher to the range over a demanding route.

The Cadre Team – Mountvoy Trophy winners

On reaching the range the team had to engage and destroy the enemy with unzeroed weapons! The Mountvoy Trophy was awarded to the Cadre Team which included 5 members of the Sqn, the SSM, **WO2 Rob Price**, **Sig Alan Diplock**, **Sig Baz Cobb**, **Sig Mark Elie** and **Sig Ben Morris.** The Sqn also had

LCpl Alan Diplock with his trophy as winner of the Poulters Plate

great success with the award of the Poulters Plate to **LCpl Alan Diplock** for being the best soldier in the Regt 2008. The final day consisted of an EOD demonstration and vehicle prep for the move back culminating in a Non-Smoking Smoker with a fine curry washed down with a few beers and lots of war stories!

Overall camp was a great success and allowed the Sqn to practise its role and also to participate in demanding but enjoyable training. Our thanks go to **SSgt Dave Berry** and the PSIs for all of the hard work they put in to make the camp so worthwhile.

60 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HUSSARS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Knight**
SSM	**WO2 Egunjobi**

ANNUAL CAMP 08

In early September, 26 Sqn personnel undertook their annual camp as part of 2 (NC) Sig Bde. The Sqn joined with the rest of 36 Sig Regt at Wathgill Camp and on the first week took part in HORSESHOE EXPRESS around Donnington, HORSESHOE ODOUR around the Disforth area, BARDIC SURGE around Brecon and other exs around Middlesborough. There were also elements from 10, 37, 39, and 40 Sig Regts taking part in the exs along with HQ elements from 15 and 143 Regional Bdes and 205 Fd Hosp. On the first week the Sqn was commanded by **Capt Andrew Linn** who normally commands the Sqn's troops in Bedford.

Sqn HQ worked in the Regimental Command Post, firstly at Gandale Bivi Site and then in Gaza Barrack, **SSM Egunjobi** worked as a LO with 143 Bde HQ at Swynnerton. The Sqn's PSI, **Sgt Whenman** ran a Reebok Det at Disforth, whilst the Sqn's REME Workshop of **Sgt Harding**, **Cpls Lobbett** and **Stinchcomb** and **Cfn McLarren** joined the rest of the Regt LAD at Marne Barracks, home of 5 Regt RA for some concentrated REME training. Most Sqn personnel participated in the Regimental Cold with runny noses, shivers, headaches and sinus pain. This included the Sqn's G4 team of **SSgt Young**, **Cpl Brown** and **Sig MacKeever**.

The first week was not without excitement, the M1 was confused with the A1, and one Land Rover engine caught fire. The lack of drivers was a major constraint, with crews having to be moved by minibus, and qualified Land Rover and Trailer drivers being shuttled from one Det to another to get them into location. Fortunately some of the more senior personnel have grandfather rights. Morale increased with the arrival of **Maj Knight** and **Capt Robertson** (PSAO) and **Sig Valentine** (who had just passed his

Phase 1 Training and learned to drive) for Week 2, the Regimental Range package. This was run by the Sqn's SPSI **SSgt Slade**. The Sqn went from zeroing the weapons through LF7 and 9. It progressed through IBSR to CQB individual and pairs. Range Background Activity covered, Judging Distance, Range Cards, Target Indication, Fire Control Orders, GPMG Training (with everyone shooting) and Bayonet Drills. The Sqn took part in a Day and Night Defence Shoot, and also had a respectable placing in the Mountvoy 'March, carry a Stretcher and then Shoot' competition. The recovery phase went well with most assets released in the early evening of Saturday, ready to go back to our other jobs on Monday.

37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) REDDITCH

CO	**Lt Col JE Sutton**
RSM	**WO1(RSM) DE Cupit**

EXERCISE VIXENS ARCHER 08

The Regt deployed on Annual Camp in Castlemartin over the period 6 – 20 September, The camp consisted of 2 distinct parts. The first week Ex BARDIC SURGE (part of the Div Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS) in support of 2 (NC) Sig Bde and 160 (W) Bde and the second week a military skills and development course.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC	**Capt Bond**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Mansell**

- by LCpl Taylor

Hearing that the Regimental ex will be held at Castlemartin is the sort of omen that signifies cleaning rifles and getting shouted at, so the members of Support Sqn, 37 Sig Regt who deployed this year, arrived at Redditch TA centre in an hesitant mood. The sound of SSMs barking and Sqn Officers producing orders soon confirmed that this ex was being taken very seriously. We all expected a "grin, sweat and brag" attitude to the fortnight; however none of us expected to achieve so much in such a short space of time. More startlingly, some of us accidentally enjoyed ourselves!

The long drive down to Castlemartin went as smoothly as Bedfords will allow and everyone arrived in good health and in good time. For the first few days we had the luxury of accommodation, showers and even suspiciously edible cookhouse food!! CRT Tp deployed Reebok to the tank park providing computers, phones and connectivity for the Sqn offices and then later for the RHQ. Thanks to the vocational expertise of **Sig Andy Hemmings** in the cable weaving department, we even managed to look professional. At this point the generator developed an unhealthy cough but continued to provide power and so was left to chug along.

The first order to move from Castlemartin sent us up the M5 to Swynnerton Training Area but this was cut short by a fire at Corsham that left HQ 160 Bde without internet! Thundering (at 40mph) to the rescue back down the M5, the CRT redeployed to Brecon and beavered away through the night. The crew achieved that special kind of enlightened bliss that can only be gained by finding out at half one in the morning that the 20m of cable you definitely tested, before spending half an hour threading it through the roof and zip tying to every available object, is not working. Such morale boosters aside, we managed to furnish the Bde Ops room with laptops, allowing the unrelenting cornucopia of officers to carry on doing whatever it is that important people do when they have the internet. Feeling chuffed with ourselves and having gone hours without sleep, the crew attempted to settle back into routine.

At this point the generator decided to throw a tantrum and started to cough quite loudly causing the lights on the CP to flicker. The power sect diagnosed that the fault would be terminal and a replacement generator was sent for. **SSgt Paddy Keogh**, blackened and hammering away like a possessed engineer at the head of a runaway train, managed to keep the beast running just long enough for the replacement to arrive, enabling us to maintain our satellite connection.

Hours later Corsham re-established its link and we were able to travel back to Swynnerton, hand the Reebok over to 71 Sig Regt and head back to Castle Martin. In a sleepless week, we had managed to deploy Reebok expertly, sending cables over, under and through buildings in 5 locations on an 879 mile round adventure, provided assistance at short notice to 160 Bde and been promised a beer by the CO. Job well done!

Battle fatigue in HQ Squadron

We spent the second Monday and Tuesday with the rest of the Regt in lessons, learning various skills including leadership, the effects of mind bending drugs and how to stay awake in a warm lecture theatre. We then split into groups covering military skills and leadership exs before deploying on Wednesday evening to the training area.

After a night well spent beating back 'separatists' and firing all the flares and blanks we could muster, we spent Thursday morning practising our sect attack drills before driving the enemy out of the training area and turning exe casualties in to the real thing with a stretcher run. Despite our fatigue, none of Support Sqn managed to fall asleep cleaning their rifles and we started to turn our kit around before coming last in an orienteering contest, followed by coming first in the non-official 'eating curry and drinking' competition.

53 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Marcus Cosgrove**
SSM	**WO2(SSM) Steve Webb**

CARDIFF – PARIS TRIATHLON 3 – 5 OCTOBER

The Sqn took on a challenge on Friday 3 October in the name of charity. The task was to cover the distance between Cardiff and Paris on ex machines; cycling, rowing and running where appropriate. The total distance, including a direct crossing of the Channel was 702km. Our OC, **Maj Marcus Cosgrove** got things off to a great start at 2230hrs on Friday night with a solid 15km in 30 mins on the bike, setting the target for the entire Sqn to aim for.

Maj Marcus Cosgrove gets us off to a flying start in the Cardiff to Paris Triathlon

Shifts continued through the night, with only episodes of Family Guy and an iPod to keep the impetus high. Unfortunately, this left some struggling to pedal as they were forced to listen to the likes of Snow Patrol in the small dark hours of the morning. Some say they were lucky to get off the bike without a bout of depression!

At 0700hrs there was the transfer to a treadmill by **2Lt Gareth Evans** and **SSgt Paddy Keogh** so that the bike could be transferred to the city centre to allow the general public the chance to watch our endeavours. Cardiff welcomed us with a bleary sky and a light drizzle. Eight warm bodies accompanied the bike in to town to carry on the efforts for the next 10 hours. Public interest was very good and many people stopped to chat, if only to tell us how mad we all were. More than one member of the local public wanted to know when we were setting off and how we knew where to go, having entirely failed to grasp the idea of a static bike and rower.

At 1300hrs we had completed the 376km to Dover, and **Capt Matt Longcake** leapt on to the rowing machine to start crossing the Channel. Ten mins and 2500m later, he dragged himself off; content to have made it out of Dover harbour! Short, dynamic sessions behind the oars ensured that the Channel was crossed in a little under 3 hours. **Capt Longcake** had the honour of rowing through Calais harbour and even accelerated in order to conduct an assault landing on the beach to avoid any blockades by protesting fishermen! This left us about 2 hrs of daylight in which to impress the public with our cycling prowess again.

At 1800hrs there was another stint on the treadmill while we recovered back to the TAC. **Capt Dave Barbara** and **Sig Usmar** ensured that the work rate did not drop. A quick calculation by the 2IC and it became apparent that if we kept up the pace we would finish before first light and there would be no need to move back into town again. With the final 42km to be covered on foot and with hopes of getting in the bar for a drink afterwards, **Capt Longcake** took the lead on the treadmill while the cyclists worked towards their goal. With a goal for each individual on the treadmill of 2 – 2.5km in 10 mins, everyone put their all into it. The entire Sqn stood back in amazement as **Sig Thorton**, visiting from 96 Sqn pushed the speed increase button constantly in his final 30 secs, topping out at over 22kph and finishing with a distance of 2707m in his 10 minutes. Due to this, and the efforts of the other runners, we finished the running a little early leaving just the last few kms to be cycled.

Maj Cosgrove, having worked out when he thought the last shift would fall and put his name against it, was disappointed when **LCpl Stuart Gayther** took up the challenge of completing the remaining 16.2km in his 10 mins; peddling so hard in fact that he did it with 2 mins to spare! Feeling disappointed not to have finished the distance himself but happy that the aim had been achieved, the OC lead the Sqn up to the bar for a well earned beer. As the beer went down, easing aching muscles, there was already talk of doing something similar next year, only further!

Our collections during the day totalled £400, which for a dreary day in the city was good going. Combined with donations from local businesses and items that have been auctioned off, the total raised for our chosen charities was £1,200. **Maj Cosgrove** will present the cheque for half of the money to Ty Hafan, a local children's hospice and the other half will go directly to the Army Benevolent Fund. A special thank you goes to the guys in the photo who, despite merely being in TAC Cardiff on a BSS training course, stepped up to the mark and eased the burden on those of us involved.

Hands up who wants to do it again!

67 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Richard Bowden**

- by Sig McLeod

In September the Sqn deployed to Castlemartin Camp with the rest of 37 Sig Regt on Ex VIXENS ARCHER for the 2 week Annual Camp. It was an opportunity for the Sqn and the Regt as a whole to test our comms and det skills within a real-time scenario, under both 2 (NC) Sig Bde and 160 (W) Bde. Also available were leadership and military skills packages during the second phase of the ex. The first few days consisted of classroom revision, equipment serviceability checks and maintenance on the Sqn's FFR and TC OPO Dets, as well as the associated support vehicles. During this period regular briefings and Sitreps were released regarding the ex progression. The Dets were at a constant readiness for deployment, with regular checks and equipment confirmation tests, before two FFR Dets were deployed on Ex BARDIC SURGE, a simulated response to a mid air collision, under 160 Bde's control.

The FFR's tasking, along with other FFR Detts drawn from the Regt was to provide an HF Guard Net. Comms were established using a variety of standard and improvised antenna systems in several, sometimes challenging locations! The outcome was that this involvement in a real-time ex illustrated the importance vehicle mounted HF comms can, and almost certainly will still play in MACA scenarios.

Other members of 67 Sqn were deployed on several other tasks in support of this ex. Officers and soldiers were deployed to Regimental ops, both at forward and rear locations. Soldiers were also deployed rapidly on an urgent request from 160 Bde for soldiers to form Search and Rescue teams, to be deployed via the FMB at Sennybridge Camp to Caerwent. Passing through the FMB, 67 Sqn soldiers were amongst those given valuable lessons on dealing with the psychological effects of being exposed to casualties who may have suffered traumatic injuries as a result of a catastrophic incident, such as that being played out in this particular ex. Soldiers were also briefed on techniques required to search for and mark debris which may become vital evidence for subsequent investigations.

The search and rescue phase of the ex was conducted at Caerwent Training area under an RAF Mountain Rescue team. The search was successful and the Black Box Recorder located and marked but, as a result of aviation fuel contamination, some members of the Sqn were "treated" to a decontamination shower provided by the specialist Fire Service team at the location!

Other members of the Sqn were also deployed to Caerwent, both with the Regt's REME Det and on other tasks. **Pte Barry Cuff**, RLC of 871 Tp, was deployed to fill an urgent Bde requirement for a field kitchen at the location. This was to the great relief and culinary enjoyment of both the military and civilian authority personnel deployed.

Following the completion of the Regt's taskings under Ex BARDIC STROLL, the Sqn returned to Castlemartin to begin the second phase of Ex VIXENS ARCHER, which involved management progression training for all ranks. The training was designed to earn a transferable NVQ qualification, as well as a revision of key military skills such as sect attack and Vehicle Contact Drills.

Members of 67 Sig Sqn (V) enjoying the casualty extraction!

The week culminated in a final 24hr ex. This involved the move into and defence of a location under an insurgency scenario, which also provided a chance to practise the leadership and management skills absorbed during the week. This was achieved by way of soldiers being given the chance, sometimes for the first time, to give full Orders for tasks such as vehicle mounted clearance and reconnaissance patrols.

96 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Navindra Gurung**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Adrian Gardner**

- by Sig Gray

This was my first annual camp since joining the TA and I was a little anxious and apprehensive of what to expect but overall I was looking forward to the 2 weeks of camp. The first week the Regt was deployed on Ex BARDIC SURGE, this was a comms based ex for 160 (W) Bde ran in conjunction with 2 (NC) Sig Bde, designed to test the Bde in its entirety in a real time incident. This turned out to be 2 planes colliding and crashing over South Wales. This was a good insight for me as I got to look at what each individual trade entailed prior to be being loaded on a trade course.The second week was a development week run by the Regt. We were all broken up into our rank ranges and the week was designed to develop and test us on the orders process along with a large range of skills which are now required on courses like the PJNCO and CLM. The week was intensive but I can say that I did learn a great deal. The week culminated with a final ex coordinated by OC 96, **Maj Gurung** and OC 67, **Maj Bowden**.

SSgt 'Chax' Chacksfield overlooking proceedings!

This ex was based around our real time job of MACP and developed skills that are being used in theatres like Iraq and Afghanistan. We had to protect a power station for 24 hrs while a large percentage of the local Welsh population became disgruntled and hostile.

From the power station we were tasked to send out vehicle patrols all night and many of these patrols came under fire which practised us in our vehicle anti ambush drills. I felt we had the best sect as we all worked well together. My Sect Comd, **Cpl Dave Shaw**, who is deploying to Afghanistan at the end of the year, seemed to be switched on at all times and was glad to be using some of the skills he will need on tour. The ex finished with a casualty extraction to the HLS. I was not expecting to see a real helicopter but on approach to the HLS we could see a Lynx helicopter waiting for our arrival. They managed to take a few lucky members of the Regt up for a spin. Overall, I enjoyed the 2 weeks of Annual Camp and look forward to what gets thrown at us for the next training year.

39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BRISTOL

CO **Lt Col CM Lankester TD**
RSM **WO1(RSM) SM Lithgow**

PERMANENT STAFF TRAINING AT CASTLEMARTIN EXERCISE OUT OF OFFICE REPLY JULY 2008

We had arranged to leave Bristol TAC at 0800hrs on Friday 30 June but we eventually rolled out of the gate at 0945hrs after **Maj Phil Abbott** had found his pants. After a quick pit stop it quickly became apparent that **SSgt Gaz Proctor** had made a small navigation error and was driving the team back towards Bristol. After a few route changes, he finally got the staff into Castlemartin in good time.

The first event of the week was Go-Karting, which had **Maj John Williams**, the competitive Dad, chomping at the bit and everyone else wondering what would happen if he lost any of his races. We soon discovered that he was no racing driver. The 'Grand Prix' competition that afternoon left us looking at each other in disgust and wandering just who was the psycho under that helmet. The early stages saw many a heated argument and accusation. The majority of grief was directed at the Regt YofS, **WO2(YofS) Dave Carter** who could be heard defending his actions by declaring that: "he saw a gap and went for it".

After the qualifying heats were completed, the top 5 drivers of the afternoon were singled out for the final showdown. **WO2(YofS) Carter**, **SSgt (Art Veh) Mark Aston**, **SSgt(YofS) Guy Davies**, and **SSgt Proctor** were on the starting line. **SSgt Proctor** managed to put the **SSgt Aston** into the tyres within the first 10m. When **'Tiffy'** eventually caught up with SPSI HQ Sqn he returned the favour. In the end, **WO2(YofS) Dave Carter** flew across the line triumphant.

Our second day of activities was to be more energetic. We all set off in high spirits from Castlemartin to meet up with the instructors but because **Sgt Phil Hall** failed to get the distance, time and speed correct, we arrived 1 hr early. All was quickly

forgotten when the instructors turned up. A very nice young lady called **Emma**, who was dressed in a very tight wet suit, and "some other bloke" were to be our mentors for the day.

After a quick brief, we were given wet suits, helmets and buoyancy aids. After **Maj John Williams** adjusted the socks down the front of his wet suit we were off. A quick 20 min walk later and we were at the start point. We all plunged into a very cold Welsh sea, looking like a herd of manatees. After a few little climbs, we did our first jump. **Sgt Bird** making the first 10ft jump look more like a 100ft plunge to the death!

It was then onto another climb that **Chris Bonnington** would have found technical; that's probably why **Capt Chris Hill** didn't bother and floated around in the sea like a corpse. It was at this point that **SSgt Sean Kelly** stuck to the rocks like a giant limpet – albeit a fat one. We arrived at the final jump, expecting to be lead by our airborne heroes. All the non-airborne confidently jumped from around 30 ft into the sea, much to the amusement of the assembled crowd of permanent staff; the same cannot be said for the airborne trained amongst us.

Our final day of activities started in Cawdor Barracks with Clay Pigeon Shooting. At this point **Maj Williams** took over most of the instructing, along with members of the Corps Squad. Most of the staff declared this an "Officer Sport" as **Capt Hill** turned out to be the winner (for the non-professional shots). However, even with the horizontal rain that only Brawdy can deliver, the morning was immense fun and proved that shooting can be fun without a 5.56mm!

After a wind and rain lashed morning Clay Shooting, the last activity of the day was a nice gentle walk. This was intended to allow the participants to take in the breathtaking views, give them the opportunity to take a few pictures as keepsakes and if the opportunity presented itself, to have a refreshing drink in some of the local watering holes. After a short drive to White Sands and with the sun was breaking through the clouds, which would quickly turn into a cracking hot and sunny afternoon, we set off.

Leading from the front was **Maj Williams** who tabbed off with the rest of us in tow. Personally I think this was his own way of getting back at us for smashing him into the tyre wall on the Go-Karting. However after walking at P Coy pace for a good hour, a well deserved break was allowed and we took in such sites as "The Bitches" and Ramsey Island.

About 2 hrs into what was now known as "The Death March", thankfully not to far from the end, the team met up with the QM, **Maj Phil Abbott**. A quick final hour of tabbing and we were back to the safety of the UK's smallest city and it's many watering holes. The week wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of both **SSgt Proctor** and **Sgt Hall**. Many thanks lads, same time next year?

Permanent staff in St.Davids: Maj Williams, SSgt(Art Veh) Aston, Capt Hill, SSgt(YofS) Davies, Maj Abbott, WO2(YofS) Carter, Sgt Hall, SSgt Proctor, WO2(RQMS) Dickenson, Sgt Deans, Sgt Bird, SSgt Kelly, SSgt Sullivan, Sgt Doyle

TA 100 GARDEN PARTY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

A Garden Party was held at Buckingham Palace on 10 July as part of the programme celebrating the TA's centenary. Ten soldiers from 39 Sig Regt and their guests attended the event. Transport was provided by TAC Bristol and delivered everyone direct to the Palace.

A long queue to the gates was made considerably more enjoyable by wonderful weather. The reward on entering the Palace gardens was to be greeted by the wonderful sight and sounds of a band playing either side of the grounds. Approximately 8000 people attended the event, creating a very exciting atmosphere. At 1540hrs, the Yeoman of the Guard held ground and shortly afterwards, the National Anthem heralded the arrival of the Royal Family. Sadly **Her Majesty The Queen** was not in attendance but **HRH The Prince Royal** and **HRH The Prince Edward** were present.

An appetising tea of cucumber sandwiches and cake was served in the main tent, accompanied by the ubiquitous cup of tea. At a typical tea party, some 27,000 cups of tea, 20,000 cucumber sandwiches and 20,000 slices of cake are served. **The Princess Royal** and **Prince Edward** walked around the gardens, speaking to as many guests as possible.

At 1630hrs, the Royal Party retired to the royal tent to take tea. A small select group of visitors had received invitations to join them for tea. **Sgt Palfrey** of 39 Sig Regt was thrilled to receive 2 invitations to join them for tea and was rightly very proud for both herself and her father to meet them in person. **Sgt Palfrey** was not sure why she was so honoured but thinks it may be to celebrate hey long 25 years service in the TA. At 1730hrs, the National Anthem was played again and by 1800hrs, it was all over. The sun was still shining as the happy band returned to the coach and set off home. Smiling faces showed just how much everyone had enjoyed the day.

2(NC) SIGNAL BRIGADE DRIVING CADRE
6 – 20 SEPTEMBER 2008

WO2 Dennis Griffiths ran the annual 2 week driving cadre at Westdown Camp, near Tilshead this year. Instructors were welcomed from far and wide, 39, 37, 71, 38 and 40 Sig Regts.

The course this year was split into 2. First, the Licence Acquisition Training, where we had 100% successful passes in Cats B+E, C, C+E and D1 on both weeks. Students undertaking driver licence acquisition training successfully passed B & E, C, C & E, and D1 licences.

Sig Omerod, of Sp Sqn successfully passed her B theory and then went on to receive driving lessons along with **Sig Ava Tanuku** of 94 Sqn with **WO2 John Downie** from BUOTC as their instructor who required all the wealth of his instructional ability. Mind you, he did come back a few times looking very pale and shaky and his already silver fox hair, did seem to get more silvery over the 2 weeks!!

This is the right way to do it

The second part was the new GS FAM training. This consisted of 3 days of "death by power point" class room based training, including vehicle documentation, breakdown procedures, hazard awareness, Health and Safety and accident procedures. This was then followed by a mock traffic accident, much to the amusement of the civilian staff in the offices around the area where the incident was taking place.

There was lots of shouting, crying and abuse being hurled around by the Instructors in their various roles, as the students were trying to piece together what had happened, where and by whom. **Sgt Sue Palfrey** and **Sgt Kerri Hill** put their CASSIM experience to good use and **Sgt Palfrey** with a bad head wound was left to bleed to death in the car while the students were busy measuring road widths, looking for speed limits and getting statements from onlookers and witnesses and then going back to the classroom and putting pen to paper and completing the dreaded Accident form. This will hopefully deter anyone having an accident again!.

Then came long awaited hands on training – camouflaging vehicles, fault finding, changing a Land Rover wheel, securing loads, route cards, convoy driving by day and by night, on and off road driving. I think the 5 incapacitated Land Rovers showed how difficult the "Seven Sisters" off road cross course proved to be, even to some of the experienced Instructors.

This is the wrong way to do it – things sometimes go wrong

Sgt Pat Pocklington dealt with all the course administration and ran the orderly room during the 2 weeks while **SSgt Jo Stevens** dealt with the SQMS issues for us all, sorting accommodation, packed lunches and organising the vegetarian meals (I don't think I need to say anymore about them) amongst many other things.

Sgt Palfery is already planning her packing list for next year's annual camp and has threatened to take a swimsuit for the off road driving.

SUPPORT (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SQUADRON

OC	**Maj CM Dawes TD**
SPSI	**SSgt GW Proctor**

Another hectic period for the Sqn under the watchful eyes of the OC and SPSI who have kept us extremely busy with the main focus on equipment maintenance in preparation of the forthcoming Equipment Care Inspection.

In addition the Sqn have deployed on the Regimental Development Weekend in June that focused on Leadership, Ex WESSEX HUNDRED and on the Regimental FTX on Salisbury Plain in July. We have also provided logistical support to the TA Young Officers' Study Weekend in Donnington and the LAD have provided a recruiting stand at the annual 'Truckfest' display that is held at the Royal Bath and West Show.

Finally we say farewell to our SPSI – **SSgt Gaz Proctor** and **SSgt(Art Veh) Mark Aston** who leave us for 7 Sig Regt and TES LSG DS Germany respectively by the time the next *Wire* is published. We wish them, their wives, **Andrea** and **Melanie** and their families all the very best for the future.

EXERCISE WESSEX HUNDRED 5 JULY 08
- by WO2(SSM) Jayne Tuck

On Saturday 5 July, Support (NSY) Sqn took part in the Somerset Royal British Legion "Open Day" at the Winter Gardens in Weston-Super-Mare. Despite the early reporting time of 0630hrs at Horfield TAC, there was an excellent turn-out from both NSY and 57 Sig Sqns. On arrival at the site, adjacent to the Sovereign Shopping Centre, we set up our stands, which included the Recruiting Caravan, a REME stand and FFR det Land Rover, which was headed up by **Sgt Karen Hodges**. Other stands on the site included the Royal British Legion (RBL), The Rifles, the WRAC Association, the Aden Veterans' Association, 'Help for Heroes', the Army Cadets and many more. The Rifles Band, based in Exeter, also gave a rousing performance of military music.

Although the Horfield Recruiting Team, led by **Capt David John**, made an attempt at recruiting and received some potentially useful contacts, the main aim of the event was to provide support and fundraising for the RBL, as well as a public relations ex for the Regt under the auspices of TA100. To this end, **Capt (QM) Phil Smith** despatched **Sig Jo Close**, **LCpl Cassie Downs** and some of the other young soldiers from our contingent to the sea front and Grand Pier area, complete with a PRC 320 man pack radio and RBL collecting tins. Meanwhile, back at the stand, we were delighted to meet up with members of the North Somerset Yeomanry Association (**Dennis Crocker** and **Harold Noor**) who came along to support the Sqn. There were some ex-Regular soldiers from the Royal Corps of Signals, who were very interested in the FFR element of the stand.

WO2 Jayne Tuck met up with 2 former members and colleagues of 37 (Wessex & Welsh) Sig Regt, who had been based at Horfield until 1992 and several of the ladies from the WRAC Association stand came across to chat to her and **Sgt Pat Pocklington**. It was very interesting to hear some stories from their service days. Unfortunately, the weather during the afternoon took a turn for the worst and it became more like autumn than mid-summer! Between outbreaks of rain, there was a chance for some of the girls to have a photo opportunity with "The Last Tommy", **Mr Harry Patch**, who visited the stand with a news crew in tow!

Members of the Regiment with Harry Patch

Despite being quite a long day, this was an enjoyable event which gave us the opportunity to put the Regt in the public eye while supporting a very worthwhile organisation, i.e. the RBL. The "star" of the day was our RLC chef, **Pte Emma Turner**, whose RBL collecting bucket almost full at the end of the day. She received a special thank you and a small gift from the personnel on the British Legion stand. Well done, **Emma**!

57 (CITY & COUNTY OF BRISTOL) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Iain Sainsbury**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Ben Newby**

REGIMENTAL FTX ON SALISBURY PLAIN 11-13 JULY 2008
- by WO2(SSM) Newby

On the 11 July, 57 Sqn departed for the 2008 Regimental FTX, which we were shocked to find was the first full comms ex since our Op OUTLOOK deployment in July 2007. Deployment was complicated by one of our 2 deploying CST dets being tasked during Friday with a VIP demo, requiring the det to go on ex 12 hrs early, via Corsham. The Sqn have really come to appreciate these exciting challenges caused by imaginative planning at higher levels.

The ex was held on SPTA and we arrived at our various sites around 2300hrs. The 'comms blanket' was due to be established by 0200hrs but after a long day at work followed by a move to SPTA by green fleet, most Sqn members were more interested in another type of blanket. The Sqn was split over 3 locations, with a CST and FFR at each of Silver and Bronze HQs and SHQ located with Regt Echelon.

The SHQ location was quite comfortable with a TCOPO borrowed from HQ Sqn forming our HQ, manned by the recently appointed 2IC, **Capt Sarah Trevelion** assisted by our new clerk, **Pte Ashley John**. The first test of the 'comms blanket' was a series of videoconferences to be provided using the VTC over Inmarsat from the 2 x CST locations back to Gold HQ.

Never one to miss out on some face time with the CO, **Maj Iain Sainsbury** and his duty driver for the weekend **WO2(SSM) Ben Newby** headed to Silver HQ in some woods just off the southern transit route. They arrived to find CST 39/1 based on the Bristol Tp well established in a very tidy complex. This was not surprising since they had the benefit of a whole evening to set up following the VIP visit in Corsham and **SSgt Sharp** to make sure standards were upheld.

In the ensuing videoconference, the OC received an update on the ex scenario, the movement of surplus US chemicals back to USA through the SPTA area and heard that the other 57 dets at Bronze HQ were not doing so well on the comms side. As it was only about 0300hrs and the night was still young, we decided to head over and improve their morale with a visit. At Quebec Barn, CST39/2 based on the Gloucester Tp were finding that the bottom of a re-entrant surrounded by wet trees was not the best location for SATCOMS or the Vodafone dependant ERAS.

I don't know if the OC's visit improved the Det's morale, or whether casting his expert eye over the secure VHF and declaring that indeed it wasn't working helped, but the command group's morale was lifted by a warm creamy drink supplied by **Sig Willcox**. We never did work out the ingredients since he definitely had no cream. By now it was getting light so we headed back to SHQ at Rollestone.

Later in the morning CST39/2 got a move order, and with the assistance of some HQ Sqn drivers who had managed a decent night's sleep, moved to the eastern end of SPTA into a location where they were delighted to find the Inmarsat shot was excellent. In due course CST 39/2 at Silver HQ also had to move to Tinhead Barn in the North West of SPTA. To complete the move sequence SHQ was ordered to depart our cosy location with Echelon and join CST 39/2 at Tinhead Barn. This led to the most memorable event of the ex for some Sqn members.

As the TCOPO pulling a 16/24 Gene rounded the final corner, the driver **Cpl Paul Wylde** caught sight of the CO and Adjt visiting the det at Tinhead Barn. At this time his co-driver, **Capt Trevelion** appears to have suggested that they impress the CO by pulling into location up on 2 wheels like Starsky and Hutch. **Cpl Wylde** attempted takeoff on the side of the track but unfortunately this led to the vehicle and trailer neatly rolling into the field and becoming stuck grounded on the trailer axle at an angle of 45 degrees.

Resisting temptation to utter the immortal words from the end of "The Italian Job" – "Hang on lads I've got an idea!" the two occupants were forced to exit the uppermost side of the cab to the amusement of the gathering crowd of digital photographers.

Every cloud has a silver lining, and the stranded TCOPO and Gene provided the perfect opportunity for the REME FRT to give their bedsores a break and practise some real time recovery with the Foden. They duly arrived with flashing orange lights and **Sgt Andy Gray** under guidance from their PSI, **SSgt (ArtVeh) Mark Aston** set to work.

Rather than pull the vehicle in any direction it was decided to use the Foden Crane jib to lift it back onto the track one axle at a time, starting from the rear wheels of the TCOPO. This took some time but was accomplished in a safe way without causing any damage to the casualty vehicles. This was an impressive demonstration of Recovery Mech skill by the REME team and 57 Sqn are very grateful that they were on the ex with their Foden.

After all this excitement there were another few hours of ex traffic over the CSTs as the imaginary chemical convoys made their way to safety. Endex was eventually called in time to give all drivers the opportunity for some unbroken sleep. On Sunday all the Regt's assets were centralised at Echelon before going for wash down and being released back to TACs. With ECI coming up, there was then a long afternoon of re-washing the vehicles and turning around all the comms kit.

The ex was a good refresher for the Sqn having been a very long time since we deployed the CSTs into the field. Once initial skill fade was sorted out on Friday night, the dets got to grips with the kit and with det routine. I'm sure everyone who attended will be more confident going into Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS on camp in September, where the only Sqn that is a veteran of a real UK op will be setting the standard again.

ANNUAL CAMP 57 SIGNAL SQUADRON
- by Capt Sarah Trevelion

39 Sig Regt was deployed on Annual Camp 6 – 20 September. On the first evening, a parade was held and the CO, **Lt Col Lankester TD**, promoted several personnel in the Sqn. Congratulations to **Cpls MacGilp** and **Wylde** on their promotion to Sgt and to **LCpl Downs** on her promotion to Cpl.

The first week of camp was concentrated on Regimental training in preparation for the second week which was the Bde phase. For the first week, the Regt was based at Beckingham with the Regimental Pacex and FTX being held on Beckingham Training Area, RAF Cranwell and Dukeries Training Area. The first week was very busy and certainly set the pace for the Bde phase. In addition to the Regimental FTX, a range day was held and the usual R&R day was spent in Lincoln.

No mention of the Regimental camp would be complete however, without a note about the Tug-of-War competition. 94 Sig Sqn had put a lot of work into organising the competition only for 57 to completely wipe the floor with them!

The 57 team (which it has to be said was a rather last minute composition) were victorious in every pull and even in the much disputed final which 94 claimed to be necessary – despite the fact that 57 were 4 pulls ahead – 57 won all 3 pulls. This proved to be rather costly to the 2IC, **Capt Trevelion**, as she had offered to buy them all a beer if they won and then another if they won the final. The pie-making chefs in Beckingham clearly have a lot to answer for!

Particular congratulations should go to **Sig Tyrrell** who by default, ended up as the female entry for the Sqn team, as she managed to hang onto the rope with real determination, despite being the lightest member of any of the Sqn teams by a long shot!

The undefeated 57 Signal Squadron Tug-of-War Team

57 Sig Sqn deployed as part of 39 Sig Regt on the 2 (NC) Bde ex in September. 2 (NC) Bde had in effect bolted a Theatre Troops ex onto Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS. As you can imagine, the scenarios caused some confusion as Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS was a tactical exercise, whereas the 2 (NC) Bde exs were based on UK ops incidents! There were 5 different realities being run by 2 (NC) Bde – Op HORSESHOE ODOUR, Op HORSESHOE EXPRESS, Op HORSESHOE BARNARD, Op HORSESHOE PRANZO and Op BARDIC SURGE. 57 Sig Sqn deployed with 2 CSTs, 1 ARIG, 1 ARLIG and 1 Reebok crew (less the Reebok itself). The 57 Dets were mainly involved in Op HORSESHOE EXPRESS and Op HORSESHOE ODOUR. In a change to previous Bde exs, SHQ did not form an SCP and the staff were instead employed within Regimental Ops.

The 39 Sig Regt phase of the Bde Ex started in earnest on 12 September with a move from the Regimental camp at Beckingham across to the Regimental holding area at MOD Stafford. The plan had originally been to move the Regt to Nesscliff, but real-time flooding there in the days leading up to the Bde phase meant that Regimental Ops had to do some very quick planning to find us an alternative location. Whilst the majority of the Regt moved west to Stafford however, CST 391 moved north up to Dishforth Airfield as they had been tasked to support Op HORSESHOE ODOUR.

Unfortunately the Regt had not been tasked to send the Reebok crew north at this stage, so when the order came through on arrival at Stafford, the crew had to get some sleep and then head north at 0300hrs the next morning. It soon became apparent however that it was going to be difficult for the crew to sleep due to **Sig Bearman's** snoring. **Sig Hartfield** avoided this by being bedded down in the MRS shortly after arriving in Dishforth and **Sig Wilcox** from CST 391 must have heard it to as he too was packed off to the MRS before long! Unfortunately when CST 391 arrived at Dishforth they found that they were in support of an Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS unit, who were cammed up in a field location. This caused some problems for the Det though as the white combi, one of the Det's vehicles, rather stood out. Judging by the photos however, **2Lt Peters** managed to keep morale up with a plentiful supply of Haribo!

CST 392 was deployed to MOD Stafford in support of Silver HQ for the first phase, before moving on to Swynnerton Training Area for another tasking on Op HORSESHOE EXPRESS. CST 392 appeared to win the "luckiest Det" award as they ended up collocated with an RLC Regt, complete with field kitchen and tuck shop. Perhaps this is why **Cpl Cunningham** and **Sgt Holley** always appeared to sound so cheerful when they sent their R2 in to Regt Ops in the small hours of the morning!

ARG 392 was deployed initially by **LCpl Williamson** before being replaced in order for him to get 2 days rock climbing in on the Regimental adventure training package run by **Capt John** and **WO1(RSM) Lithgow**. **Sgt MacGilp** deployed with ARG 392 to Swynnerton in support of Gold HQ, leaving ARG 391 commanded by **Cpl Downs** at Silver HQ to provide comms in support of the LANWARD Det from 36 Sig Regt. The Bde Ex phase is always busy and this year was no exception. All of the Dets performed well under sometimes difficult circumstances and a lot of new skills have been acquired.

94 (BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Vince Connelly TD**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Matt Chapman**

TA 100 AND FREEDOM OF WINDSOR PARADE 28 JUNE 08
- by Sgt Sheila Townsend

In October 1993, 94 Sig Sqn was granted the Freedom of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. What that actually means is recorded in the Freedom document:

"Berkshire Yeomanry Signal Squadron was granted the Freedom of Entry to the Royal Borough and thereby the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets on all ceremonial occasions with drums beating, bands playing, colours flying and bayonets fixed."

So we asked permission of The Mayor of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Cllr **Mrs Dorothy Kemp**. This was duly granted and so on 28 June 2008, we took to the streets of Windsor in full ceremonial uniform in celebration of the TA Centenary. As it was a beautiful day the streets were lined with many hundreds of people; mums, dads, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children and old comrades all lined the route from Victoria Barracks, through Windsor passed The Guildhall, down to the war memorial by the river. The Heavy Cavalry and Cambrai Band provided the music for the occasion.

They had already marched through Windsor once that day for the changing of the guard at Windsor Castle and then in the heat of the day they did it all again for us. At the Guildhall we halted for a few words of praise and honour from The Mayor on behalf of **Her Majesty The Queen**. The area of The Guildhall was surrounded by many other dignitaries and members of the public. The Mayor also took the salute. The TV cameras were filming the occasion for the local news. **Capt Nev MacMillan** and SSM, **Matt Chapman** were specifically interviewed, as were members of the public as to what the occasion meant for them. The parade wasn't just a nice occasion that allowed us to march through the streets of Windsor, it was in celebration of the Territorial Army Centenary, and all past and present members.

Every soldier that took part in the day's events put 110% effort into the day and the preparation before during and after the parade. The many weeks of marching and weapon drill before hand; the hours of bulling boots; the pressing of uniforms; the polishing of swords; and all the other things that go to make a day run as smoothly as it did.

94 Signal Squadron on parade in Windsor on 28 June 2008 exercising their rights of Freedom of Entry to the Borough

40th (ULSTER) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BELFAST

CO **Lt Col SJ McConnell**
RSM **WO1 Coates**

XL SPORTS COMPETITION - *by SSgt Anderson*

The annual XL Regimental Sports Competition was held at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn on 16 August 2008. All activities were planned and booked. Then 3 days before the event while driving out of camp, it was noted that a marquee had been erected on the athletics track and astro turf. If that wasn't bad enough, I then received a call from the station gym informing me that we would not be able to use the station swimming pool due to lack of funds for pool staff. Panic then set in, followed many emails and emotional telephone calls.

Thankfully the manager of the swimming pool, **Pauline Crockard**, stepped in to ensure the event would go ahead. Also the station **SSI Sgt Tucker** gave the Regt permission to use the Leisure Centre. The day arrived and so did the rain but no matter how hard the rain, it did not matter because as the marquees were on the astro turf and athletics track, all our activities were now indoors in the Leisure Centre. How lucky!

All Sqns within the Regt had selected their gladiators for the day – some were probably around at the time of Spartacus! First event was swimming or controlled drowning. **Sgt Gill** showed us all how not to do the butterfly, at least he didn't sink. **Phelps** must be quaking in his boots!

69 Limavady Sqn won that event with ease. Next it was all change for volleyball, basketball and football. Throughout the day the competitiveness grew and grew, tackles got harder and basketball turned into rugby.
Bruises compared, war stories and goals celebrations exchanged, all competitors made their way to 85 Sig Sqn drill hall to hear the results and tuck into a well earned BBQ.

The overall winners were 69 Sqn who had the honour of receiving their trophies from our new Hon Col, **Lord Rogan of Lower Iveagh**. Well done to **SSgt Anderson** for an excellently organised event.

EXERCISE CORPORATE BUTTRESS

Ex CORPORATE BUTTRESS was a Support Sqn ex conducted at Magilligan Training Centre (MTC) from 8 – 10 August 2008. This was the last opportunity for the various Depts to conduct 'remind and revise' training prior to our Field Training Ex (FTX) during annual camp at the start of September 2008. This also give the new OC his first chance to see the Sqn in action and he was suitably impressed.

Both clerks, **Cpl Judith Agnew** and **Pte Melissa Johnston** remained in Clonaver Park and worked under the PSAO, **Capt Kev Kirkham-Brown**. As did the 2 medics namely **Cpl Davey Burgess** and **Cpl Dave Coulter**. Additionally, on the Saturday, troops moved to Limavady TA Centre, which is about 15 miles from MTC, to work on JPA. Thanks to **Capt Rodney Smith**, the PSAO at Limavady for opening up the TAC.

The highlight of the weekend was the deployment of Reebok. **WO2(SSM) Donald Holmes, SSgt Luke Venni** and **LCpl Derek Hutchinson** had travelled to 38 Sig Regt to pick up the Reebok during the week. My thanks to them for taking time out from their busy workload to collect this specialised equipment. **SSgt Bob Buckingham** and **Sgt Denis Stewart** happily demonstrated their knowledge and experience on this equipment to eagerly awaiting troops. These troops were given ample time to 'strip and assemble' and operate for the rest of the weekend.

Plenty of valuable lessons were learnt for future ex deployments. Thanks, as always, to **Sgt 'Satnav' McConnell**, Tech Workshops PSI, for coordinating the Reebok deployment with Corsham. Roll on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS!

LIMAVADY TAC OPEN DAY - *by Sgt George*

On the 23 August , 69 Sig Sqn held an Open Day in Limavady TAC, as part of the TA 100 celebrations. The idea behind the Open Day was to offer the general public an insight into the organisation and roles of the various TA units in the North West of the Province. We were joined in the event by neighbouring units from RA, R IRISH, RLC and RAMC who each provided a stand. After months of planning, co-ordinating and advertising the event, **Sgt George** was relieved when all the units turned up, stands were in position and displays rehearsed and ready to go. The gates opened at 1000hrs and a steady stream of locals began to enter the TAC despite the overcast weather.

The first display on the programme of events was put on by 69 Sig Sqn and involved the setting up of a radio det, lead by **Sgt Lindsay** and his fine team of practised volunteers. The team impressed the crowd by deploying vehicle, mast and tent in under 10 mins and were equally impressive in packing it away. Then came the most spectacular aspect of the display with some fine reversing by **LCpl George** who managed to jack-knife the Land Rover and trailer in the space of 2m. "Unbelievable" was the general comment from the stunned onlookers.

The next up was the RLC pipe band, lead by **Pipe Major Lyle**. The band performed several tunes and gave a good display to the delighted crowd, who were still recovering from the supreme driving display earlier. Then to keep the PSAO happy, **SSgt Palmer** organised a timed Land rover pull with all the participating units providing a team. 69 Sig Sqn provided 2 teams, one filled with the old and bold and the other with young and fit. In all 5 teams entered in the competition including one from the local Fire Brigade. The wining team was the 69 Sig Sqn old and bold with a time of 17.5 sec. Which just goes to prove that old age and treachery will always overcome youth and skill?

Old age and treachery overcomes youthfulness and skill

Next up was the local Fire Brigade who put on a display of casualty extraction from a crashed car. In no time at all they had stabilised the casualty and removed the roof of the car with their cutting equipment. **LCpl George** made an excellent immobilised casualty. Following this the RLC put on a display of their Drops capability involving big trucks and heavy loads.

The gates finally closed to the public at 1600hrs and the event was judged to be a great success in which all the units played a significant role. Despite the weather between 200 and 250 people came through the gate with an estimated 15% within the target recruiting age bracket. Most importantly all the units reported a measure of success with regards to the completion of recruit contact coupons.

EXERCISE TIPPERARY VENTURE 08 - *by WO2(SSM) Gamble*

On the weekend 26 – 28 September, **WO2(SSM) Les Gamble**, **Cpl Dave Ritchie** and **Cpl Robert Wilson**, from 69 Sig Sqn along with 2 of the Sqn members wives, **Julie Gamble** and **Joanne Palmer**, made the long journey south to Tipperary for the 4th Annual Commemoration weekend organised by Tipperary Remembrance Trust. The group were accompanied by 3 members of the North Irish Horse, Regimental Association (North West Branch), **Mr Billy Lyle** (Standard Bearer), **Mr Lloyd Cammack** and **Maj (Retd) Mac Magowan.**

On arrival in Tipperary a meet and greet took place at the local Civic Centre where **Mr Mick Haslam**, the Trust Chairman, welcomed everyone and gave an outline of events planned for the weekend. Afterwards, all those taking part were invited to Corney's pub for some refreshments. So after a night of good old fashioned Irish hospitality, it was up bright and early for a bit of sight-seeing around Tipperary and to see if we could get a bit of colour back into **Cpl Dave Ritchie's** face. The morning also had a formal side with an official visit to some of the local military sites.

The main event on Saturday was a Black Tie Dinner, which was held in the Glen Hotel. The trust organised transport to collect all the guests and bring them to the event which as you would guess, resulted in the bus spending 30 mins driving around town looking for a party of visitors from France who had little or no grasp of the English language. Always a cool head in a crisis, the SSM made a command decision that we would not miss the pre-reception drinks, so the bus went on to the hotel only to find that the French were already there. A fantastic evening was had by all and local historian, **Mr Michael Desmond**, delivered a great after dinner speech on the forgotten battles of the WW1. It is a measure of the event's growing importance that the Defence Attaché's from Canada, USA and New Zealand were also in attendance.

On Sunday morning following a hearty Irish breakfast, the party made their way to St John's Church of Ireland for a service of Remembrance and Thanks hosted by **Dean Knowles** and assisted by the Chaplain of the local Irish Army Unit in Clonmel. Immediately after the service the parade formed up outside the church. The Band of the Southern Bridge led, followed by a pl from Support Coy of the Irish Reserve Defence Force. These were followed by the standards and Veterans, which included the Sqn and NIH party.

Tipperary Remembrance Arch

The parade wound its way through Tipperary to the Remembrance Arch at the Old Army Barracks where another short service was held followed by a wreath laying ceremony. The proceedings were then finished off with a vote of thanks from the Chairman and a look forward to next year for a bigger and better weekend. He then invited everyone for a farewell buffet lunch in Tipperary Golf Club and having bade fond farewells to all the old friends and indeed many new ones, we made or way back up North to Limavady with everyone reflecting on what was, a very successful and memorable weekend.

EXERCISE SNOWDON FINN - *by SSgt Jack*

On 25 September, a group of more than 20 personnel from 69 Sig Sqn made the journey across the Irish Sea to Snowdonia National Park and to Capel Curig Training Centre (CCTC) which was to be home for the next few days.

On arrival there where a few stange looks to say the least, when the group found that the new CO, **Lt Col McConnell** and the RSM had arrived the night before and were raring to go on the first activity, the High Ropes Course. No room for wobbly legs, not with the CO watching ,unless you were the RSM who gave us all an excellent impression of Elvis.

Despite much trepidation from some, we all did extremelly well, especially **Sig McGuinness** who overcame his fear of heights and made the final jump look easy. Well, it was either jump or listen to the slagging for the rest of the weekend. In the end he opted for the easier option and jumped.

Then **Cpl Billy Kane** decided he was coming down half way through, only to be told that the only way down was back through the stages he had already completed. Carrying out a quick estimate he decided to keep going; again I think the threat of the slagging he could be subject to played a part in his final decision.

All in all the group completed the High Ropes course and took part in other activities which included mountain biking (**Sgt Lindsay** promises to take a map the next time), rock climbing, abseiling and group walks to Snowdon and the Glitters to experience some of the most breath taking views in Great Britian. The group then returned to Belfast at 0630hrs on Monday morning and for the majority it was off to work, just another day in the life of a Territoral Soldier.

The soldiers from Limavady stop to admire the scenery

EXERCISE WHITE WATER FINN 25 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2008
- by Lt Lindsay Fulton

Wet, wild and worn out – well, we wouldn't have our adventure training any other way! The last weekend in September saw 85 Sqn hot foot it to Aviemore in Scotland for some mountain biking, battlefield touring and rafting fun. The weekend commenced with a 'gentle' 60km cycle to the battlefield of Culloden led by the

'lean, mean cycle queen', **SSgt Cathy Barker**. Having set us on our way with carefully illustrated map and cryptic photos our leader brought up the rear to keep us on track and undertake the inevitable bicycle repairs.

Armed with a cycle repair kit that would put the best Tour de France mechanic to shame, she skilfully patched her way through dodgy chains, problematic tyres and a few unstable cyclists. Hopefully next time **Sig Robert Cowden** will realise that those little levers on his handle bars are there for a reason and throwing himself to the ground, although entertaining, is an unnecessary stopping technique.

Similarly, the entire left hand side of **Maj Dave Wilson's** body would probably appreciate him learning a similar lesson, I do sorely regret not capturing the moment the OC went skidding to a crashing halt having hurtled himself down a gravel slope to find that the bend that lay at the bottom was rather tighter than he had expected.

Cpl Holland, Sgt Livingstone, Sgt Herridge and Sig Cowden pose at the summit while Sig Chapman wonders where his bike has gone

A few 'John Wayne impressions' later and the entire team had made it to Culloden for an opportunity to learn about the last full scale battle to be fought on British soil. It was there on 16 April 1746 that Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobite army, determined to reclaim the thrones of Britain and Ireland for the Stuart dynasty, were defeated by the government forces under the Duke of Cumberland.

The battlefield site has been extremely well maintained as a memorial to those who fell with the positions of the two front lines marked out by flags, a network of paths and 'educational posts' running throughout the battlefield and a very modern visitor centre – an extremely worthwhile visit.

The next morning looked a bit bleak compared with the glorious sunshine of the previous day but rain or not we were going to get wet anyway as we made our way to the rafting centre. There is nothing like a dunk in the freezing rivers of north Scotland to cure a hangover. Within 2 mins of leaving the safety of dry land, the battle of the inflatable rafts had commenced and within 5 mins we were all soaked.

The rafts navigated their way downstream with varying levels of success. **Sig Peter Stewart** for one, seemed to spend more time out of his raft than in it, whereas **Cpl Artie Holland** determinedly wedged himself in so that he and raft would not have to part company – ever!

A packed weekend of activity was not difficult to find in Aviemore and we would highly recommend it for biking and water sports. Evening activities are quite good as well.

EXERCISE GRIFFIN FOCUS 08 - *by WO2 (SSM) Gamble*

69 Sig Sqn set sail for Scotland on Friday 5th September 08 as part of the 2 (NC) Sig Bde FTX. The journey was a horrendous one, due to the inclement weather which was hoped could only get better. On arrival at Kirkcudbright Camp (KTC) we were met by the advance party, who thankfully had arranged rooms for our stay and it was straight to bed for an early start Phase 1, a Regimental plug up in preparation for the next Phase, the move to Wathgill Camp in Catterick

Once at Catterick we moved to Wathgill Camp and immediately started to prepare for the Main part of the FTX. The Comd element of the Regt set up a briefing room at a local farm and what started of as a requirement for a couple of tables and chairs, grew into the Balmoral hotel with the SQMS all but emptying the Bedford. Having set up the CST the farm proved to be compact and comfortable. This was then perfected for the visit of the Bde Comd.

69 Sqn were held in reserve so a training establishment was set up back at Wathgill, to keep the troops occupied and to prevent skill fade. We stayed there for a few days waiting on a reduced notice to move. Then we all got the news we were waiting for, 69 Sig Sqn CST was to deploy.

Happy days we thought, until we were told, you are going to Swynnerton and by the way it's a 5 or 6 hr drive. So we made the journey further south and arrived at Swynnerton and set up the CST.

We were met by **Lt Clarke**, from 36 Sig Regt, who was glad to see us and briefed us on where to go. We stayed here until the next day when the IRT from 10 Sig Regt came to relieve us and then we headed back North to Kirkcudbright. Well most of us apart from **Cpl Jones** and **SSM Gamble** who were left abandoned on the M6, babysitting a broken down 4 tonner.

Capt Burgess was very worried at this stage, not about the lorry but about his civvies that were in the back. Several phone calls later the Cavalry arrived, OC Support and the QM. Having tasked the REME who turned up and under the expert guidance of **Cpl Robert Wilson**, we proceeded to be towed all the way back to KTC. With the R&R phase already in full swing it was all guns blazing up the road and we arrived safely in time for the BBQ and a well deserved beer.

We continued the R&R that evening in Kirkcudbright and let's say I have been to better places for my R&R, however it was well appreciated after driving the length of the country. On the final day we got up nice and early to turn round the equipment and vehicles in preparation for the final phase, the return to the Province. Thankfully we all arrived in one piece back in Limavady and we all reflected in what was described as an unusually quiet but very productive and enjoyable FTX. Meanwhile, across the country, 85 Sig Sqn were enjoying the trials and tribulations of their own...

- by SSgt Anderson

85 Sig Sqn deployed with the usual enthusiasm you would expect of the TA (or pressed men). After the initial convoy brief, it didn't take too long before half of the packet took a wrong turn. Once on the motorway, the Sqn was reunited again and arrived at the ferry port with no further hiccups.

Finally we were given the word to board the ferry, unfortunately the gods weren't with us and the Sqn's lead vehicle driven by the PSIs broke down and had to be jump started to get on the ferry. This was not the end of disaster, as on arrival the same Land Rover had to be pushed off the ferry by the PSIs and 2IC.

The remainder of camp went without any more problems and the Sqn enjoyed their stay in Darlington TAC (with the whole Predator film series on view in the 85 cinema). The motto for our camp is "If I could...I would".

71st (YEOMANRY) SIGNAL REGIMENT BEXLEYHEATH

CO **Lt Col TJS Allen**
RSM **WO1 NJ Pollitt**

THE YEOMANRY TA - *by WO1(RSM) Pollitt*

It has now been 5 months since I took over the reigns of RSM at 71 Sig Regt. The reason for writing this short article is to clear up a few misconceptions about life within the TA and especially within a Yeomanry Regt.

The reactions of my peers on hearing of my impending posting to a TA Unit were facial expressions condemning me to a fate of hardship and frustration. This attitude then gave me 2 options; first, believe all I've been told and come into the TA with a negative attitude, accepting that everything I do will be shot down in a ball of flames and that nothing gets done.

Second was to see the TA as a completely new challenge, a job that takes me outside my comfort zone, allowing me to develop my leadership and management skills in a completely different way. I chose the second option and I have taken over a Regt that is extremely proactive in all it does and comes with a myriad of challenges.

More importantly the unit has a sense of pride in what it does and I have discovered a multitude of opportunities for me to get my teeth into. If as a PSI (T), a SSgt in the SPSI role, YofS, FofS or as an RSM, you want to develop your military skills, organise and run major exs, take part in civil ceremonies and a whole host of other activities at a high tempo, then this is the job for you and I write this as a Regular!

What wraps up such a unique Regt is the Yeomanry aspect that comes with it. A part of belonging to any unit is the history that comes with it. This unit is no exception and is steeped in a huge amount of history.

68 (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry) Sig Sqn trace their history back to 1584, with the Inns of Court supporting the Crown in defence of this country, a service they continue to carry out with great fortitude to this day. 70 (Essex Yeomanry) Sig Sqn's roots stem back to 1798 and they served with particular distinction during the 2nd Battle of Ypres in 1914. Although 265 (Kent and County of London Yeomanry) Sig Sqn can trace their history back to 1583 their true history began in 1794 when they served with distinction in the Boer War. The newest addition to our ranks, 47 (Middlesex Yeomanry) Sig Sqn, was formed in 1797 and served as Imperial Yeomanry in the Boer War and have been Royal Signals since 1920. This Sqn has two VCs awarded in Palestine and on the Western Front in the WW1.

Although 71st (Yeomanry) Sig Regt has only existed as a major unit since the reorganisation of the TA in 1969, it nevertheless retains many long and glorious links with the past and being part of that history is something special. Our history is set in stone but the futures of our TA Regts are not and that's what makes working within these volunteer units so unique. The opportunity for Regulars to shape the future of the TA and uphold their heritage is I believe paramount to the continuing success of these Regts.

VIEW FROM RHQ

Since the last edition, the Regt has been extremely busy with the TA Annual Camp during September. Initially at Castlemartin low level military training and then on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS with the Bde FTX. It was at the end of this ex that the Regt bade farewell to the outgoing CO, **Lt Col CS Tallents** and welcomed the new CO, **Lt Col TJS Allen**. We wish the CO and his family a warm welcome into the Regt and hope he has an enjoyable and rewarding tour with 71 Sig Regt.

HELP FOR HEROES CHARITY EVENT

CAPITAL CITY ROWATHON BY 265 (KCLY) SUPPORT SQUADRON - *by Cpl Brett Harries*

July saw a testing time for 12 members of 71 Sig Regt. Both fitness and buttocks where tested during a 48 hr sponsored Rowathon for the Tri-Service Charity – 'Help For Heroes'. This took part from 25 – 27 July in Bexleyheath High Street.

Mission: Row 1409kms (875 miles), the equivalent distance from London – Cardiff – Dublin – Belfast – Edinburgh then back to London in 48 hrs using Concept 2 rowing machines.

Friendly Forces: Twelve eager rowers and a number of support staff from 71 Sig Regt. An Army recruitment team with climbing wall and Time 106.8 fm pumping out the tunes.

Timings: Using 3 teams of 4, each member would row for 30 mins then have a 1hr 30 min break then back on. At all times 3 members need to be rowing. From 2000hrs to 0800hrs each member would row for 1hr then take 3hrs off. Each member would need to row 5,000m during the 30 min session then 10,000 during the 1hr session.

The whole idea was 265 Sqn's very own PSI, **SSgt Trev Evans**, during a session down the gym he thought as the summer is here why not try to raise some money for charity and do a sponsored row So wheels where set in motion. Twelve members where approached and signed up (gun point on the ranges I heard). Unfortunately (for my buttocks) a member of the original 12 dropped out so I stepped in.

I often row down in the gym but not for the time required so I thought I'd best get some training in; this was a month before the start. I remember my first 30 min row, very sore buttocks and back and as the week progressed serious chaffing. Well a month later the time was upon us, Friday morning was rock up at the TAC, ferry 12 x 12s up to Bexleyheath High Street, set up for a 1230hrs start. Lucky for us the chosen weekend turned out to be the hottest weekend to date, so hydrate, hydrate and hydrate was the advice from our PTIs.

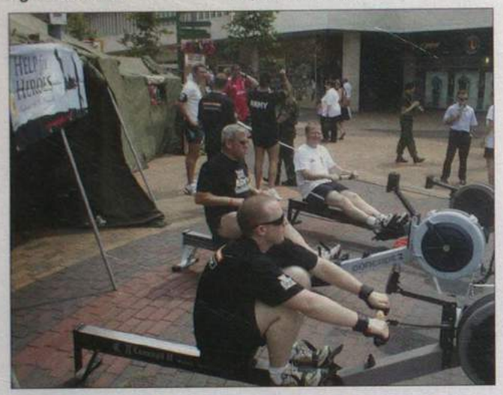
This was sound advice but our 3 rowers had been placed by the ever flowing fountain, which resulted in around 4 toilet breaks every 40 mins. As Time FM where not due to turn up until the Saturday, the only thing we had for entertainment was friendly banter and **Sgt Dave McGuinness's** iPod and speakers. Tunes were great until it come to my turn to row which saw **Capt Steve Slaney** request an Eagles track, which lasted 20 mins. However my and **LCpl Carl Cranes'** morale was lifted when **Capt Slaney** fell off his rower.

Saturday flew by with friends and family arriving to boast morale, though the "pillows" had now turned into uncomfortable lumps of hard clay which didn't help with the chaffing. 2000hrs soon arrived, though a team discussion resulting in binning the 1 hr rows and carrying on with 30 min sessions, which suited all of us. Saturday 2100hrs and we were just passed Edinburgh, well on our way to smashing our time of 48 hrs. Morale was still high.

We finally finished at 0615hrs, completing all 1409kms (875 miles) in a time of 41 hrs. There was then time for a quick team photo followed by some well deserved shut eye and shower. Once we'd showered and added Savlon to chaffed buttocks it was off to the local for a couple of cold pints and a full roast dinner.....

As of 6 October, we have raised nearly £12,000 for 'Help for Heroes'. The team members consisted of:

Capt Steve Slaney	**Cpl Nick Castro**
SSgt Trev Evans	**Cpl Andy McGuckin**
WO2 Ade Keeble	**Cpl Brett Harries**
SSgt Mickey Goodwin	**LCpl Jim Sutton**
Sgt Dave McGuinness	**LCpl Steve Williams**
Sgt Dean Smith	**LCpl Carl Crane**



Cpl Brett Harries, Capt Steve Slaney, LCpl Carl Crane making money for 'Help for Heroes' in Bexleyheath High Street

47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj Mike Smith**
SSM	**WO2 Marc Gilfrin**

EXERCISE ENDURING HELP 2008 - *by Sig Matt Cope*

Exercise Enduring Help

For those of you not up to speed, Ex ENDURING HELP is a 24 hr cross country motorcycle event organised and run by BAFMA. The aim of the ex is to improve cross country motorcycling skills whilst raising money for various charities and of course, having a great time. The race is open to all NATO forces and is to be completed using only standard NATO issue bikes. The course is situated in Longmoor and starts and finishes on the old air strip. This year's event took place on the weekend of 23 – 25 May, starting at 1200hrs on the Saturday and finishing at 1200hrs on the Sunday.

Having competed in previous years, our team led by **SSgt Gary Cheshire** started the preparation for the 2008 race at an early stage. In fact, I believe we began planning the Tuesday night after the 2007 race was completed. We had grand ideas of sponsorship. There were funds to be raised, people to be recruited and charities to be considered. We were to step up our game and make 2008 the year that Team 47 Sqn, supported by 71 Sig Regt, raised some major coin.

We arrived at Longmoor in the early afternoon on Friday, found our favourite spot, and began to set up camp in a fast and thoroughly efficient way only a TA signals unit can. Once we had finished, we set about relaxing and telling each other the horror stories from last year's race. Later in the evening **Cpl Craig Langley** decided we should walk the course to pass the time.

At this point please take note of Mistake 2 "Walking the Course". Mistake 1 had been the thought that 2008 was going to run as smoothly as 2007. After numerous swear words, one or two blisters, many terrifying drops offs, one log to duck under, a never ending stretch of sand, and a few comments from **Sgt Mark Belcher** resembling "I ride a sports bike on flat tarmac what am I supposed to do here?!?!?!" and over 9km under our belt, we realised we had our work cut out for the next day.

Our fearless **Cpl Paul Messett** rolled up to the Le-Mans style starting line and was off like a motorcycle courier in London rush-hour. Over 30 mins later he returned and after a 2 min blow by blow account of the course, the real fear set in. We all plodded on managing a lap per rider and boy was it hard work. Later in the afternoon we moved onto the obstacle course. This consisted of a short forest track with various boulders in it, which the team were told to push a broken bike around as quickly as possible. It was hard but thanks to the weight lifting abilities of our team giant **Sgt Mark Belcher**, we managed to come 3rd in the test, only beaten by the two Dutch teams composed of what seemed to be pure blood line descendants of Odin.

The race continued to break us mentally, slowly, until one of our riders decided he needed to sleep more than the other riders and pull himself out, due to a past injury. Then the rain started. After a few more laps the team thought it best to retire half way through the wet muddy night and settle down for a couple of hours. Upon wakening the team was greeted with a sight to make any novice cross country rider fear for his life. Instead of a pit lane there was a river and instead of a course there was a swamp. Now down to 3 riders, the boys pushed on until **Sgt Mark Belcher** had enough and was mumbling "I'm sticking to riding on tarmac". It was down to 2 riders, after a few more laps and a number of crashes and not many more laps the race was over and the team was shattered.

Feeling guilty about sleeping all night and not competing on Sunday, our resident slacker **Sig Matt Cope** thought he ought to do as much as he could to help the packing-up. While manoeuvring the bike on the back of the van, he decided he wanted to go down in history as the first man to use a transit van, as a can opener, on his head. Copious amounts of blood were lost and many photos were taken. After 24 hrs of serious riding, this was the only injury we sustained – we didn't do too badly.

At the end of the day 204 miles were clocked up, we looked around at the tired, dirty and unshaven faces of the riders and support crew and said was it worth it? Yes it was. The most important thing however, was the fact that we managed to raise money for 3 separate charities. We raised £750 for Childline, £400 for ABF, and a whopping £1400 for 'Help for Heroes' and all we have to do now is get ready for 2009's event.

68 (INNS OF COURT & CITY YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	**Maj J Evans**
SSM	**WO2 S Healey**

TA100 PAGEANT – 21 JUNE 2008 - *by Cpl Steven Warren*

I was fortunate enough to be selected to ride as a cavalry detachment in the TA100 Pageant at Horse Guards Parade. This involved several early morning practices at the Household Cavalry's HQ in Knightsbridge. We were taken through ride formations and sword drill in preparation for our re-enactment as the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry at the battle of Fishguard. Interestingly enough the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry are the only unit to have battle honours on British soil. After 2 weeks of practice, we had to ride in a dress rehearsal. This was the first time we had taken the horses out of the riding school and into a parade with loud gunfire and crowd noise. We rode our horses from Knightsbridge to Horse Guards Parade and riding down The Mall in rush hour is one of the greatest moments I have experienced. The traffic drew to a halt and everyone with a camera rushed to the roadside to get a picture. This moment of glory was soon passed when we ran through the rehearsal and the horses bolted at every noise and flash – it didn't leave me in great confidence for the parade.

The day of the parade had arrived and I felt a little nervous to say the least. We had one last rehearsal before the parade and it didn't go well at all, the horses and riders were nervous and it showed again as the horses kicked and bolted. There were now some serious concerns about the parade. We took the horses into the Horse Guards Stables to calm down while we got dressed into out 17th Century cavalry uniforms. These looked amazing and were a much needed morale boost.

The time had finally come for our part in the parade and we decided just to go out and give it our all. The horses must have realised they were on TV because they behaved impeccably and the show went without a hitch. This left us all feeling extremely proud with an enormous sense of achievement as we rode back down The Mall, past Buckingham Palace being photographed by every member of the public. What a day it had been and what a result for all the hard work.

TA100 UNIFORM TO WORK DAY AND DOWNING ST RECEPTION ON 16 JULY 2008 - *by Cpl Steven Warren*

After the TA 100 Pageant and the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, I thought I had seen the last of the ceremonies, but I was surprised to see an invitation to 10 Downing St fall through my letterbox. I had previously agreed to wear my uniform to work for the TA 100 'uniform to work day' after my line manager had stated he'd pay to see me in my green kit.

The invitation was for afternoon tea at Downing St with the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence in recognition of the TA and its employer's efforts. We would be attending after spending the day in the office with me dressed in Combat 95. I had also arranged to be sponsored for wearing my uniform for the day, with all proceeds going to 'Help for Heroes'.

I made sure I got into the office early that day, firstly to ensure that I got maximum exposure for the sponsored day and also to minimise the funny looks I would get on the tube. My colleagues were quick to throw in the jibes but I could tell there was an amount of respect for me doing it. This was then confirmed as I walked through the building a bit later to collect any spare change from them and people were eager to shake my hand or have their photo taken with me.

I managed to collect £643.68 in total, just for wearing my uniform to work. I didn't realise I worked with such a supportive and generous group of people. The time soon came for me to finish up for the day and take my employer to the reception at 10 Downing St. I had my day sack full of the change I had collected earlier and it weighed a ton, I wondered what the security would say as I went through the scanners at Downing St and thought I'd just tell them I had just did a bank job, but when I got there the truth seemed much more appropriate.

On arrival to the famous black door of Number 10, we handed in our invites and were directed upstairs to the state rooms. On entering, we were presented with canapés and were greeted by the organisers. I was asked why I had my day sack on and I explained that I had been sponsored for the day. The news went down a treat and I soon found myself in favour with all the senior officers in attendance.

I was told that I would be in the group who had been selected to talk to the Secretary of State for Defence. After half an hour of exchanging stories with the other guests the Secretary of State arrived. He approached our group and asked us what we did for a living and then told us a few stories on his experience as Secretary of Defence. He then gave a speech about the TA and thanked us for our support and commitment.

It was about an hour after that when the Prime Minister joined the reception. He too gave a speech thanking the TA and its employers. After this he did the rounds amongst the troops asking us again what we did in Civvy Street and the TA. I was fortunate enough to be approached by **Mr Brown** and asked a few questions which I answered gladly.

He wasn't around for too much longer after that and that's when I decided to leave. There was one last opportunity to have photos taken by the door to Number 10 and then I headed home with a day sack full of change and a carriage full of funny looks.

EXERCISE DEEPWATER DEVIL 18 – 25 JULY 2008
- by Cpl Steven Warren

I took part in an adventure training expedition, scuba diving in the Red Sea alongside the Officer Training Corps from London and the East Midlands. This was the first time I had ever done anything like this and was looking forward to learning to dive. The first day consisted very much of getting to know the others on the trip. We all rendezvoused at the ULOTC HQ in Handel St to be issued our dive kit and sign on. Once all the stores had been issued we all headed up to the bar for a few drinks and something to eat while introducing ourselves. All of the attendees seemed like a decent bunch and I hit it off straight away with a lot of them.

The second day mainly consisted of the flight out and some shenanigans at the airport where people had packed too much and were now having to offload their kit onto other people to avoid paying excess weight charges. Once these issues were resolved it was almost time to board the flight. A quick trip through duty-free and we were getting onto the plane. We landed in Hurghada, Egypt at 1400hrs and the heat was noticeable straight away. We were taken by coach to the live-aboard yacht we would be staying on. I was very impressed and after a couple of hours of safety briefings, we were taken to our cabins to unpack and then headed up to the main deck to relax.

The third day would be our first day of diving. We were all up early for breakfast and then onto our check dives. This was to make sure all of our equipment was serviceable and that we had the right amount of weight on to keep us neutrally buoyant. Once this was achieved we conducted some safety drills under the water before surfacing to be debriefed.

A couple of hours later we were heading back into the water for another dive. This time we would be able to spend more time looking at the sea life and getting a feel for diving. I found the experience an enthralling one and couldn't believe the amount of life and the vitality of the coral. I was starting to see the attraction with this diving malarkey. The next few days were filled up with a series of dives around coral reefs, examining sea life and conducting safety drills to get us signed off on our ocean diver qualification. Once we had qualified we were permitted to participate in some wreck dives. These were fascinating, especially after the *RMS Thistlegorm*, which was a merchant navy ship carrying supplies to North Africa during the second world war, that was sunk by German bombers. You could still see the cargo of motorbikes, lorries and Lee Enfield .303 rifles in the ships main hold.

Our last dive was very much the most fun of the trip, we were allowed to go in and do our own thing with the instructors keeping a watchful eye from a distance. We all posed for photos and there was a spot of ballroom dancing on the sea bed. Once we had finished our frolicking about we had just enough air to do one circuit of the reef and then head back up to the boat. It felt a bit sad to know I had done my last dive of the trip, but reflecting back I had had an excellent time. I will certainly be doing it again next year.

70 (ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Julian Picton**
SSM **WO2 Richard Pieper**

After a busy first 6 months of the year, the tempo has not decreased much with Sqn and Regt exs. August saw 3 members of the Essex deploy on Ex MIDNIGHT SUN, these were **Capt Kirk Humphries**, **Sgt Richard Marsh** and **Cpl Ross Nugent**, no doubt there will be more in *The Wire* about these adventures. As a brief outline all deployed to Greenland on the first phase of the ex.

Sgt Marsh and **Cpl Nugent** took part in the mountaineering phase and had an excellent time whilst deployed in Greenland. **Capt Humphries** assisted the BT ERT with the maintenance and operation of the comms network in the fjord and back to the UK. The time in Greenland went very quickly and sadly all too soon we had to return to the UK.

LCpl Ross Nugent, Cpl Val O'Regan and Sgt Richie Marsh proving that they did go to Greenland

Camp 2008 saw the Sqn rising for early morning PT on the western tip of Wales along with the rest of the Regt, to be greeted by a spandex clad **WO2 Aidi Keeble** leading aerobics to hits from the 80s, broadcast by PA troop!

A week of adventurous training and range work then followed and during the regimental sports competition our new PSI Tech, **Sgt Denis Long** managed to break his leg while playing 5-a-side football!

The Bde FTX took place on the second week of camp where the Essex Yeomanry found itself in support of Op PRANZO, a Bde led odyssey that over the next 8 days was to carry both Sqn and Regt assets across the length and breadth of the country. Our furthest deployment was to Otterburn in search of the RA who were enjoying a very pleasant fully tactical ex. Naturally when **LCpl Honychurch** arrived with his det in the pitch black of night, headlights blaring and not a drop of camouflage or weapon in sight, there was a moment of confusion.

As soon as the Gunners realised they hadn't been rumbled by the enemy, the det was placed in a covert location a good 1km away and was rapidly open for business conducting interoperability trials with a Lanward det from 31 Sig Regt.

Whilst the dets were out enjoying the fresh air, RCP71 was based in Cardiff TAC. The Essex Yeomanry ops staff had the privilege of being on the night shift with exclusive access to the sharepoint intranet blog site. All in all camp proved an excellent opportunity to get the kit out into the field for a prolonged period and for all to brush up on their skills!

We say goodbye to our PSI Tech, **Sgt Steve Slaughter** on his recent posting from the Sqn and welcome in his place **Sgt Denis Long**. We wish him all the best for his time with us. Congratulations to **Capt Jim Swain** on his success at LECB and his recent commissioning and to **Sgt Ian Braizer**, **LCpls Will Day** and **Vennesa Way** on their promotion – all are deserved.

Sadly we have to say goodbye to **WO2(SSM) David 'Sam' Liddle** who has decided to leave the Sqn. We wish him all the best and thank him for his time. Stepping forward for a second tour, **SSgt Richard Kim Pieper** has been appointed as SSM, a task which will no doubt be conducted with his normal gusto.

265 (KENT and CITY of LONDON YEOMANRY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj Simon Palmer TD**
SSM **WO2 Adrian Keeble**

August and September is always a busy time for TA units and this year was no exception. August saw the Regt deploy to Napier Barracks to conduct a 9 day trade camp with strong support from 265 (KCLY) Sp Sqn.

WO2 Mark Gittins, as the Regimental Yeoman lead the course and was ably assisted by **WO2 Ade Keeble**, **WO2 Cliff Springer**, **Sgt Jason Bontoft**, **Cpl Pete Alsop** and **LCpl Steve Williams** who made up the bulk of the instructional team.

Sigs Neil Connelly, **Phillipa Horton** and **Jonathan Moore** turned up as students along with 40 other potential Class 3 operators from the Bde. All 3 performed very well and will prove to be very valuable assets to the Sqn.

We also said goodbye to our outgoing PSI (T), **Sgt Dave McGuinness** and welcomed our new PSI (T), **Sgt Georgie Keogh**. We wish them both well in their new postings.

The Sqn met up at the end of August for its traditional Camp preparation weekend. Kit was checked, vehicles were cleaned and trucks were loaded before a BBQ organised by the SSM in the evening. **LCpl Jim Sutton** headed off the Army School of Physical Training in Aldershot and successfully completed the TA PTI Intermediate course. **Cpl Pete Alsop** headed off to Blandford in September and gained his Class 1 ICS Operator trade.

The Sqn deployed on Ex PHOENIX ENDEAVOUR, its 2 week annual camp, in September. The first week consisted of an adventure training and military training package while the second week saw the Sqn play its part on the Bde Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS. A full report will appear in the next issue of *The Wire*.

The end of September saw the Sqn deploy with Reebok on Op LONDON RESPONDER, providing comms support to the staff officers and the blue light services at Wellington Barracks in London. **Sgt Georgie Keogh**, **Sgt Ray Jopling**, **Cpl Steve Turner**, **Cpl Bob Myers**, **LCpl Carl Crane**, **Sig Phillipa Horton**, **Sig Neil Connelly** and **Sig Luke Tate** all provided invaluable support to this annual training ex.

NEWS FROM THE SQUADRONS

1 (ROYAL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON (SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS) MILTON KEYNES

OC **Maj S Clarke GM, QGM***
SSM **WO2(SSM) J Krikorian**

In typical fashion, the last 2 months have seen 1 Sig Sqn juggling a variety of responsibilities in parallel to continuing op commitments. The OC Sqn's ambition to see the Sqn enter the Lanyard Trophy for the first time was successfully (if haphazardly) crammed into the calendar, while unit training commitments have focused around the Sqn's 2 week Annual Camp.

In the background, this year's recruiting cycle has come to a successful end, with the fully loaded Special Communications Course ready to start with 28 candidates. Which of course means that the recruiting cycle is about to start again, so we look forward to visiting each of your units in the coming months…

LANYARD TROPHY 2008 - *by Cpl C Reid*

The arrival of the British summer is a much anticipated event which famously signals 2 unavoidable truths:

The first is Summer equals rain
The second is that the Lanyard Trophy will soon be upon us

So during June, 1 Sqn began their preparation to enter this prestigious Corps event. Having only a small pool of available personnel, the Sqn has usually been unable to enter a team, but **SSgt Spud Fawcett** was determined that 2008 would be different. Ably assisted by **LCpl Sean O'Connor** as team trainer, several arduous training sessions in the Yorkshire Dales and Brecon Beacons were organised and eagerly attended by the nucleus of what would be the team.

Such is the nature of 1 Sqn that the first time the whole team really came together was on the day of the competition, with **Lt Ash Jeyes** and **Sgt Dave Whitfield** manfully stepping in at the last moment. But despite the disruptions, when we stood on the start line in the early light of 11 September, we were raring to make our start up the slopes of Sugarloaf. For once the traditional downpour and gales were absent for the event, and we made good progress through the morning, navigating the hills and ridges of the Black Mountains with confidence.

A positive attitude, coupled with fast checkpoint turnarounds, kept up our momentum, and we continued to push hard on the heels of the teams ahead. Alas **Cpl Hedley Midgley** found that 3 weeks of Italian food and wine is not the ideal preparation for Lanyard and despite giving his all, he was unable to go past the 25 mile point.

The remaining 9 members went on to complete the long homeward drag along the final ridge, and dropped into Cwrt-y-Gollen Camp in a time of 12 hrs 47 mins. Our performance placed us 4th in the Regular Male competition, with the winning teams squeezing ahead of us by 3 hrs.

Thanks go to **SSgt Fawcett** for all his hard work training and organisation which reaped dividends; producing a close-knit team from all areas of the Sqn and ensured that we performed to our potential on the day. With the first attempt behind us, we look forward with enthusiasm to what the 2009 competition will bring.

EXERCISE RUNNING LYNX - *by LCpl Larman*

Ex RUNNING LYNX was a combined survival and escape and evasion ex organised by the Sqn 2IC, **Capt Mo Fisher** and was held in the Argyle forest area of the west coast of Scotland as the second half of our Annual Camp. For the centrepiece of our training year, there had been a lot of build up to this phase, including helpful hints from Regular Tp SNCO, **SSgt Whitfield** and some not so helpful texts like, 'The weather here is awful' from **SSM Krikorian** in the advance party. And eventually there we were, by the side of the road, in the middle of nowhere.

Even the camp was so inaccessible that the coach could not reach it – not a good omen! After much trudging we arrived at Strone Camp, although 'Camp' in this case meant – a semi disused collection of buildings previously used for some other industrial purpose. In this case it had been mining but there were at least comfy bunks and hot water, not that we got to use either.

The initial brief was: "Bring this selection of items, which you will need for the teaching phase". What we were not told was that the classroom where this teaching was happening was made of logs and more importantly, located elsewhere. First off was a night navex to get us in the mood. Eventually, after some more trudging, squelching and occasional swearing we arrived at the 'Bothy Hilton'. A group of small wooden tent shaped huts with central heating provided by the 7 people sharing it with you. The stay was enhanced for me by being in between one person who slept like a foetus and another who slept in the shape of a swastika.

We moved on to 'Survival Wood' where we learned about making shelters, followed by making fire and trapping our own food. Then it was on to a 'Preparation of Dead Animals' lecture given by a crazy Scotsman whose Land Rover interior looked like the props department for a Stephen King movie. Highlights of this lecture included how to disembowel a woodpigeon by chopping off the head and sticking two fingers down the neck into the chest cavity to eject the contents… lovely! Over the days we spent in the wood, a strong bond of comradeship developed and a black-market almost entirely kept alive by **Sgt Dine**.

After a demonstration of 'What these dogs will do if they find you' from the MOD police, we briefly returned to camp. While there we got jumped mid map lessons by gun toting Gurkhas, trussed up, blindfolded and stuck in transport. Blindfolds off and we were back in the wilderness again. All we had to do was avoid the dogs, helicopters, enemy patrols and make several RVs which promised information and as we eventually discovered, raw vegetables.

Some evaded, some didn't. **Sgt Stu Welton** spent some considerable time searching for the balloon with a Cylume attached to it that had become tied to him and enabled the search parties to find him no matter where he was.

LCpl O'Connor reminded everyone else, as if it was needed, that he is the ultimate warrior by walking not only himself but also his entire team right down the centre of the most direct route between RVs and not getting caught. He was quoted as saying, "Tactical movement… for losers that."

Ex Running Lynx – Sgt Stu Welton leads his team of LCpl Thompson, LCpl Gray and Cpl Hayles in a bid to escape

The chaos of the next couple of days included a rumoured suicide bid by **FofS Gray** who in moment of madness thought he would route test a sheer 20ft drop. Meanwhile **Sig Edwards** took it upon himself, without consideration of his own personal safety, to ensure that the epic story of the rest of his team's capture made it to the outside world by running in the opposite direction at the first sign of an enemy patrol. His disappearance caused the DS (especially **Capt Fisher**) a virtual coronary until he turned up at the next RV and joined another team.

Cpl Folan's team had no problem evading, mainly due to his technique of simply striking out across country for 5km at 90 degrees to the RV direction and finding a parallel path. Then he swept in from the other side of the RV. "They will never think of that" – and they didn't. He was ably assisted by **Sig Fisher** who had packed everything in his 'admin Tardis', so called because there was no way the piles of stuff that invariably appeared around him could possible have fitted into that small day sack.

The final RV was a small cottage by the beach where we all met up – we had maintained a watch for the previous 3 hrs and so were fairly convinced it was not a trap. After a full English breakfast, a long shower and a buddy buddy tick check, we rounded off the ex with a BBQ and a trip to Glasgow for R&R. Roll on next year!

EXERCISE CIRRUS LYNX 10 – 12 OCTOBER 08
- by Cpl Colin Teo

Military training this coming weekend and according to the Tp office it was going to be 'Drips'. Normally that conjures up images of wet bashas on STANTA and the obligatory dawn attack. The old 'n bold have done it so often they could do it in their sleep and it is even rumoured some do. But, this was different. Drips, or rather DRIPS is an acronym for Demanding, Realistic, Interesting, Progressive and Safe, which is what the weekend turned out to be. The TA component of 1 Sig Sqn travelled to Hythe ranges for their military skills weekend. Arriving on Friday night at St Martin's Plain, we moved on to Hythe ranges on Saturday morning where under the tutelage of our DS Regulars **SSgt Spud Fawcett** and **Sgt Stu Welton**, we familiarised ourselves with the HK weapons system – namely the MP5K (a 9mm SMG), HK53 (a 5.56 SMG) and the Sig Sauer P229 9mm pistol. Grins appeared and widened in the warm weather as the fig 11s disintegrated and the pools of spent brass grew. This was interesting! Eventually time and lack of ammunition brought this stage to an end, but in fact the best was yet to come.

The afternoon was spent on the CQB range. Imagine a range set up as a village, complete with streets, buildings, manikins that talk and the odd terrorist thrown in. You could be tasked to go out and patrol to anywhere in the village to talk to an individual to discuss a problem or pick up information. The scenarios were infinitely variable according to the wishes of the DS. The normal habit of aggressively getting to grips with the enemy when it all kicked off was not an option here. This was about being able to return accurate fire in the first few seconds of the contact and extracting your patrol under cover, back to the safe house. It's about drills 'n skills, teamwork, the ability to think quickly, making a decision and implementing it.

We each had 2 runs, first as part of a pair and then as part of a sect. Due to the odd numbers, **Cpl Bennett** swindled 3 goes and came out grinning every time. To keep us on our toes there were plenty of blanks, smoke and training grenades, resulting in lots of shouting and adrenalin – all damn good stuff under the direction of **SSM Krikorian** and the DS who were sure to follow up each time with a constructive debrief. It was indeed demanding, realistic, interesting (we'd never done this before), progressive and safe. As usual, the only downside was cleaning the weapons afterwards!

Sunday morning was much more chilled – a clay pigeon shoot. This was pure fun and it soon became apparent that some blokes like **LCpl Larman** are nifty with a shotgun and merely needed a wax jacket and black Labrador to complete the transformation to country gentleman. Many thanks are due to **Cpl Bennett** and **LCpl Gray** for driving the vans taking everyone and their kit to and from the weekend as well as to the DS for all the planning and the preparation that went into the weekend. Getting us a rare opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the HKs was no mean feat, as was running the CQB range. Yep, definitely a DRIPS weekend.

1 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (215) TIDWORTH

OC **Maj RDW Rumsey**
RSM **WO1(RSM) SM Watts**

INTER-TROOP MERCURY CUP HOCKEY - *by Sgt Murcott*

During a break in the summer rain, the 4 Tps of 215 Sig Sqn took to the Tidworth Astroturf pitch armed with hockey sticks, (some were even held up the right way!) ready for the fifth event in the annual Mercury Cup Sports competition.

The opening match saw Sabre Tp beat Bengal Tp 2 – 0 thanks to 2 goals from **Sig Jack Rickard**. Despite the spirited efforts of **Cpl 'JC' Campbell**, the misery continued for Bengal Tp as they lost the next match 4 – 0 to SHQ.

SHQ took early control of the match thanks to 2 first half goals from **SSgt Chris Deal** who narrowly missed out on a hat trick. With high spirits, SHQ then faced Support Tp and again convincingly won 4 – 0, this time the main goal scorer was **Cpl 'Shrek' Greenwood.** Typically the summer rain returned but thankfully only for the duration of the match between Support Tp and Sabre Tp. While the huge crowds huddled under the solitary 12x12, **Sig Rickard** again found the back of the net to get the winner for Sabre Tp.

The following match saw the title decider take place between Sabre Tp and SHQ Tp. Unsurprisingly this was a tight affair, even with the expert football skills of **SSgt 'Fozzy' Foster**. The match was decided late on, thanks to **Cpl Greenwood** securing the win for SHQ.

Last but not least Bengal Tp and Support Tp played the final match of the day with both teams looking to score a goal after drawing blanks all day. Plenty of goal mouth action was seen at both ends but good goalkeeping in particular by **LCpl 'Robbo' Robertson** ensured that a no score draw was the final result.

The RSM demonstrates his lunges

LANYARD TROPHY - *by LCpl Catson REME*

A select team from the 215 Sig Sqn departed sunny Tidworth on Wednesday 10 September – destination The Black Mountains, Wales. The aim was to complete the 40 mile leisurely stroll better known as the Lanyard Trophy. Heading up to the first Checkpoint (CP) with 11 carrying the mandatory 40lb plus water, it was soon far from leisurely!

We were led by **Capt Henry Bowden** YORKS who volunteered to lead the Sqn team at lastminute. dot.com due to **Lt Neil Taylor** who was due to lead the team inconveniently breaking a bone in his foot; nice timing! The remainder of the team were **Sgt 'Ridders' Ridley** as 2IC, **Cpl 'Shrek' Greenwood, LCpls 'Bushy' Bush, 'Leroy' Thewlis, 'YamYam' Catson, 'Jibber Jabba' Hutt,** and **Sigs 'Nightnav' Timoney, 'Goppin' Graham** and **'Jack' Arbon.**

At our given start time of 0625hrs we were in the blocks at the start line ready to smash out 40 miles in good spirit. This was the plan but at the 2 mile point morale had diminished slightly, making the prospect of completing another 38 miles seem optimistic.

The only one left smiling at this stage was **LCpl Bush** who, still full of enthusiasm and determined to do well wanted to pick up the pace! On the descent from CP 1, despite his previous pedigree on Lanyard, Tough Guy and Cambrian Patrol, we lost **Cpl Greenwood** through injury.

The team ploughed on and a sterling effort was made by **Sig Graham** to keep going despite carrying a boot full of blood. It was immediately after the slippery descent from the ridgeline to the admin point at Capel Y Fin that an ear splitting crack was heard as **Capt Bowden** went over on his ankle. Fortunately, due to **Capt Bowden's** infantry grit he insisted on going on. However, 2 CPs later and with a grimace any gurner would be proud of he reluctantly agreed to retire through injury.

There were a few highlights throughout the emotional journey, **LCpl Bush** couldn't stay on his feet as he was wearing his 'slipper-boots' with absolutely no tread which cheered everyone up. At this stage it was dark and visibility was dire with the clag well and truly in. The team needn't have worried - it was the turn of **Sig Timoney** to step up to the plate after claiming to be much better at map reading at night than in the day. A man of his word the carrot munching Scotsman managed to locate even the most hidden of tracks.

Having completed the course as a team, it was discovered on weighing in that I was carrying my own bodyweight since I only weigh 50lb wet through – selection next year I think! Another mention for **Lt Taylor** whose admin team consisting of **LCpl 'Dodders' Dodman** and **Sig 'Max' Maxwell** were ever present providing excellent support to us. I am sure the Sqn will be back post tour in 2010 once again competing with the best the Corps has to offer. There may be a few new faces by then though.

The Sqn forms up for a photo

WHITE HELMETS VISIT - *by Cpl Butler*

On 17 September, the Sqn was paid a visit by the famous Royal Signals White Helmets display team. The Sqn split down into 2 groups: those with riding 'experience' who got to ride the Triumph display bikes and the rest who worked their way around a number of activities. This involved trying some of the stunts performed by the team which led to **LCpl Phil Pacey** in some funny positions. Meanwhile others were being used for stunt practice by laying on the ground holding a jump board while the team rode over them.

At this point **WO1(RSM) Watts** arrived with his scooter which appeared to have more wing mirrors than horse power! We then formed a pyramid of people with the bikes on the base for a Sqn photograph which was only held for a short time before feet started slipping from people's shoulders. Apologies to the riders whose shoulders and sides must be in some pain after the amount of grip people applied whilst manoeuvring around the bikes! Many thanks to the team for all their time and enthusiasm on the day, which got a couple of the Sqn thinking about applying for selection.

LCpl Pacey looking uncomfortable

BRIGADE COMMANDER'S ATHLETICS DAY - *by Cpl Davidson*

With the OC promising "sport, sport and more sport" which is always good news to the ear of a PTI, we had the pleasure of entering The 1 Mech Bde Comd's athletics day. As with any large event within the Bde, we were tasked with the main body of the setup which was undertaken on 2 very wet and miserable days before the event.

Furniture from the WOs & SNCOs Mess for the VIP Tent and rain never really mix but with some hard work and determination, the Sqn got the Tidworth Oval athletics track ready for the big day.

As is the norm due to various commitments, we had limited number of athletes but we still managed to get a good team together with help from **Cpl Lindsay Deal** and **LCpl Leanne Knott** for putting together the Women's team and myself getting together the Men's team. The weather held out for the day which enabled both the band of The Prince of Wales Division and a "will they ever jump" parachute display from The Netheravon Parachute Display Team.

The Sqn won the Minor Units Cup with relative ease and even managed to place in a very good position within the Major Units in the overall competition. The Tug-of-War team were outstanding and managed to pull themselves to 1st place, beating off stiff competition from all the Inf Bns and 22 Eng Regt, with the encouragement and coaching of **SSgt Matt Steven-Fountain**.

Overall the day was a big success for the Sqn, proving our might against some of the bigger units. The success did not stop with the athletics. **Cpl 'Evo' Boothby** successfully ran silver service, keeping the VIPs fed and watered with his team of bow tie wearing waiters.

The minor units trophy is now waiting to be engraved and hopefully will not have to move much over the coming years, as I don't think we could live with getting beaten by the RMPs; its good to know we can all outrun them!

ROYAL SIGNALS INTER UNIT INDOOR/OUTDOOR SEVENS HOCKEY WINNERS - *by Cpl Barnstaple*

An early start for the team consisting of **Capt Jon Richards** RIFLES, **WO1(RSM) Watts**, **SSgt(YofS) Wooton**, **Sgt Murcott**, **Cpls Barnstaple**, **Campbell**, **Washer**, **LCpls Stewart** and **Tyler** as well as **Sigs Rickard** and **Lillie** who departed with plenty of time for the journey to Aldershot. The first game was going to be the first time the team had played together and there was some stiff competition in our pool.

A draw with 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt and 2 Sig Regt led to the team rethinking our formation. This obviously worked as we then beat 35 Sig Regt, 4 – 1 and qualified on goal difference for the semi-final where we beat 14 Sig Regt 2 – 1. The team was now through to the final and was against the favourites 11 Sig Regt. This was the hardest game of the 2 days with a 1 – 1 result at full time. **LCpl 'Tim' Tyler** managed a penalty flick conversion to win on the golden goal 2 – 1 to see the Sqn win the overall Major and Minor Units outdoors 7s tournament.

The following day with stiff limbs the team got up to do it all again. This time the team was in Pool A and despite losing one game against 2 Sig Regt, managed to finish top of the pool; it was a good start to the day. The semi-final was against 11 Sig Regt and although we had beaten them in the final the day before, we knew they would play their best to try and beat us. But the team pulled together to beat them 5 – 2. This meant that we were in the finals against 2 Sig Regt who had beaten us earlier in the day.

It was a close game and even after extra time the result was 2 – 2. With flash backs to the day before, it was time for penalty flicks. After some hair-raising moments we won 5 – 4 on penalty flicks to win the overall Major and Minor Units indoor tournament. The whole team did extremely well with **Sgt Marcus Murcott**, **LCpl Tim Tyler** and **Sig Lillie** being selected for the Corps Team.

Corps Indoor and Outdoor 7s Hockey Champions 2008

LCPL COLLING REUNITED WITH 215 SIGNAL SQUADRON AFTER OP TELIC 10.

Monday morning at 0830hrs, with a sip of hot brew, I looked around the small confines of the Bengal Tp MT office in which I now worked and wondered, how did I end up here?

Only 5 years earlier, after another unfulfilling day of work, I decided to join the TA to try something new not knowing where it would lead. I was attested and joined 36 Sig Regt deciding to trade as an electrician and later re-traded to become an operator.

My success in the TA was a stark contrast to my life as a baker, money was short and job satisfaction even less. I decided that something drastic needed to be done to give me a clean break and chose to volunteer to mobilise for Op TELIC 10.

I found out that I would be joining 215 Sig Sqn in Tidworth for the tour. I was somewhat nervous at starting my new job as I had heard the stories of how TA soldiers are treated as second class citizens by their Regular counterparts but in my case I found the complete opposite. We were welcomed into the Tp and mucked in where we could, despite our obvious lack of experience with the kit. It was soon time to leave the UK for warmer climates and I quickly settled into a routine.

Generally if we weren't working, it was either because we were asleep or under Indirect Fire (IDF) attack. I surprised myself at how well I coped what with the IDF becoming more of a nuisance than a threat, the constant heat and disrupted sleeping pattern, which at the end of the day it beat baking to me by a long shot!

While on tour I was asked if I would be interested in transferring from the TA into the Regular Army. Without too much consideration, I decided to take the opportunity, after all I had enjoyed the TA so why not make a real career out of it. The even better news was that I'd be able to carry my rank across, which made the deal all the sweeter!

I attended my Class Three Comms Systems Operators course at Blandford to iron out any gaps in trade training and bring me up to standard. Half way through the course I submitted a posting preference to go back to 215 Sig Sqn but was instead initially posted to a different unit. It wasn't until a few weeks later that I discovered the OC 215 had managed to successfully change my posting; I would be going back. It was news that came with great relief as I had hoped to get back with lads that I started my journey with. I have now come full circle.

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

OC **Maj B Williams**
SSM **WO2 W Smith**

LAIRIG GHRU MILITARY CHALLENGE JUNE 2008
- by O/Cdt Maggie Kelly

Ex LAIRIG GHRU is an arduous military challenge open to all units, Regular and Reserve open to all 3 Services. This year's event was the very first and will be a permanent fixture in the unit calendar in the future. The challenge was conducted on 14 June and included 4 teams; 2 teams from RAF Lossiemouth, 1 team from RAF Leuchars and 1 team from 2 Sig Sqn.

The Lairig Ghru is possibly the best known high level pass in Scotland and has a long history as a key cattle droving route between Speyside and Deeside. The steep-sided pass cuts from North to South through the Cairngorm Plateau and provides a spectacular route with 4000ft peaks towering above on both sides.

Unfortunately, my most recent walk along this stunning route did not allow me to appreciate and digest the fantastic scenery, as I was taking part in a timed event. The event was The Lairig Ghru Challenge: a competition conceived by our OC, **Maj Williams**. When he was posted to us, he was keen to inject more diverse training into the Sqn and came up with the idea of the Challenge to promote team spirit and fitness into the Sqn's members.

The rules of the race were simple: Get from the Start Point at the Linn of Dee car-park to the Finish Line at Rothiemurchus Lodge as quickly as possible under CFT conditions.

Teams comprised 8 members and our team was made up of a rag-tag group of sub-athletes, who had been thrown together over the course of a few months: Team Captain was **SSgt George Cowan** with **SSgt Malcolm Forbes**, **Sgt 'Ginge" McLean**, **LCpl Mark Melnyk**, **LCpl Mark Batchelor**, **LCpl Davy Carmichael**, **Sig Chris Grieve** and yours truly **O/Cdt Maggie Kelly**. To my recollection, no 2 training session had ever produced the same contenders for the final 8 out of 15 hopefuls!

Even after a couple of practice runs, I was still fairly nervous and on the day as we rolled up to the Start Point in our minibus, all eyes were fixed on our competitors as we tried to determine what kind of a threat they posed. Lossiemouth had an A and a B team, both all male. Team A was made up of folk slightly over 30 and Team B appeared to be a bit younger. The Leuchers team was a 50/50 split of men and women. The team structure for our final 8 was 7 men and a hobbit. We were the last team to cross the start line and we watched the others set off at 15 min intervals.

The route itself was 15.7 miles in length and the first 4 miles was plain sailing along a flat track. Our competition strategy was simply to complete the first stage to Checkpoint 1 at Derry Lodge as quickly as possible, as it was the only terrain that we would be able to build up a bit of pace on and then make the best pace possible for the rest of the race. When we got to Derry Lodge we asked the DS staff how far ahead the previous team were and were fairly disappointed to learn that they were 20 mins in front of us.

The biggest challenge was the river crossing that we had opted to take at Luibeg Burn. By crossing the river where we did, we avoided a long trek over a bridge further up the track. It had started to rain at this point and jumping across wet boulders is not a good idea at the best of times without adding the extra weight of a bergen to balance into the equation. At 5ft 4ins, there was no denying that my stride was the shortest of the team. After taking a deep breath I took a flying lunge and didn't stop until I had reached the other side. It was a bit of a gamble, but it did save us some time. Immediately after the river crossing, the track climbed steeply for a couple of hundred meters before levelling out. With the best will in the world, I couldn't complete this section any faster if I'd tried.

Carrying almost a third of my bodyweight uphill, I'm afraid gravity got the upper hand. Once the track started to level out though, I was off like a shot and leading the way when I spotted one of the other teams in the distance. We increased the pace a bit and passed Lossiemouth's Team A quite comfortably before having to stop to put on an extra layer of clothing. The weather had quickly closed in on us and we were forced to get our Gortex jackets out.

My hands were numb and I found it almost impossible to undo my buckle clips. Several fumbles later I was ready to carry on. The jacket was not going to keep me dry – it was far too late for that and I started to wonder why I had ever been so concerned about falling in Luibeg Burn. The condition of the track was not improved in any way by the weather and as we started to round the corner into the main valley, the rain seemed to come down harder than ever. Shortly after we passed Corour Bothy, we caught sight of another team in the distance.

By our own estimations we were making good time, but couldn't believe that another team was now in our sights. When we caught up with them, we saw it was the Leuchers team who had left first. We had been so focused on catching up with them that we hadn't noticed the Lossiemouth B team was only 500m up ahead. We really pulled out the stops and passed them just as the track started to rise up leading to the pools of Dee: the second Checkpoint.

As we started to climb I could feel my legs beginning to complain a bit but knew to expect this due to the preparatory training runs we'd done before. We were just over 2½ hrs in now, and were aiming to hit the Pools of Dee around the 3 hour mark. The climb up to the Pools was tough – the track was covered with boulders and hail was hitting us in the face like needles. Who knew hail could be so painful?

Sgt McLean was suffering from severe cramps. He had gone through 6l of water the week before on the practice run and had drank too much water on the journey up to the competition. Unfortunately he had not factored into account that the conditions were completely different form the sun drenched previous week and had lost too much salt and sugar from his system due to frequent calls of nature and was now in a great deal of pain.

The most dangerous stretch of the race was yet to come – about 500m of boulder fields lay ahead of us. It's the shortest part of the course but the longest as well. Our plan of attack for crossing the boulder fields was just to get over them as best as possible and arrive at the Checkpoint 3 in one piece.

By now I couldn't feel my hands at all and my legs were numb with cold. Taking a look at the rest of the team, it was plain to see that the weather had started to get to us and we all wanted the same thing; to get off the hill as fast as possible.

It was important at this point to keep focused on the race and dig deep. We had to stop a few times to re-tie bootlaces and stretch off on this stage which was a bit of a vicious circle for me. I knew my core was still warm but at the same time knew that stopping so often was not helping my body temperature. If I was feeling like this, then there was a good chance the others were too.

Once we had cleared the boulder fields, we knew that was the worst part over and the edge of the Rothiemurchus Forrest would soon creep up on us. The final stretch to Rothiemurchus Lodge for me was made up of a mixture of impatience and excitement. We'd known we'd won the competition as soon as we'd passed all the other teams but we still pushed on as fast as we could.

Crossing the finish line 5 hrs and 23 mins after we had started, we were welcomed in with applause and more importantly hot soup. I must admit I've never been so pleased to see a Norwegian container. After a lot of hand shaking, photographs and a stretching session, the real reward came in the form of a hot shower for me. I'm sure this year's Lairig Ghru Challenge was just the beginning and next year will present an even greater challenge now that we have a time to beat.

In the right weather conditions, I would say this is one of the nicest walks in Scotland, but make no mistake – it's not a place you'd like to be when the weather takes a turn for the worst. This event will take place again in June 2009. Any unit that wishes to take up the challenge are more than welcome. Details will be advertised later this year.

The winners of the first Lairig Ghru Challenge

4 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (204) CATTERICK

OC **Maj PR Griffiths**
RSM **WO1(RSM) A Maylett**

204 Sig Sqn is now well and truly back up to full speed in their new Catterick Garrison home. The unit has received about half of its allotted vehicles and all the kit from Germany has been subjected to a thorough Board of Officers and will shortly be issued out to the Tps. Concurrently, an enormous amount of manpower has been sent away on courses in order to give us the qualifications we will need for BATUS 09 and a probable Afghanistan deployment in 2010.

On a positive note, the soldiers new Z type accommodation should be ready for occupation by the time of printing and this will be a well-deserved lifestyle improvement for all affected. Naturally, after an op deployment and unit move, there has been a considerable turnaround of personnel. We would like to say a heartfelt goodbye to all of those who have left the Sqn after a demanding yet successful year and also wish a warm welcome to the many new faces who have joined us.

WELCOME TO CATTERICK PARADE

No major British Army unit move would be complete without some shouting and marching up and down a square. Knowing this full well, Comd 4 Mech Bde therefore held a 'Welcome to Catterick' parade for GOC 1(UK) Armd Div on Friday 3 October 2008, which was hosted at 1 Bn The Scots Guards. The parade was preceded with several weeks of intense drill revision directed by the Bde RSM, **WO1(RSM) Andy Maylett**. Before long, spine chilling 'thwacks' rose above the din of the builders on Gaza Barracks, as Sigs' hands became accustomed to slamming against rifles.

Every spare moment was spent practising, ensuring that the Sqn would be well represented on the day. As the date crept closer it emerged that the parade would be in Blues and at this point the QM's department worked some special magic to miraculously produce the goods. This included procuring uniforms, dying epaulettes, sewing buttons etc etc. A late substitution saw some panic polishing and uniform hacking/glueing by **Capt James Osterloh** who had 2 day's notice to be on parade in No 1s.

The RSM's plan to show off the Sqn nearly went awry when the Officers, **Maj Paul Griffiths**, **Capt Pete Hatton** (QM), **Capt James Osterloh** and Bde HQ representative, **Capt Mark Bentley** (SO3 G2 ISTAR) eventually 'got on parade' to rehearse only 2 days before the event. **Capt Hatton's** Z for Zorro impressions immediately gave away his Late-Entry credentials, reinforced by his request to take the sword to Afghanistan in 2010. This, combined with the clanging sword scabbards and dangling knots soon drew the attention of the Scots Guards CSgt who used phrases like, "Sirs, please hold down the "!"&"! timing!". For a moment, we could have been standing in front of the Old College at Sandhurst.

Nonetheless, after marching up and down the square many, many times, we managed to create the impression of a well-rehearsed parade. The day itself went just about perfectly besides the fact that each unit decided to adopt its own step on the 'eye's right'. Not to be outdone, the RAF decided to be fashionably late and instead of buzzing the parade on the 'present arms', they arrived unexpectedly just as the GOC was about to begin his speech, nearly causing him to fall off the dais.

The Squadron on the Welcome to Catterick parade

These small amusing hiccups in no way detracted from what was a very smart and unique opportunity to display all the units of 4 Mech Bde in their new home. The GOC's speech congratulated the Bde for its performance and flexibility in Iraq. He also summed up the history of the Bde and acknowledged that it had been demanding to do both an op tour and a major move in the same year. The parade marked a moment in time, leaving behind Germany and starting a new era in Catterick Garrison. The Sqn's huge effort to look polished on parade had paid off and the day was a complete success. Our focus now turns to preparing our new vehicles for ex in the coming weeks and readying ourselves for 2009's busy forecast of events.

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

OC **Maj A Greenfield**
RSM **WO1(RSM) Greenwood**

SQUADRON OPS TEAM - *by WO2(FofS) Avery*

The Sqn Ops team welcomed the arrival of **Maj Greenfield**, **WO2(FofS) Avery** and **SSgt(YofS) Green,** who all conducted a rapid handover/takeover hitting the ground running while on tour. The team also welcomed **Lt Lett RN** as an augmentee from Fleet, who takes over as the Traffic Officer in the J6 cell in the Div HQ.

The rapid tempo of ops has ensured that the whole team has been busy. Although things have been quiet in Basra, the comms plan never remains calm. The usual attitude that comms run themselves and J6 are only looked upon when there is a problem with them, still runs true but the team still finds time for the usual sarcasm and humour.

The whole team is now involved in running and going on 'Op Massive' although the **YofS Brooker** believes this is achieved by eating Minstrels late at night – he is looking quite massive! The Ops Officer is continuing to graze on all sorts of dodgy looking powders throughout the day insisting that they will increase his fitness levels to **Geoff Cape** standards. Also Amazon have made a small fortune out of the Ops team as every member now has a shiny digital photo frame with pictures of friends and family rotating round.

The end of tour is slowly coming into sight and the team are busy planning for the return to Germany and the forthcoming training year as the calendar is rapidly getting filled with various exs. The tempo in Ops never slows.

SHQ - *by SSgt Bufton*

The last couple of months have been an extremely busy and challenging time for all those working in SHQ. A great number of infrastructure projects have been undertaken within Allenby Lines by both the Sappers and Sig Sqn which has seen the completion of a 5-a-side football pitch, a new guard room and a new car park. **WO1(RSM) Greenwood** assumed control of the new all ranks dining facility (DFAC 2) which has brought with it numerous control issues, standing at the entrance ensuring that the doors are closed and body armour is correctly stowed instead of being abandoned somewhere on the floor.

The Sqn has been taking on tasks from Bde which are stretching manpower, especially with the R&R plot still running. The 2IC, **Capt McNelis**, has finally found himself having to do some work in the absence of **SSgt 'Titch' Mackay** by taking charge of the Imprest and Service Funds accounts. **SSgt Bufton** has managed to escape his desk in order to take troops deploying to Safwan Hill to Normandy ranges to conduct practices on GPMG and UGL prior to their deployment as Force Protection.

Sig Walker, temporarily attached to the SQMS from the COB MT, has found the time to express his artistic side by painting 2 large Desert Rats on the blast walls guarding the entrance to Allenby Lines. **Cpl Kimberley** has been busy keeping COB support lifting tackle register up to date which has seen him putting in long hours travelling all the over the COB.

Cpl Vakacegu and **LCpl Mhango** have been masters of their own destiny in the absence of the FSA, ensuring the admin office is ticking over and keeping an eye on the troops' mail, parcels, cash and of most importantly troop movement to and fro from R&R. With the end of the R&R plot in sight, attention has been well and truly adjusted to preparing everything for the handover to 20 Bde and getting ready to return to Hohne.

EUPHRATES TROOP - *by LCpl Jones*

Now that most of the Tp has finished skiving on R&R, everyone is steadily getting back to normal, but it won't be for long. **Cpl Holdsworth**, **Cpl Latusek** and **Cpl Kennealy** are leaving us at the end of the month to go on their JCLM course in Blandford. It's a tough call, I don't personally know what I would prefer, here, or the nice cold Brecon Beacons in October. Treat yourselves boys! I would also like to wish **Sig Philitoga** and his wife all the best following the birth of their third child, all the best from all of us.

Various events have been taking place in the COB, here is a short explanation of just a few of them.

NSPCC CHARITY EVENT FRIDAY 15 AUGUST

To commemorate the battle of El Alamein, a few Sqn members took part in this charity event, which consisted of covering a massive 1800km – the distance from the battlefields of El Alamein to Basra, by running, rowing and cycling. Seven lucky members of the Sqn volunteered for this mammoth task, which took place in the foyer of the Div HQ.

Capt Mc Millan, **SSgt Smith**, **Sgt Tiplady**, **Cpl Wagacha**, **Cpl Holdsworth**, **LCpl Jones** and **LCpl Burns** completed the 90kms each person had to do within a 30 hr period. All together the entire event raised over $2500 for the NSPCC.

BINGO NIGHT SUNDAY ON 31 AUGUST

Once again the members of the Sqn are trying to keep up the Sunday tradition of a Bingo night. Only this time we didn't have the wives chatting away to keep us entertained. Instead what we had was a very excited **Cpl Dan Kennealy** and **Sig Mo Docherty**. **Dan** was the caller, and **Little Mo** was his 4ft side kick! **Dan** excelled as a bingo caller with such phrases as "Two Fat Seniors - 88" and "on its own - **Lt Wells** Medal No 1", which went down a storm!

We also had a couple of 'moments', when **Sig Clifford** couldn't quite grip the concept of Line and Full House but he still managed to win! The evenings winners consisted of **Lt Corns** (2 Sig Regt) who was skiving away from Kuwait for the week and **LCpl Grice** who took the last full house!

PIZZA AND DVD NIGHT ON TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

On one of the worst, windswept nights so far in the COB (gale force winds, sand storms and rain!), the females of the Sqn decided to have a 'girls night in'. **Cpl Collins** and once again **Sig Docherty** were the event organisers. The pizzas were ordered, one less thanks to the windy walk from Echos to the Bas Bar, and everyone gathered. Only one small problem – once again the females proved their technical prowess as they did not bring a DVD cable! But in true girly fashion, the girls did what they do best and had a good chin wag for a couple of hours!

All in all, a very enjoyable night away from the men of the Sqn!

TIGRIS TROOP - *by Cpl Garrett*

It seems like the RSOI in Kuwait was the last time that the Tp was altogether. Everyone has been scattered to the four winds and come in and out of the COB only to go on R&R. The job that all the guys are keen to do is to go out with the MITTs on the ground. **Sig Reedy Reed** and **Sig Papa** have been coming back with some tall stories, and naff tashes – the real boy's own adventure stuff.

Cpl Garrett clearing the Helipad

There have been some very amusing moments as well, mainly provided by **Sig Clifford**; while he was standing on the roof of an ISO adjusting an antenna, he stepped back to admire his work – and stepped off the ISO, luckily falling into a cam net, so no serious damage done to anything but his pride. And then, **Sig Clifford** (again) managing to get off the Merlin at the wrong place but luckily **LCpl 'Hooky' Rutherford** was there to inform him and after some frantic waving at the helicopter, it came down to pick him up again.

Meanwhile back in the COB, the Tp is working hard at the less glamorous but important jobs. Duties are always long and boring wherever you are, but **Sig Scotty Hunter**, has been doing his best to keep everyone's spirits high with welfare parcels sent out to him from the charity Support Our Troops (SOS), who his mum happens to work for. These have been great but if I ever see another packet of Jammy Dodgers, it will be too soon! The new cookhouse is open.

The food is excellent, coupled with the fantastic Gym, where even the normally gym-shy like myself have found the way! The list of facilities at Allenby Lines now sounds like a Holiday brochure. But there is nothing better, after spending a day on track bashing the Bulldogs under the guidance of **LCpl Moore**, in 50 degrees heat, than to sit in the J1 village and have an ice cold milkshake.

The Tp has taken on the extra task of Force Protection at Safwan Hill. At first there were concerns about how the guys might get a bit too bored stuck on a hill in the middle of the desert – but actually they have discovered it's a lot more chilled out there than the COB, so much so that Support Tp are now getting involved! Finally, we say goodbye to **LCpl Billy Burns** and hello to **Cpl Coatsworth** and **Sig Spilsbury.**

Sig Reed masters the UGL

LIFE WITH 52 BDE MITT - *by Sig Papa*

For the past month, I have been working from Camp Sa'ad as part of the CO's TAC Gp as they MITT the Iraqi Army. I was the RLD and have been working with the Sig Pl. Despite me being there as the Subject Matter Expert in all areas of comms, these guys were actually pretty good! When I first arrived the accommodation conditions were quite bad but now there are bunk beds with mattresses, air con units and wireless internet, which is good news – but now we are no longer entitled to that £5 per day unpleasant working allowance!

Most of our time was spent going out in a mini MITT to Camp Al Nasar – formerly Camp Jamoose. It was a chance to get out on the ground and spend some time with the Iraqis. This has certainly been the highlight of my tour and it has been a really good experience to work with the infantry and test my skills on all the kit especially when the kit used is quite new to me as well!

COB MT

The MT has been busy during the month of September with **Sig Grant** doing force protection at Safwan hill. **Sigs Stevie Cassells** and **'Massive' Massey** are due to replace him around the 16th and then **Sig Grant** can look forward to some real work – back on stag in the COB. Although we have been busy it has been quiet due to **Pte Nicholls** leaving us for his end of tour – lucky bugger – and also **LCpl 'Chezza' Stevenson** and **Sgt Timmerman** have been away on their R&R.

The MT welcomes **LCpl Coatsworth** and his wife **Cpl Coatsworth** (we know who wears the trousers in that relationship). We have now got a real MTWO with the return of **WO2 Fraser**, not that anyone has seen him as he is doing his Warrant Officers CLM. Now **SSgt Law** has been made redundant from the MTWO's job he has a lot of time on his hands so he regularly pops off to the gym to work on his ever improving body by looking in the mirrors for an hour.

LCpl Coatsworth and **Sig Cassells** want to do their PTI course on returning from tour so the QMSI made them both do a PFT which **Bobby** passed and unluckily for **Stevie**, he failed the qualifying time by 3 fat boy secs, so lay off the Jammie Dodgers, **Stevie**! **Sig 'Mongas' Monaghan** arranged a birthday gathering for **LCpl Young** – which unfortunately he managed to mess up by leaving the cake in the fridge at work (big mistake) and getting his card signed on the table in front of him.

The MT has also found the time to win the COB Sp CO's challenge for the second time in a row. This consisted of physical and mental challenges so we thought we were going to be out of the game but somehow the so called simple Linemen managed to win the whole event. We thought it was going to go all wrong when we had **SSgt Law** who led the way with the blind leading the blind but he somehow managed to get the quickest time for that event - meaning **LCpl Stevenson** could receive the trophy from the CO – nice one!

The blind leading the blind

LCpl Stevenson with the winning trophy

LAD - *by Cpl Elston*

So far on Op TELIC 12, the EDs have been fairly busy with the repairing of FEPs generators and 2KW LFGs. There have been other taskings to do, such as organising the backup power for the Div HQ and building a beach outside the LAD – of course a high priority! This tour has been a good experience for the young EDs as they have more chances to really test their trade knowledge doing tasks such as stripping down the FEPs. This wouldn't usually happen back in a working unit due to the fact that all these generators are under contracts, so it has been a really good opportunity for them.

Sig 'Rusty' Russell and **Sig 'Billy' Elliot** have been deployed as Force Protection to Safwan Hill to help provide a guard force along with the Americans. This has been a welcome break from the Gene Bay and also meant they had time to get a pretty good tan. Meanwhile I have been back in the LAD with all the work to do.

LCpl 'TC' Carter's wife has just had their first baby while he has been out in Iraq. We wish them all the best for the future. He was actually hoping his R&R would go a bit quicker so he could return to the COB to get some sleep!

The tour overall has been challenging and we are certainly all looking forward to getting back to our families for the festive season.

11 LIGHT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (261) ALDERSHOT

OC — **Maj IR Hargreaves**
RSM — **WO1(RSM) A Morris**

EXERCISE GRIFFIN FOCUS - *by Lt Calder*

As our Sig Sqn is now under command HQ 11 Lt Bde for OP HERRICK 11, our old HQ 101 Log Bde are left high and dry without their own Sig Sqn. This meant that when 101 Bde needed comms for their nationwide Ex GRIFFINS FOCUS, 261 Sig Sqn stepped back into the breach to save the day. This meant that Bravo Tp had the honour of spending 3 weeks living both on top of and in an 80 year old converted ammunition bunker within the training area of Swynnerton Camp near Stafford. Bravo Tp generally provides a Forward HQ capability so the ex proved to be a good opportunity to test our skills at engineering and maintaining some of our long-range comms systems. We also got some practice testing our procedures in comparison to other cap badges with some mixed results!

The weather was typically kind to us and transformed our initially meadow like antenna field into a swamp which always helps with maintaining kit. It also meant that come Endex, we were unsure whether we'd be able to get away at all! There were no real dramas and we all recovered safely back to Aldershot without incident.

However on our return, we had a phone call asking if we'd left a trailer behind. This led to that horrible sinking feeling until we realised we were complete. Nothing more was ever heard about that trailer, so if you've recently lost one – turn left off the A34 shortly after Stone and carry on for 5 miles. You'll probably find it still there. Alpha Tp has also been busy supporting 3 Rifles on CAST, so much so they are now preparing to go on CAST again to support HCR and 2 Yorks. What can we say, Alpha Tp are just too good!

FREEFALL PARACHUTING - *by Sig Clarke*

The date was 23 May 2008 and 6 members of 261 Sig Sqn, **Lt Calder**, **LCpl Unwin**, **LCpl Landry**, **Sig Clarke**, **Sig Stratton** and **Sig McLaren** were on a mission to fly from Birmingham International to Germany to start a basic freefall course.

On arrival in Germany, we proceeded to collect our hire cars so that we could make our way on to Sennelager, where the course was held. But the Army being the Army, nothing at all was waiting for us, so **Lt Calder** being just as annoyed as the next man decided to hire the cars himself out of his own pocket – cheers sir! After getting to Sennelager and collecting our room keys we then went to test out the local night life in Paderborn, before the course began on 26 May. And what a weekend it was!

So Day 1 in the big freefall house, everyone got up at around 0630hrs ready for the big day of events that was to come. We got picked up outside the block at 0730hrs and were driven to Bad Lippspringe to begin our intense course. We did a number of things such as parachute malfunctions, landings and packing our parachute away after landing ready for the next jump - no-one was very confident about this!

Waking up on Day 2, we were all very nervous as it was the day of the first jump! We got picked up at roughly the same time again and proceeded to Bad Lippspringe again to begin our parachuting. Everyone on the course was very brave as they managed to throw themselves out the plane on their first attempt and also managed to land on the drop zone (DZ). That was basically it on the first day of jumping, only one jump for everyone!

When Day 3 arrived, everyone was raring to go, ready to do a perfect jump out of the plane from 3,500 ft! Everyone managed 2 jumps that day with one major hiccup! There was one individual who managed to land 2 miles away from the DZ – the furthest distance away in 17 years!! The same individual happened to be **Sig McLaren** who was also in the local newspaper as he landed on a bungalow roof!

On Thursday we went to the lodge again awaiting our next jumps, one load went up and one individual **Sig Stratton** was the only one to jump, the winds were so strong he got blown over to the

ranges next door but luckily, he just made it onto the DZ. So after finding out the weather was too bad to jump anymore, we all went on a mountain bike ride in the afternoon, in which one person from the course managed to fall off the bike and sprain his wrist. It was actually the funniest thing we'd seen all week!

Oh what lovely jump suits!

ROYAL SIGNALS INTER-UNIT HOCKEY - *by LCpl Tuppen*

When informed of a female Inter-Corps Hockey tournament, **Lt Morris** ran around 261 Sig Sqn desperately scraping together able bodied and willing girls for a team, which is always an impossible task due to lack of man power and females in the unit.

After much panicking, a lot of persuasion and one training session, we rocked up at the hockey pitches in Aldershot with the bare minimum team (which included **Sig Storey** who was on maternity leave!). We were chuffed to say the least when we couldn't spot many other girls teams warming up. In fact, there were no all female teams – it was a mixed tournament! We had not been informed that it had changed! With most teams only having 1 token female (if any), 261 managed to scrap a token male for the team, **Cpl Copson**. However we did manage to "steal" a Corps player from 30 Sig Regt and a spare goalie from 11 Sig Regt.

The first game against 10 Sig Regt started and thinking we would get a hammering, we were surprised to only lose 3 – 1. 10 Sig Regt decided to try and bring an extra player on to the pitch to help them out but we thought the CO's dog was an unfair advantage to them! He stole the ball and wouldn't let us play . . . time wasters! The next game was against 14 Sig Regt, who had 3 Army Hockey male players on their team. So only losing 5 – 0 was a good result we thought! The 14 Sig Regt team turned out to be a ruthless crowd and roughed us up a bit, knocking a few of us down because they couldn't outrun us or shouting obscenities as **Sig Storey** blocked their shots.

Out last game against 11 Sig Regt proved to be our best result, only losing 2 – 0! Now losing is not something we do regularly, but 6 girls and 1 male against 6 males and 1 female is not what we're used to! Day 2 saw the Indoor Tournament and we all prepared ourselves for another hammering, so when our first match against 35 Sig Regt ended 2 – 2 we were gob smacked!

The Team enjoying the hockey in the rain – I guess it's better than being in the office!

We tried to keep the good luck going but against male Army Hockey players from 14 Sig Regt, that proved a bit difficult, so 7 – 2 wasn't a bad score. At least we scored some goals! Thinking we would all go home with nothing, we were surprised to find out we had won the Minor Units Trophy. So it just goes to show girls are just as good as guys!

LCPL EDMUNDS' OPERATIONAL AWARD

On 27 August 2008, members of HQ 11 Lt Bde & Sig Sqn (261) gathered in Buller Barracks, Aldershot to watch **LCpl Daniel Edmunds** be awarded his well deserved Commendation for actions on Op TELIC 9 by the Bde Comd – **Brig JM Cowan OBE**. The award was given after not just 1 incident but 4 separate incidents. Below are some extracts from his citation:

"... November 2006, whilst repairing cable in open ground, he was contacted by several rounds of indirect fire. He was unable to reach hard cover, so remained in the prone position and continued to repair the phone cables..."

"... early December 2006, **LCpl Edmunds** was on guard when a UK call sign in a Snatch vehicle was contacted by small arms fire ... He identified one of the firing points and fired a single aimed shot at an unknown male with a long barrelled weapon. The unknown male was seen to have fallen and subsequently dragged away by his fire-team..."

"... at a later date, **LCpl Edmunds** assisted the local inf coy by spotting for snipers. During a 3 hour contact, he manned an un-armoured dummy sangar, where he used thermal imagery equipment to locate a persistent and tenacious unknown male, who was targeting the base. With rounds passing through the sangar in which he stood, **LCpl Edmunds** gave a target indication over the radio to the snipers that enabled them to claim a successful enemy hit ..."

"... 3 May 2007, **LCpl Edmunds** was travelling in a convoy when the vehicle in front of him was contacted by an IED. Fragments from the explosion passed through the windscreen of the vehicle and injured the driver. **LCpl Edmunds** helped drag the driver onto the back seat. **LCpl Edmunds** applied direct pressure with his hands to the injured soldier's wounds (a perforated neck with damage to the main artery), reassured him and minimised the blood loss... "

LCpl Edmunds was awarded the Commendation for his composure and courage in the face of a variety of challenges. His coolness under fire and during incidents belies his relative inexperience and age. Congratulations **LCpl Edmunds** for this well deserved Commendation.

Brig JM Cowan OBE presents LCpl Edmunds with his Commendation

102 LOGISTIC BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (262) GÜTERSLOH

OC **Maj AJ Smith**
RSM **WO1(RSM) DB Holroyd**

EXERCISE MERCURY QUEST - *by Sig Inman*

262 Sig Sqn deployed to the Harz Mountains in North West Germany for 5 days of Level 2 adventure training 21 – 25 July 08. Over these 5 days, we based ourselves in the luxurious Torfhaus Lodge and took part in 3 main activities; kayaking instructed by **Cpl Cox** REME, rock-climbing by **Cpl Mitchell** RLC and trekking led by **Capt Barr**. Other activities included mountain biking, where those who took part managed to capture **Sgt O'Connor** on camera crying in pain, and also a day of swimming at the local spa/pool.

Sgt O'Connor, Cfn Orchard, LCpl Wilkinson and Sig Rattray learning the ropes

There were 3 groups which took part in a round-robin of kayaking, climbing and trekking, with the other 2 activities being optional for individuals to participate in on the last day. Along with learning the vital skills in kayaking such as capsizing drills there was plenty of time to play games, mainly consisting of **YofS Allen** and myself spending more time upside down in the water than anything else. In rock climbing, we mastered a range of climbs up to grade 5.

However, the most challenging part for some was getting back down again. Our trekking consisted of climbing our way up the Brocken (1140m) from the northern side, which was quite unforgiving as we rose 500m over the last 3km, hence a few parts proved to be quite steep!

Evening activities consisted mainly of tucking into some well-earned food and watching plenty of DVDs while nursing our sore limbs!

On the last evening, **Sgt Mee** organised a Sqn meal out at an 'All you can eat' Chinese Buffet in Braunlage. After which we enjoyed a few drinks in a local bar which surprisingly turned out to be very lively with live folk singing and dancing on tables!

We have certainly come home with lots of memorable moments, some more memorable that others! Such as **Cpl Burrell** getting his trekking group lost during his navigation leg, causing them to hack their way through a nice thick forest for half an hour.

Everyone shaking like a leaf when they tried to abseil off a 30m bridge. **SSgt Hambrook** and **SSgt Parkes** both managing to lose control of their bikes, each ending up head-first in a river and **LCpl Swanick** getting chatted up and massaged by a local German bloke.

Throughout the week everyone managed to overcome at least one fear, whether that was heights or local German men and were more than ready to rise to the challenge of every activity.

BFG ROAD RELAY CHAMPIONSHIP - *by Lt Sarah O'Connell*

On Wednesday 24 September 102 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (262) took part in the BFG Road Relays, Gutersloh. The women made a clean sweep of medals, winning the fastest individual female in both the senior and the vets categories and then also went on to win the team gold. The men also competed outstandingly to take silver behind 1 AAC in the Minor Unit team event.

A total of 17 teams both male and female from all over Germany, competed. Each team consisted of 4 runners, who each ran a 3.8 mile course. The extremely flat route was run as a relay with the takeover being by hand to hand touch in a designated 20m area on the sports pitches opposite the gym. **LCpl Ash Mulligan**, winner of the senior women's individual medal stated: "Although the course was quick and flat, it was very hot and that made it difficult."

The winning ladies team consisted of **LCpl Ash Mulligan** (winner of the individual senior medal), **WO2(FofS) Lisa Openshaw** (winner of the individual vets medal), **Lt Sarah O'Connell** and **Capt Jo Barr**.

The men's team consisted of **Sig Sean Rattray**, **LCpl Jamie Hodgkinson**, **Cpl Chris Callaghan** and **Capt Dave Clarke**. It was a fantastic result for 102 Log Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (262), who have a Tp in both Afghanistan and Iraq at present, leaving only a very small rear party behind.

The BFG Road Relay Championship winning ladies team: LCpl Ash Mulligan, Capt Jo Barr, Lt Sarah O'Connell and WO2(FofS) Lisa Openshaw

12 MECHANIZED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (228) ALDERSHOT

OC **Maj NM Stokoe**
RSM **WO1(RSM) SJ Crooks**

As always this has been a busy few months for 228 Sig Sqn. MEDMAN 3 and MEDMAN 4 throughout August and September saw many of our soldiers packed off to BATUS to support the Bde out there, returning with excited anecdotes of chasing Challenger 2s across the prairie and standing on airplane wings for the parachute jumps. Those left behind have had the joys of the Combined Inspection Week to contend with and many have sighed with relief now it's over.

CHARITY RANK SWAP DAY

On Thursday 16 October the soldiers of the Sqn had the opportunity to see 'how the other half live'. In aid of the ABF, bids were made to swap ranks for the day with OC Sqn, QM, RSM, Tp OCs and some other members of the hierarchy. As a result, as of 0900hrs, all hell broke loose when during the course of the day **Maj Adam Cook** (ex Cpl) had to discipline **Cpl Niall Stokoe** (ex Maj) and **Cpl Dave Rook** (ex Capt) for allegedly being drunk on duty with the excuse that they were commiserating the demise of 'Rooksie's' budgie, who had been fed to the Sqn python.

OC for the day Maj Adam Cook dealing with Cpl Rook (ex QM) in the matter of the death of Rooksie's budgie

The rest of the day was a great success and enjoyed by all; except perhaps for **LCpl Ritchie Ayling** (ex WO2) who had the misfortune to swap with **LCpl Suka** who was due on guard all that day. Oh, how we all laughed to see him stagging on at the main gate! The day culminated in a fancy dress PT session, as decided by the OC for the day, which saw the indescribable sight of a Rubik cube, **Cpl Igo**, attempting to catch a ball with his head and an almost indecently attired aerobics instructor, **Sig Skarratts**, doing lunges in pink tights and a sweat band. Altogether a successful day with £170 raised for ABF, although **Maj Stokoe** enjoyed himself so much he's now thinking of doing a rank swap week.

Fancy dress PT: Sgt Cooper, Sig Andre, Cpl Pagan, Sgt Kavanagh, SSgt Mason, SSgt Trehewey, Cpl Igo and Sig Grindlay

ADVENTURE TRAINING – FAST AIR (ALBERTA)
- by Sig Callaghan

On 15 September, 228 Sig Sqn deployed to Canada on Ex MEDMAN 4. Before the ex we all took part in some well deserved adventure training. One of the packages was skydiving in Alberta instructed by Canadian civilians; this was for 4 days. Unfortunately on the plane journey out, we stopped to refuel in Gander where the ground crew found a fault with one of the wheels and we were stuck for a few hours which was not the best start.

When we finally arrived at Calgary, we split down into the package we were taking part in and then set off on the relevant coaches. The 'fast air' package, which was the skydiving part, consisted of the elite from 228 Sig Sqn, as well as some of the Bde staff. We arrived in Alberta in the early morning of the following day, where we received a quick brief from the chief instructor and then we were all sent to bed.

Later on the next day, after some much needed sleep, we were split into 2 groups and began the training. It was at this point that the instructors brought up the point that you could not jump if you weighed more then 15 stone, which is where **2Lt Davidson** left the 'fast air' package.

The weather was predicted to be good and on Day 2, we were ready to go. We were split down into 4 groups of 5 or 6 because that was all one plane could hold. Seeing the anxiety in his troops' eyes, the OC, **Maj Stokoe** offered to jump first with a big smile covering his emotions which had suddenly sprung up ass he realised what he had just proposed. Much to his relief he was told by the instructors that due to the plane's structure, someone heavier would have to jump first.

The first 2 groups were taken into the main hanger and suited and booted. On the first trip up tensions were high not helped by the fact that every 1000 feet, the instructor would open the door (which we were all just inches away from) to show us how it looked and felt at that height; every time he did this we were blasted by 80mph winds.

We reached the altitude we were going to jump at, i.e. 4000 ft and were told 'get the hell out of my plane'. We had to climb out of the door onto the strut of the wing, slide our hands across to the end then wait until the instructor gave the 'go ahead' to let go, which at 4000 ft feels about as natural as giving birth to a full sized elephant. As the week continued people began getting more relaxed with idea of jumping out of planes. While the jumps were going on, the other groups took advantage of the facilities and the nice weather, so we were averaging 3 or 4 games of volleyball a day which quickly became the most popular sport (on the ground). Everyone enjoyed it apart from **Sig Kemp** who couldn't really come to grips with the serve.

Other pastimes while we were waiting to jump consisted mainly of 'card games' or more specifically one game in particular which everyone started taking far too seriously, especially **Sig Bennett** who stormed off to bed every time he lost.

The 'fast air' adventure training package was an extremely enjoyable experience which will be remembered by all those who took part, this was down to the professionalism of the instructors and the way we were treated while there.

FORWARD HQ 12 BDE – EXERCISE MEDMAN 4
- by Lt Nick Purdy

September saw the 'Independent State of BRAVIA' (B Tp) deploy with numerous attachments to Canada to take part in Ex MEDMAN 4 to 'test and adjust' the Forward HQ and its staff. Excited about using the Panther vehicle and getting away from Salisbury Plain, the Tp deployed in high spirits for a spot of adventure training prior to the start of the TOTALISE phase of the ex.

Leaving a slightly less happy crew in EXCON to control the staff at Bde Main, the buoyant Fwd HQ team set off to their first grid. A night time move and the first build incorporating operators from 26 Engr Regt, things got off to a slow start and left a few points to improve on with subsequent builds. Points on board, Forward began bouncing round the prairie like a pinball machine as it went. Tentage and comfort items were discarded; "Staff can sit on their bergens" cried the Comd, "I don't want lighting, they can use their headtorches"! With a 2 hr build dramatically reduced to a svelte 30 mins, the only things slowing us down were the Panthers. A dodgy fan belt on one, and an excuse for an engine on the other, Forward was shedding weight faster than Fern Britten with a gastric band. As the ISO BRAVIA has come to expect, goalposts changed, boundaries moved and all of a sudden the Forward HQ was moving round the prairie fully tactical, cross country and following the KRH BG HQ at night!

Having experienced both hot and cold temperatures, wet, dry and exceedingly dusty weather, followed armour of all shapes and sizes and been killed off by over zealous 'red tops', the soldiers had a fantastic time and really experienced life as close to the front line as the Bde HQ will ever get.

OC Bravo giving a briefing to the Troop in the field

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

OC **Maj RJ Anderton-Brown**
RSM **WO1 MA Brown**

CAYTHORPE REUNION WEEKEND 2008 *- by 2Lt Williams*

Prior to Op MARKET GARDEN, 1 AB Div formed up around Caythorpe Village in Lincolnshire. Sixty four years later, Caythorpe Village was once again awash with AB forces, both past and present.

This time, though, it was not to fight the Germans, but as part of the annual Caythorpe reunion weekend.

With the majority of 216 Sqn on deployment in Afghanistan, what would normally be a Sqn task, fell to the Rear Party. With the usual airborne spirit, the troops set about providing stands for the village fete, including an air rifle range and recruiting stand.

Fortunately the dull weather did not put the veterans and locals off attending and by mid afternoon the fete was in full swing with gentlemen in their sixties trying on parachute rigs and vowing to sign back on!

The traditional football match between the Sqn and Village football teams also went ahead, with a spectacular 30 yard volley from **SSgt Watts** contributing to a 4 – 1 victory for the Sqn.

When Sqn personnel weren't involved in tasks, they did an excellent job of hosting the veterans. Many of those who attended had served together 50 years previously but still had the same 'banter' and spirit that they had displayed whilst serving. Each veteran had many stories of their exploits, both on ops and in barracks, which kept all entertained and also put what British forces are currently doing in perspective.

After a busy afternoon, events then moved to Caythorpe Court for the Dinner Night. Being the newest officer, and 'penguin', to join the Sqn, I had the honour of being Mr Vice. As I am renowned for being 'the un-funniest man in NATO', I knew that providing the end of evening entertainment would prove to be an interesting experience.

FofS Lang contemplating the merits of his 'back door' wings

However, what I did not realise was that my jokes would be so bad that **SSgt Watts** would try to set fire to me! This at least got some laughs. Safe to say I crashed and burned. Aside from the entertainment, the dinner night was excellent and an enjoyable time was had by everyone.

The next morning there were many sore heads. However, the Sqn's responsibilities were not finished. **Maj Gen Deane-Drummond CB DSO MC** was the guest of honour, so both the Sqn personnel and veterans conducted a march past. This was followed by a church service where those that had fallen were remembered.

Overall an excellent weekend was had by all that attended, and the Wagon and Horses have been kept in business for another year!

Maj Gen Deane-Drummond leading the way into the Caythorpe church

THE MILLION METRE CHARITY ROW 8 – 12 SEPTEMBER 08
- by SSgt Wilde

On 8 September 2008, 216 Sig Sqn hosted a 1 Million Metre Charity Indoor row, in aid of 'Help For Heroes'. With 16 AA Bde deployed on Op HERRICK 8, this was the Rear Party's opportunity to show support and solidarity for our friends and colleagues who had deployed. The event was scheduled to start at 1000hrs Monday 8th, as the Sqn returned from Caythorpe fresh and ready for the physical challenge of rowing half the distance from Basra to Kabul!

The event was split down into 30 min slots, which included a 1 min changeover period to allow the next rower to get comfortable before putting themselves through 29 minutes of sheer discomfort! With an average target distance of 7km per slot, we looked to finish the event in 72 hours.

The event started well with **SSgt Wilde** of the LAD rowing what turned out to be the overall best effort of 7.9km. As the event rolled on and the "Caythorpe Hangover" was purged from the troops, the infectious optimism and keenness set in and the race was well and truly on!

Many of the rowers achieved good results as this was their initiation into the world of Indoor Rowing, with **Sig Mercer** coming closest to the top spot with 7.7km. The event was well supported by the Bde Rear Parties, as teams from 13 AA Sp Regt LAD, 7 PARA RHA and 8 Fd Coy (Para) helped whittle down the metres. Even the Bde HQ managed to put down their Biros for a morning and show their support for the cause!

After 73 hrs 8 mins and 19.7 secs we had rowed our last metre, and approximately £3500 had been raised for 'Help For Heroes'.

Many of the Million Metre rowers

A big 'Thank You' has to go to **Bill Carrahar** of Bensons for Beds for supporting the event, and to all those who donated their time and money toward helping our heroes.

ALL ARMS PRE-PARACHUTE SELECTION (aka P COMPANY)
- by LCpl Mason

The All Arms Pre-Parachute Selection course is 3½ weeks of exacting exercise all of which is rewarding despite some rumours to the contrary. The P Coy staff will do all they can to get every man through, as they want you to pass because of their professionalism not in spite of it. Above all, they reiterate each morning "it's achievable". You are told "It has been done by many men before you and will be by many after you". It's all true.

You start with a screening day to evaluate your initial fitness. It is here the staff benchmark the starting point of acceptable strength. Training, effort and willingness now enable you to face the incremental challenges presented by the staff ensuring a steady phase by phase build up, taking you right up to a 5-day test week. Before you know it, it has arrived.

With the finish line now in sight, providing you have avoided the ubiquitous injury, you've earned your beret. There are no funnies around the corner, no trick tasks to pull you down. You have already met each challenge as required, so don't let the log or the stretcher faze you. By now, you have nothing to fear but fear itself.

None of us are left unchanged by the experience. My experience of P Coy has been positive on so many levels. Both physically and mentally, I feel I have done something worthwhile. I'm now back at the Sqn and into work and although P Coy already seems a long time ago I eagerly await my Jumps course and my first experience of jumping into a Bde level ex.

POTENTIAL ROYAL SIGNALS OFFICER RECRUITMENT DAY
- by Cpl Mitchell

On returning from ops, it is usual to remain in barracks for a decompression phase. Tasks are then given to soldiers, in order to reacclimatise them to Sqn life. One such task included a recruitment drive, targeting Officer Cadets currently under going officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Led by **Capt Harris** and **2Lt Williams**, both new officers to the Sqn, a team was provided to give an insight into the Royal Signals and in particular 216 Sig Sqn. Other Royal Signals units were present but due to the Corps being heavily deployed on ops, none of the specialist units could provide a team. This meant that it was up to the 'Airborne' fraternity to set the standard and show potential Officers a side to the Royal Signals that is of a different pace to mainstream units.

The team consisted of **SSgt 'Curly' Watts**, **Sgt 'Athers' Atherton**, **Cpl 'Mitch' Mitchell**, **Cpl 'Trigger' Hensby**, **Cpl 'Percy' Purcell** and **Sig 'Mac' McEnaney**. An eye catching stand, with photos fresh from the current tour in Afghanistan and a large TV screen showing the Test Week phase of P Coy was set up, in order to draw in the exhausted Officer Cadets. A parachute rig was also deployed and proved useful in 'trapping' unsuspecting Officer Cadets under its weight.

As the Officer Cadets entered the recruiting room, the first thing that they saw was the 216 stand and a row of maroon berets. They were then swiftly dressed in the waiting parachute rig in order to feel the weight carried by Sqn personnel when jumping. All the team worked extremely hard during the day, talking about both the Sqn and the Royal signals. I had recently arrived back from ops and was asked a lot of questions about the Royal Signals in theatre and had to explain how different the role of the Sqn is, when compared to a 'normal' unit.

Overall it was a long but successful day and the credit went to all the units involved, however special mention was given to 216 for the outstanding enthusiasm shown by all members.

20 ARMOURED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (200) PADERBORN

OC **Maj Andy Coulson**
RSM **WO1(RSM) F Fensom**

THE HERMANNSLAUF - *by WO2(FofS) Gordon Tibbetts*

The Hermannslauf or Herman's run is held annually on the last Sunday in April in honour of the renowned German chieftain, **Arminius**, (nicknamed 'Herman the German'). In 9 AD aged only 25, he led a coalition of Germanic tribes to resounding victory over a Roman Army at the battle of the Teutoberg Forest. Six members from 200 Sig Sqn set out from Talbot Barracks in the early morning sunshine, to take part in the 37th Hermannslauf. Along with another 5500 runners of all levels from across Germany, they would tackle the 31.1km arduous cross country route that snakes across the hills of the Teutoberger Wald from Detmold to Bielefeld.

The reason for participating in this gruelling event was to raise much needed funds for St Christopherus Kindergarten in Sennelager. The Kindergarten is very close to the where the Sqn is based and it specializes in caring for young children with communication impairments; many of whom also have physical disabilities. The run started underneath the awesome Herman's Denkmal in Detmold and due to the large number of participants began in similar fashion to many marathon events with a staggered start.

200 Sig Sqn Team : Lt Des McGuickian, Cpl Matty Anderson, Sgt Paul Bungay, Cpl Joe Binder, WO2(YofS) Brett Harrison and WO2(FofS) Gordon Tibbetts

Participants set off in order of running ability. Our team was off at 1115hrs, down into the valley underneath the Denkmal and into the forest. The weather was unbelievably hot for the time of year and it is testament to the organizers that casualties caused by dehydration or heat related injuries were minimal. Support along the route was immense with the German Red Cross out in large numbers, plenty of water stops from the organizers but more impressive were the garden hose showers and buckets of water provided by locals at almost every house we passed.

The run itself was certainly difficult, 19 miles of pain made that little bit worse by the glorious sunshine. Not all gloom though and perhaps the highlight of the day was around the 11 mile point when runners entered the small village of Oerlinghausen, legs just beginning to feel heavy and energy levels dwindling, the crowds in the village were unbelievable, lining the streets from entry point to exit.

They were cheering, singing, encouraging and giving that little boost that lifts the head and widens the stride – a truly memorable moment. The same could be said for the final mile of the route which saw runners enter the Sparrenburg in Bielefeld.

Spectators lined the path in droves willing the runners over the finish line with gusto. All 6 members of the Sqn team successfully completed the run with some impressive times logged. All received medals and t-shirts on crossing the finish line but more importantly gained massive satisfaction from helping raise almost €3000 for the children at the Kindergarten. The money has been put to good use and 3 Abel-Net-Kopfer machines have been purchased.

Capt McCallin holding one of the Abel-Net Kopfler kits and the 2IC, Capt Laura Smith presenting a 20 Armd Bde mailed fist to the school headmaster with WO2(FofS) Gorden Tibbetts.

The exhausted and jubilant runners would like to thank the wives and friends who formed the close support and Admin Party on the day and finally all who contributed in raising cash for a truly worthy cause.

SQUADRON DEPLOYMENT - *by Cpl Jinks*

On the weekend of 13 September 2008, the Sqn deployed to Stamhule Camp to join 1 PWRR on a CFX. This was a confirmatory ex from the training already received at Haltern and by OPTAG. On arrival we went straight onto a 2 day package of stands, ranging from Patrolling, Convoy Drill, Battlefield First Aid and Checkpoints. This was a refresher for most of us even though a lot of new points had been raised. On Sunday at 2000hrs, the Sqn went straight into the CFX, no more messing about we were now getting assessed.

Tigris Tp had the pleasure of the first guard and QRF rotation until 0600hrs the following day. During the first night we had 2 mortar attacks, both at early o'clock; this kept us alert at all times and out of bed clearing the camp when beds were wanted. On Monday, Tigris deployed on a number of vehicle patrols day and

night to check out vulnerable areas and vulnerable points, using the skills we had been previously taught. On the next day, Tigris Tp was employed in escorting and protecting a convoy from Stamhule to UDTA to do a relief. The convoy went well until they were on the return journey. The main body came under contact and had to do a fighting withdrawal. Casualties were taken and the convoy rapidly made its way back to base. Once there, the casualties were dealt with by the trained Team Medics, who got straight in and dealt with the injuries presented to them. The 4 days on the CFX was of immense training value to the Sqn members who participated, revising and learning new skills to take with them on Op TELIC.

81 SIGNAL SQUADRON (VOLUNTEERS) CORSHAM

OC **Maj Steve Clout**
SSM **WO2(SSM) John Collins**

GENERAL NEWS

The Sqn continues in good health, and currently has nearly 40 recruits in the pipeline and progressing through their initial training. It continues to further links with BT/openreach to target the Modern Apprentice population. At the time of writing, two Tps have now completed their deployments. 855 Tp's success in Cyprus is detailed below – see the October Wire for 857's Gibraltar deployment. The Sqn has also taken the decision to reform its 5th Tpp – 854. **Capt (TOT) Paul Masheter** and Sqn FofS **WO2 Andy McEvoy** are being kept busy filling slots and balancing trade skills across the expanded Sqn. A familiar face returns to the Sqn to take command of the newly-formed 854 Tp – welcome back to **Capt Seb Phillips** ably supported by **SSgt Matt Ticehurst** as Tp SSgt and **Sgt Steve Wadsworth** as A/FofS. In other news, **O/Cdt Rob Catton** has now joined the Sqn from Cambridge UOTC and will be progressing through the Commissioning Process over the next 12 months. **Cpl Matt Holmes** of 856 Tp has been promoted to Sgt and will be able to test his new SNCO authority in Brunei.

OP HERRICK

The Sqn's first deployment to Op HERRICK in Afghanistan has recently returned. Led by **SSgt Andy Green**, the det had an excellent experience working in and around Camp Bastion with regular counterparts from Lima Tp 10 Sig Regt. A full report will be in the next issue – but all were impressed at **SSgt Green's** recognition of TA100.

81 Signal Squadron's first deployment to Afghanistan recognises TA100

The Sqn will be sending at least two further detachments to Afghanistan in 2009.

EXERCISE APHRODITE – CYPRUS 2008

OC **2Lt Mark Oxley**
SSgt **SSgt Al Minton**

June saw 855 Tp deploy to Episkopi Garrison for their Annual Camp, accompanied by elements of SHQ. The Tp arrived with a series of comms infrastructure jobs around Episkopi and Akrotiri to complete. With the recce and advance parties ensuring that everything was in place, work started at full speed. The weather was extremely hot and the ground and duct layout made the work difficult at times. This didn't stop every member of the Tp from working hard and the Tp even managed to take on more work than we had expected.

Many of the junior members of the Tp were given a chance to shine, including our newest member **Sig Ross Bray**. After 3 weeks of hard work, the Tp had managed to install, terminate and test 5km of 100 pair copper around Episkopi, greatly expanding the voice and data capacity and resilience from the RIB right down to Gibraltar Village. A det had also been sent to install 1.5km of optical fibre at Akrotiri to increase the data capacity there.

For the duration of the camp, the Tp was hosted by Episkopi Tp from CCU. **Lt Miller**, **SSgt Farrow** and their Tp were extremely hospitable, even inviting us to their summer 'Pirate' party. We were also able to assist the CCU with a VIP visit from the new DComd of DE&S. The Tp OC, **2Lt Mark Oxley** and Sqn FofS, **WO2 Andy McEvoy** were able to demonstrate the Sqn capabilities, and outline how it operates around the world.

It wasn't all hard work though. PSI Training had thoughtfully booked some glorious weather, and as it was particularly dismal back home, we had every intention of making the best of it. The 'sun worshipper' squad was headed up by **Sgts Pascoe** and **Allen**, the end result being a wide spectrum of reds and browns. **Sig Marshall**, not wanting to slacken from his Ironman training regime, had brought his bike over from the UK, and made good use of the many cycle paths around Cyprus.

Maj Clout, OC Sqn and 'football guru', insisted on a football match being played and had even packed the Sqn football shirts. A match was organised between 855 Tp and the CCU Eagles, but the outcome really isn't important. Many outstanding performances were noted, and particular mention ought to go to **Capt Andy Kennedy** for his valiant goalkeeping efforts. A Go-Karting Grand Prix was also arranged for the Tp, bringing out the competitive side out in everyone. Whilst **Sgt Gray** and **Sig Thibeault** battled furiously for a place in the finals, **Sgt Pickett** was quite happy just taking in the scenery. However when it came to the crunch, it was **SSgt Al Minton** who, with his injured knee miraculously curing itself, managed to beat the remaining competitors to the fastest kart and drive to victory.

855 Tp and the Squadron TA100 Banner

For some this was the first visit to Cyprus and for some it was their last. The Tp had the opportunity to say a fond farewell to **LCpl Pearson**, whose first military duty was to be based at Akrotiri during the Turkish invasion in 1974! For everyone it was a very enjoyable and productive camp, and the Tp is now looking ahead to our 2009 deployment on Ex JAGUAR in Brunei.

SQUADRON STUDY WEEKEND

October 2008 saw the 81 Sig Sqn Officers and SNCOs hold their annual Study Weekend in Corsham. Each Tp presented reports from deployments over the last year and the training package for the following year was discussed and finalised. **Brig Hargreaves** visited on Saturday afternoon and went through a 'State of 2 (NC) Bde', giving a valuable overview of what the Sqn's counterpart units are doing for UK Ops.

Both Messes also took the opportunity to hold dinner nights and invite guests. The officers invited their Old and Bold members while the SNCOs invited 3 Normandy veterans, who had recently accompanied an 'all ranks' study group from the Sqn to Normandy on a Battlefield Tour (See Next Page). The tour had included a number of Airborne Operations supporting D Day, including Pegasus Bridge and the vital battles around Hill 112 near Caen. The veterans also recounted some of their experiences on Sunday morning.

BATTLEFIELD TOUR

Back in 2006 there was a discussion between the PSAO, **Capt Craven** and myself, about a possible Battlefield Tour to D-Day battle sites in Normandy. The original idea was that it would be privately funded by those attending. Subsequently, **Lt Durtnal** took on the project to gain Army funding and sponsorship for the tour.

As a result 25 members of 81 Sig Sqn (all ranks) have just completed an excellent, educational tour of some of those sites thanks to the diligence of **Lt Durtnal**, with advice from the PSAO and especially **Maj Powell** of the Army Education Corps. **Maj Powell** is a military historian and put together the learning packages we were issued with prior to departure and arranged for 4 Normandy Veterans to accompany us on the tour.

Of the 4 Veterans, 2 were AB and 2 were Inf; **Ray 'Titch' Rayner** was with the glider borne 'Ox & Bucks' that landed at and captured Pegasus and Horsa bridges and **Len Daniels** was with 9 Para who captured and destroyed the guns at Merville Battery before the landings could take place. These 2 were therefore some of the first Allied soldiers into action on D-Day. **Bill Edwardes** (1 Worcs) and **Frank Grigg** (DCLI) were involved in the close fought Inf versus tank batties of Hill 112 and the breakout from Normandy and on to Germany's ultimate defeat.

The learning points for Ex BOLD BEAUFIGHTER were 'Mission, Command and Communication' how they applied to Normandy in 1944 and how relevant they are in today's op theatres. The 81 Sig Sqn personnel were split into 4 syndicates and each member was given a D-Day personality to study, Allied or German and then told to prepare a presentation for the rest of the tour party. This took place at Blandford in the lecture theatre, before we left for the ferry at Portsmouth on Monday evening.

The Veterans being with us added greatly to our appreciation of what they and their comrades went through in those harrowing close fought battles in June 1944 and their struggle to survive and overcome a fanatical enemy in positions that the Germans had had 4 years to prepare for defence.
Everyone on the tour enjoyed the full and demanding programme which gave us an insight into the preparation for, execution of and follow up to what was the greatest seaborne invasion ever mounted with 160,000 soldiers and marines landed on the beaches and 30,000 airborne soldiers securing and then defending the invasion beach flanks and approaches.

Lt Durtnal takes great credit for the staff work he put in to bring this tour to fruition and I would advise any of you who are considering attending future such tours to keep an eye on the Sqn emails in future as this is an experience that will surely be repeated but to a different venue no doubt. Basra and Kabul will have to wait a few more years though.

OTHER UNITS

1st NATO SIGNAL BATTALION

CO **Lt Col DJM Bizley**
RSM **CWO G Power** R CANADIAN SIGNALS

The breadth and depth of tasks undertaken by the Bn continues to grow progressively. We continue to provide one Deployable Comms Module (DCM), a sub-unit of sqn-minus strength, to ISAF. This is currently our Danish company serving in Kandahar and Bagram.

Alongside the op commitment, our ex forecast is ever expanding as the Bn looks to reassume the NRF role in 2009. This preparation will include exs in Germany, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Denmark in the next 6 months.

Finally the Bn is being included in the ongoing NATO establishment review for both expansion and relocation.

We look forward to the pending decision on whether we shall remain in the Netherlands or will be crossing the border into Germany.

VISIT OF COMMANDER 1st (UK) SIGNAL BRIGADE – BRIG I HOOPER

On Tuesday 9 September, the Bn received a visit from the new Comd 1 Sig Bde, **Brig I Hooper**. While there is no direct command relationship between the Bde and the Bn, there have been operational relationships developing in Afghanistan between the Bde's Op HERRICK support and the continuing NATO deployed CIS commitment from the Bn. Additionally there will be increasing cooperation in 2009 as the Bn supports part of the NRF commitment that 1 Sig Bde will be undertaking in the latter half of the year.

The visit allowed **Brig Hooper** to be briefed on current op and ex commitments, as well as seeing some of the soldiers and equipment that will be used to support ARRC exs in the near future.

We look forward to the relationship continuing to improve through the coming ex schedule.

Brig Hooper receives the Regimental plaque from Lt Col Bizley

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT COMPANY

OC	**Commandant G Eerdekens** Belgian Army
CSM	**WO2(CSM) S Munro**

COMPANY HQ

In what has been another busy period of deployments and exs, the coy bids farewell to a number of personnel: **Cpl Tim Sluman** makes the short border hop to 7 Sig Regt on promotion to Sgt, **Cpl Ben Redfern** has swapped Maastricht for Blandford, again on promotion. Welcomes go to **Sgt Chris Chapman, Cpl Lou Walker** and **LCpl Pete Carlin** who have all recently arrived in Tapijn Kazerne. Congratulations to **Cpl Andy Peters** on his recent marriage to **Sarah**, we wish them all the best for the future.

Congratulations are also due to **Cpl Lewis Finlay, Cpl Ross Fernie** and **Cpl Ritchie Beasley** on the successful completion of their CLM courses. Let's just hope that this does not result in any early postings. A special mention is also required for **SSgt Andy Gleadall** for his efforts during the recent multinational football tournament; we all hope that the broken leg heals swiftly.

ISAF 2008 DAMA PROJECT TEAM
- by Sgt Lawrence and LCpl Harrison

Recently 4 Royal Signals soldiers from 1st NATO Sig Bn (NSB) were deployed to ISAF along with 4 of their colleagues from Denmark and Estonia. Their mission was to oversee the pending switch for TACSAT comms from American UFO Satellites over to the NATO Sicral 1 Satellite. The task was a massive operation that stretched the entire length and width of the country, with all Regional Commands (RCs) affected.

Any TACSAT radio that was using one of the 3 UFO satellites had to be upgraded, reloaded with a new comms plan and the operators trained on how to locate, access and use the Demand Assigned Multiple Access (DAMA) system that would then allow them to communicate to the NATO satellite.

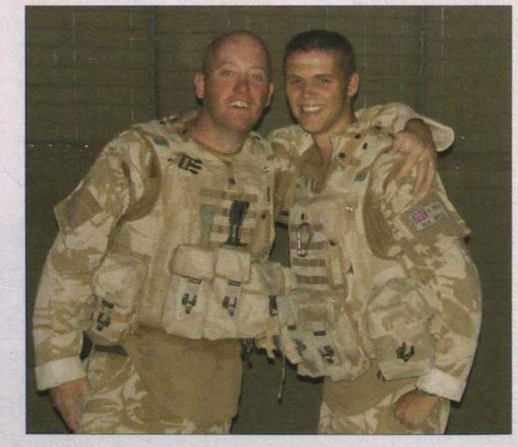
The team consisted of 9 members in total with the 4 Royal Signals members being **Sgt Mick Lawrence, LCpls Tom Harrison, Kris Fairnie** and **Steve Bennett.** After receiving training from the NATO School of Signals in Latina the team deployed mid-March.

Two operators went to each RC, with **Sgt Lawrence** and **LCpl Fairnie** deploying to the South and **LCpl Bennett** working with former Royal Signal Sgt, and now NATO Civilian Consultant **Mr Simon Griffiths** from HQ ISAF in Kabul. The plan was to train as many operators from each RC in one main area, such as Kandahar Airfield, Kabul camp etc. however it proved impossible to get all the radios in for upgrades and all operators in one location for training. Subsequently the teams deployed out onto the ground for a whistle-stop road and air trip to every FOB, Patrol Base, Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLT) and Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) location in the respective provinces.

At first this proved to be a reasonably straight forward task however movement around the RCs soon started to become more dangerous and harder due to the constant threat of Taliban activity on all major routes. The teams worked non-stop till the middle of May and before their R&R started they had managed to switch RCs (North), (West), and (Central) radio nets over to the NATO Satellites, with some 400+ radios having been upgraded.

Additionally German, Dutch, Australian, Canadian, Spanish, Italian, and Romanian troops had all been trained on the new system. Things had so far gone to plan, so the team headed home for their R&R, knowing that on their return the mountains of Helmand Province would await them, as well as the RC(South) switch over. June saw the redeployment of the team and this time **LCpl Tom Harrison** joined **Sgt Lawrence** in Helmand, replacing **LCpl Fairnie** who had been sent on his Class 1 course.

LCpl Steve Bennett remained in Kabul as a rear link with HQ ISAF until the end of June when he moved down to Kandahar with the rest of the multi-national team to continue with the radio upgrades and training in RC(S).



Sgt Lawrence and LCpl Harrison – a close bond was formed!

The Helmand team started with a week in Camp Bastion, training soldiers from 16 AA Bde. After this, the team split with **Sgt Lawrence** and **LCpl Harrison** going north up the Sangin Valley while their counterparts went south. Between the 2 teams they managed to visit all major FOBs, PBs, and OMLTs in the Sangin Valley area.

The teams at various times were involved in a number of contacts and regularly came under fire by RPGs. The workload meant the teams were moving around non-stop with little time for respite for nearly 2 months.

Finally at the end of July nearly all the radios nets (one was to remain in its current configuration) for RC(S) were changed to the NATO satellite. The teams in Kandahar and in Helmand had upgraded a further 300+ radios and carried out more training for British, Estonian, Danish and Australian troops. The Helmand team extracted back to Kandahar Airfield in late July and by the first week of August all had safely returned to their homes.

SHAPE NCSA OPEN DAY - *by Sgt Rick Davey*

On 14 September, **Sgt Rick Davey** and **Cpl Jim Robinson** departed Maastricht for SHAPE to assist the British and German DCMs with their preparation for the NATO CIS Services Agency (NCSA) Open Day. The aim of the Open Day was to introduce the equipments and systems in use by NCSA to other members of the NATO alliance and their families. The move to SHAPE was not without incident. 628 Sig Tp tried to refuel on the motorway but their fuel card failed to foot the bill. A few constructive phone calls later and a runner was dispatched with an alternative means of payment.

Once the Bn elements formed up at SHAPE, the plan was to attack the preparations with vigour and gusto. This lasted all of 5 mins as work stopped when the first vehicle drove onto the grass and was immediately bogged down. After repeated efforts to extract the vehicle by hand failed, a second truck was eventually required to recover the bogged vehicle. The team members then demonstrated their horticulture skills as a large section of turf was 'acquired' from a less conspicuous area of the site and used to repair the damage caused by the bogged in truck. Once we had finished you would not have known the difference – honest!

The following morning work commenced at a pace to setup the Light Interim NRF Capability (LINC) and satellite equipment. Of course a military stand would not be the same without an information board and banners. All the lads got stuck in, including **LCpl Daz Jamieson**, who had recently arrived with the CO, **Lt Col Bizley**.

Three masts went up but due to a problem with the soft ground (remember the vehicle incident on the previous day), one mast swiftly came back down. The day was saved with the aid of a very large hammer and an extremely large American; at last the NCSA banner flew proudly.

The NCSA Open and Families Day was a resounding success. A large number of senior military personnel from various NATO states visited the Bn in the morning and all were impressed by the presentations by the unit personnel and at the unit's capabilities. The afternoon provided an opportunity for the families of personnel serving in SHAPE to visit the stands and obtain an insight into the function of NCSA. The visiting children were especially impressed and eager to get their hands on the comms equipment, much to the annoyance of some very tetchy Det Comds who were concerned about ice cream and fluid spillages!

Following a very successful day, all personnel were invited to the German Oktoberfest tent where Director NCSA, **Lt Gen Wolf**, made a presentation and 'tapped' open a barrel of German beer. This barrel was then passed onto the troops on the understanding that it was to be returned empty – orders are orders.

628 SIGNAL TROOP

OC	**Capt G Oosterveen**
2IC	**WO2(FofS) K Waring**

1st NATO SIGNAL BATTALION GOLF COMPETITION
- by Sgt Lyon

On Thursday 2 October, members of Bn HQ visited Elmpt in order to participate in comms and planning conferences for forthcoming exs. More importantly, they were to take part in the first Bn Golf competition hosted by 628 Sig Tp at the West Rhine Golf Club.

The format of the competition was individual 9 Hole Stableford rules. This meant that those who do not regularly play golf ended up with the higher handicaps and had more of a chance of getting some points on their cards. On the day, 28 was the highest allotted handicap, much to the dismay of the CO who had hoped to be playing off 36! However, he seemed to be doing well enough playing off 28 and scoring 17 points. The word 'bandit' springs to mind.

There were 3 prizes up for grabs: nearest to pin, longest drive and best overall score. Well done to **Capt Tom Kelly** for getting closest to the pin on the 2nd hole. Those 7 swings before he hit the ball were all practice swings of course.

Well done to **WO2(FofS) Waring** for winning the longest drive. Another 9 of those and that new fangled driver will have paid for itself. Last but not least, congratulations to **LCpl Wayne Higgins** who finished with a massive 20 points playing off a handicap of 16. The consolation prize of a pack of three balls was also won by **Capt Kelly** for having the worst score and losing the most balls.

All in all it was an afternoon enjoyed by everyone; well those who managed to stay out of the woods, sand, rough and heather. We look forward to the next competition and hope that the weather is as kind to us as it was on the day.

Lt Col Bizley presenting the winner's trophy to LCpl Higgins

MATTS TRAINING WEEK - *by Cpl Ross Palmer*

The week started of with the advance party, consisting of the instructors, range staff and chef leaving early on Sunday 7 September. We arrived at Haltern ranges at around lunch time and began turning an empty range into a base for a week of MATT training. Haltern ranges have all the mod cons with accommodation, ablutions and a cooking area provided, so all that had to be set up was a temporary NBC chamber and classrooms. We also prepared training aids and eating areas for the coming troops.

The first day started early for the men and women of 628 Sig Tp at 0600hrs at the armoury and all went smoothly and they arrived ahead of time at the ranges. Once settled into the accommodation the Tp was broken down into 4 groups. Two groups headed for the ranges and for the other 2, the MATT lessons began in earnest with a vicious dose of glass eye! Three hrs of CBRN followed by 3 hrs of BCDT kept all alert and focused.

The second day did not go as planned, as we were ousted from the ranges because another unit had been put on high readiness to deploy and needed to group and zero their weapons. This gave **Cpl Whelan** an opportunity for an impromptu PSPO lesson (by the way **LCpl Keers** running away is not a recognised PSPO manoeuvre!) For the 2 groups who were on the ranges the day before, there followed their 3 glorious hours of CBRN and 3 hours of BCDT.

The third day was completely taken up by ranges, which could not have come sooner as the lads and ladettes of 628 Tp were

becoming fed up with classrooms. It was a warm sunny day, perfect range weather and so with ruler in one hand and DS cup in the other, the range staff coached the Tp through with only a couple of re-shoots. The final day of practicals and the CFT began with **Sgt Lomas** and **LCpl Richards** conducting a very realistic and abundantly gory BCDT practical.

The test included burns, breaks, amputations, one decapitation and of course Oscar worthy acting. This even tested the steely nerves of **Sig Stu Hames**! After a brief respite and a gathering of wits, we donned respirators and ventured into the super air tight, made to order 12x12 NBC chamber where **WO2(FofS) Kev Waring** led the way with a flawless decontamination drill. The only thing left to do was the much anticipated CFT, which after much deliberation by the PTIs was cancelled due to the high temperature, so we "volunteered" to go for a run instead. On our return **Pte Butler** laid on a fantastic BBQ giving the troops a chance to reflect on a week of standing and prone, blood and bandages, gas and rezzies!

I would like to briefly thank all the personnel who made the week work and special thanks to **Pte Butler** who made excellent food even through the heckling.

LCpl Vaughan getting flustered by catastrophic bleeding

JOINT SERVICE SIGNAL UNIT (CYPRUS)

CO **Lt Col M Dooley**
RSM **WO1(SSM) S Fleming**

CO'S HANDOVER/TAKEOVER

This summer saw **Lt Col McIntosh** and his family leave the Island and the Army for pastures new in civvy street as a Chief Executive of an up and coming company. Everyone here at Ayios Nikolaos wishes them all the best for the future. Filling the shoes as CO of JSSU(Cyp), the unit welcomed **Lt Col Dooley** and his family into the fold. As a keen runner, the Unit is waiting with baited breath for the forthcoming CO's PT.

HQ SQUADRON

OC **Maj D Wilson**
SSM **WO2(SSM) Pam Mitchell**

NICKFEST - *by Sgt Andy Richards*

On Saturday 6 September, Nickfest was held for the first time. This was done by combining the annual events of the Ayios Nikolaos Fete and Nickstock; our music festival. The reason this was done was to reduce the manpower bill and produce a whole day for the families and locals to enjoy.

Two weeks prior to the event, the committee (which was some 25 strong), started the hard task of erecting a small city of tentage and stores. Come the day, headed by **WO2(SSM) Rowley**, the sun was beating down on the sports pitches in what proved to be one of the hottest days of the year. All the stalls were ready and a steady stream of visitors started to descend upon them.

A vast array of vendors turned up with the usual favourite 'Cyprus Sandwich' making the early running of the food stalls. A charity stall with official merchandise from football teams like AC Milan and Liverpool through to signed photos of celebrities like **Kirsty Gallager**, in aid of 'Help for Heroes' and 'Dreams come true' charities also went down well. The auction to be RSM/HQ Sqn 2IC/QM for the day weren't quite as popular however, and went for around €2 apiece!

Throughout the day there were various events going on. An RAF police dog display team showed off their talents, while a team from the Parachute Wing in Dhekelia jumped into the venue earning **Cpl Dave Price**, 4 bottles of wine for the 'nearest beer mat challenge'. One of the highlights was the 'It's a Knockout' competition. One team from each Sqn plus a 'Staff' team was entered and endured some gruelling challenges before meeting the stomach churning 'Eat it all' end game, which has become **WO2(QMSI) Lee Millets'** forte. Fortunately most of HQ's team consisted of the RAF Regt, so eating competitions are a personal favourite and ably assisted by **Cpl Donaldson** from the QM's department, the team won overall.

The evenings' festivities started off with the BFBS presenters hosting the 'Miss JSSU' Competition. Each competitor had to don a bikini in the first round and a whole lot of waxing had being done prior to the event! Some of the 'ladies' had certainly put in a whole lot of thought to the competition; however world peace strangely wasn't mentioned. On to each of the talents and quite a few competitors seemed to be going down the exotic dancer route to the music of the Pussycat Dolls hit 'Don't cha?' First up was **SAC Singer** who absolutely stole the show and the judges' votes. There were other noticeable displays with a yard of ale being drunk, an eastern European version of an Oasis track and some trumpet playing.

An adult audience was certainly enjoying themselves, and so much so that no photos of the event are available to print! Strangely (and disturbingly enough) all of the men competing seemed to enjoy it and get in touch with their feminine side far too easily!

Onto the music and a band from King Richard School kicked us off with their version of 'Mustang Sally'. Another few bands from across the Island followed and then the 2 professional acts were on. The Chinese acrobats were next and got into some weird and wonderful positions whilst throwing various objects around with their feet.

Professional outfit 'Time after Time' rocked the crowd with some great numbers before Ay Nik got what they wanted. Around about midnight, after a very long tiring day, our very own 'Say no to Disco' appeared on stage to a great reception. For the next 1½ hrs, **Sgts Matt Stratton** and **Stu Danes**, **Cpl Mike Galyer** and **LCpl Danny Blandford** had the place dancing and singing along to the likes of Razorlight, Green Day, Good Charlotte and the Fratellis to name but a few. At the end of the night, everyone was suitably fed and watered and ready for a good nights' sleep! All had a fantastic day out and hats must go off to all of the committee for providing the Island with an outstanding day. For the first time in over 10 years, a profit was made for the event and the proceeds then going to allotted Unit charities.

Top that, next years' committee!

Say No to Disco are Sgt Matt Stratton, Lynsey Stratton, Sgt Stu Daines, Cpl Mike Galyer and LCpl Danny Blandford

1 SQUADRON

OC **Sqn Ldr M Gellini** RAF
SSM **WO2 S Page**

It's been another good summer in Cyprus but as they say "all good things must come to an end". With the bulk of the tourists now gone, a good number of the local attractions and taverns are closing down for the quiet winter period to come. However the good folks of JSSU (Cyp) are working hard to keep us all occupied during this wind down period.

Some of the forthcoming events include the cross country, as well as the annual USAAM. In preparation for this **Cpl Simpson** has been organising some practice shoots for 1 Sqn personnel which will give some an altogether too infrequent opportunity to lay down some rounds and others a chance to hone their already excellent skills to perfection.

We also have some new faces appearing in 1 Sqn, including new Ops Officer **Capt Longmuir** and SSM, **WO2(SSM) Page**. Also recently new in TRF Sect are **Cpl Chris Davidson** and **Cpl Lee Halsall**. We also wave goodbye to **Capt P Crawley** and **WO2(SSM) RG Kidd** who we wish all the best in their new posting and their future endeavours. I'd like to finish up by saying good luck to **Cpl Fear** on his CLM course and to **LCpl Byam** on his Class 1 upgraders. I'm sure they'll both pass with flying colours.

2 SQUADRON

OC **Lt Cdr Paul Chambers** RN
SSM **WO2(SSM) Oz Rowley**

It has been another busy month for the Sqn, with lots of different activities taking place and being organised. There have also been a few departures from our mighty Sqn including **WO1 'Tommo' Tommlinson**, **WO2 Glen Franklin**, **CT AI Walters**, **Cpl 'Scotty' Lloyd**, **SAC 'Lewy' Llewelyn**, **SAC 'Jarrad' Ratcliff** and last but not least **SACs Mike** and **Liz Jeal**.

Also we would like to say a big hello to **WO1 Munson**, **WO2 Edmondson**, **Cpl 'Rab' Macleod**, **Cpl SAC Chris Kelly**, **SAC 'Gaz' Hunter**, **SAC Paul Turner**, **SAC 'Vaunghan' Friswell** and **SAC 'Cal' Calverley**, welcome to the mighty 2 Sqn.

On another high note we have had some promotions lately this includes **SAC Liz Jeal** to **Cpl Jeal** and also **Cpl 'Stan' Stanley** who has been lucky enough to get an internal posting and is now **Sgt Stanley**, the new Station workshop Sgt, congratulations to you both and we wish you all the luck with the future.

TMS PIG ROAST - *by Cpl Lincoln*

The annual pig roast always hosts the Sqn pillow fight event and this year was no different. With the previous 2 years' champion no longer on island and some strong contenders away, the title was up for grabs. All potential winners and those up for a bit of fun put their names into the hat to be randomly drawn to form the table.

With the blazing sun above and cool water below, was it worth staying on the bar for the title or dropping into the water to cool down? That was a tough decision. With the rounds fought as best of 3 going well, it was the pillows you had to watch, not the person holding it.

As the rounds flew by the pillows became heavier with the water. It was now time to watch your own swing, one wrong move and you'll swing yourself off.

On his way to the final, FofS WO2 Si King versus Cpl Becky Lincoln

As the league drew to an end, the final came down to **FofS Si King** (Army) and **Cpl Scott Lloyd** (RAF). The Army had all their hopes pinned on the FofS to keep the trophy in their hands. Some very powerful shots taken at each other and the round went to 1 - 1, all down to the final line up. With the tension high the final round was discounted and played again due to some illegal bar holding!

The final round was replayed with **Cpl Scott Lloyd** coming out as the champion – well done **Scott**.

Pillows now hung up to dry; it was the turn of the golf balls. With many golf players in the Sqn, this would be a tight competition only this was a different kind of golf. Six balls are dropped into the tank while 7 players stand with their back to the tank. On the command, the players turn and throw themselves into the tank and start the hunt for the golf balls. With the water not at it's cleanest this was harder than it sounds but still very entertaining from the side.

With some very near misses and only one minor injury of the day the bar was opened and the families were invited down to the riggers compound for the pig roast. A very enjoyable day for all and everyone is now looking forward to next year when the title is once again up for grabs. Who will take it this time? Thanks go to **Sgt Marsden** for organising the event and of course the Riggers who sat in the blazing sunshine turning the pig on the spit because the motor for the spit was defective.

DE&S - CYPRUS COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

OC **Maj M McCorry**
USM **WO2(SSM) Tresidder**

The period up to and including October has seen the transfer of the last remaining CS Operators out of CCU. As a result of much discussion at the higher levels of DE&S it was deemed that the service delivered by the Tactical Radio Cell (TRC) was what is referred to as non core business. Effectively the provision of the Cyprus emergency radio system and the tactical CIS on island should have been and is now the responsibility of HQ British Forces Cyprus. For all of the operators this has resulted in the physical moving of TRC to the newly formed Akrotiri Service Flight, which is a joint RAF/ Royal Signals flight commanded by an RAF officer. As always the occasion was marked with a leaving do which is described later on.

As a result of the transfer, Infrastructure and HQ Sqn is now formed of 3 Tps providing the CIS infrastructure support to the military in Cyprus. The majority trade group is the Installation Technician. In addition to these, there a small number of Driver Linemen, Technical Supply Specialists and CS Engineers (I) as well as the usual mix of hierarchy.

AKROTIRI TROOP - *by LCpl Reeve*

Tp Comd **Capt Dave Watson**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Steve Cooper**

The Tp has been going though some changes in the past few months with near enough a complete turn around in Tp seniors and officers. Firstly we say a fond farewell to our OC, **Capt Williams** and a warm welcome to **Capt Watson** who has taken over with both feet running. **FofS Ferguson's** shoes are being filled in by **FofS 'Bob' Dryden** who has already fallen in love with the remedy system. **SSgt Cooper** who has been posted in from the office next door has taken over as Tp SSgt from **SSgt D'or** who has been posted to another RAF camp, this time in the form of RAF Henlow. **Sgt 'Dino' Simpson** has now joined us arriving from Episkopi Tp and loves his new role behind a desk as long as there's milk in the fridge. Finally we bid a sad goodbye to **LCpl 'Jules' Grieves** and **Sig 'NFI' Davis** who have both joined the illustrious 1 (UK) Civ Div.

However with the arrivals and departures, there have been opportunities for a few Tp functions; most recent was a go-karting and BBQ afternoon at the station kart track. The competitiveness was rife as **Cpl 'Baz' Barinisavu** and **Sig Van Zyl** showed great ingenuity with their route selection, eventually leading to their disqualification. **Cpl 'Al' Mousley** was the eventual winner and didn't waste any time in letting everyone know.

Cpl Joughin, **LCpl White** and **LCpl Reeve** took part in the recent Army *v* RAF 10 pin bowling event. It was a tightly fought contest but despite some quality bowling from the Army team, the RAF turned out the eventual winners, winning by the narrowest margin since the annual competition began.

Along with the new faces arriving, we also saw the introduction of the updated AGAI system, which the sigs welcomed with open arms. The troops own **'Richard Hammond'** was the first customer for **SSgt Cooper**, you know who you are. Besides these mishaps the Tp has been able to fulfil its role within CCU dealing with RFCs and faults giving our young sigs the opportunity to gain more experience and fill in that Class 3 – 2 book.

The later part of this year is going to be a busy time for theTp as the station preps for the DII change over known as project WELCHMAN. In addition PJHQ will deploy to the Island as Ex JOINT VENTURE will take place in and around the station, which will see a surge team from 241 Sig Sqn bolster our manpower.

Recently the Tp had a visit from new OC Sqn **Maj McCorry** to see what role the Inst Techs performed on a day to day basis on station. After an initial brief from **SSgt Cooper** and **Sgt Simpson** on an Inst Tech's role and present projects, **Maj McCorry** was shown around the station to view recently completed projects and also currently running projects such as the move of TRC from Episkopi. There was also an opportunity to see the faults crew working out on the ground. Overall it has been a busy couple of months for Akrotiri Tp. One thing is for sure though **Sig Harrison** is still the loudest member of the Tp.

UNIT ADVENTURE TRAINING - *by Sig Billingsley*

Over the summer there has been some adventure training for the Sqn split into 2 separate weeks, one in July and one in August. I was lucky enough to return from the Falklands in time for the August week. The time came for us to get some down time from work and take part in a week's worth of adventure training. The week was split down into different activities which were aimed at taking us out of our comfort zone and trying new things.

The majority of the group made their way to Dhekelia on the yellow fun bus, the rest meeting us there. Once arriving we were split into 4 different groups, which turned out to be a mission in itself due to most of the Tp not being able to make the 95kg weight limit for the parachuting. So all the 'large frames' were put in their own group, including **Cpl Gaz Coy** and **LCpl Bielby** not to mention too many names.

So with all the admin over and done with, part of the Tp went kayaking and the other half went parachuting. Unfortunately the parachuting wasn't for all with **Sig Daisy Dougherty** deciding once in the air that she was comfortable staying on the plane. A mention should go to **SSgt Ian Farrow** who while kayaking looked up into the sky and saw a 747 plane. He turned to the group and asked 'Is that what they are jumping out of?' That has cost him a few beers. Back to the parachuting, when **Sig Clark** landed the wind picked up a little and tried to drag his massive body along the ground.

With the day's activities finishing at the usual time there was time for the fun bus to take the lads for a bit of cliff jumping. With **Cpl 'Killer' Wells** trying to direct us to the cliffs we were able to jump from. We spent a good few hours of 'on the bus off the bus'. When we finally found the place, **Cpl Gaz Coy** led from the front and went straight in, closely followed by **Sig Overs,** the water seemed to go down a bit after those two had gone in. Later in the week the not able to jump group decided that they would give rock climbing a go.

This turned out to be a little more enjoyable than they thought, with the good **SSgt Farrow** being caught short in the climbing area which is lacking in facilities. The accident that followed was probably the most arduous experience of the week. It was becoming an expensive week for him in beers. So with the week coming to a close we handed back our 5 star luxury accommodation to the cockroaches and headed back to camp. A great time was had by all over the 2 week excursions, with some new sports and hobbies being taken up.

DHEKELIA TROOP - *by Sig Phillips*

Tp Comd **Capt Chris Moody**
Tp SSgt **SSgt 'Kips' Fisher**

It's been a busy time for Dhekelia Tp with a huge number of things going on. Besides our ongoing support to Dhekelia

Station, we have been on our annual boat trip which as always was a hit with wives and kids alike. The Mountain to Sea bike ride took place on 14 September which **Capt Moody**, **Sgt Sankey**, **LCpl 'Bubba' Danby** and **Sig 'chez' Rogers** competed in and placed 6th overall.

A number of people have managed to get away on courses recently with **Sig 'Bri' Evans** completing his Class 1 in Blandford. **Sig McFegan** and **Sig Matthews** have completed a CCTV course and **Sig 'Bri' Evans**, **LCpl Watt** and **LCpl 'Bubba' Danby** have passed their health and safety manual handling course. The Boss, **Capt Moody** and **Mr Mick Tweedie** have excelled themselves by successfully partaking in the Prince 2 course.

There is a special mention to 5 of the lads who have deservedly been selected for promotion; these fantastic soldiers are **Cpl Rennie**, **Sig Stu Marsh**, **Sig Rogers**, **Sig McFegan** and **Sig Matthews**. As Tp mentor, **Cpl Sean Foster** was ecstatic for these boys, also **SSgt Fisher** has expressed his joy at how well the boys have done. **SSgt Fisher** announced to the Tp that 'There is no where else in the world he'd rather be than in Dhekelia Tp'. **Sig McFegan** and **Sgt Sankey** have been away adventure training on a gliding course. Other people adventure training have been **Cpl Bate** and **Sgt Sutcliffe** who have been diving. **Cpl Murney** is away doing the 'Great North Run' for a worthy charity, so good luck to him. **Sgt Sutcliffe** has completed his senior CLM at Blandford. Going away on his PTI's course is **Sig 'Chez' Rogers**, so from the Tp we wish him all the best.

New arrivals to the Tp are **Sgt Poole** and **Cpl Barrett** so welcome to them. **Cpl Barrett** has had a windfall, scooping a win on the sports lottery. Congratulations are offered to **Sig McFegan** and his wife **Nicky** on the arrival of their baby boy **Charlie**, also we would like to congratulate **SSgt (FofS) Paul Floyd** and his wife **Manuela** on the birth of their daughter **Olivia**.

EPISKOPI TROOP - *by Sig Overs*

Tp Comd **Lt Dusty Miller**
Tp SSgt **SSgt Ian Farrow**

The workflow for Episkopi Tp over the last month has been steady. In addition to the usual daily routine of faults and SWS, the Tp has been preparing for the upcoming commencement of Project WELCHMAN. Some of this preparatory work has included the removal of somewhere in the region of 6 skips worth of legacy internal cabling from many of the buildings in the local area. The guys seemed to enjoy working in the offices of the local magazine editorial team who just happen to all be female. Just in case you're wondering I don't think Diet Coke will be calling soon.

The level of trade work carried out has been well rewarded recently with 3 of the 5 LCpls either selected for, or already promoted to, Cpl. Well done to **Cpl Ritchie Barlow**, **Cpl Mark Thompson** and **LCpl Del Slowey**. We would also be congratulating our sigs if we had any, however there was one piece of good news for operators and **Sig Dave Tannock** who has been selected for promotion to LCpl.

Sports wise the Tp has its fingers in a few pies, with the Episkopi Station football team being, some might say, comically managed by **SSgt Ian Farrow** and the CCU team managed, very professionally, by **SSgt (FofS) Dave Wood,** and coached, impeccably, by **Sgt 'Muzzy' Musgrave** from the QMs. In their last match CCU Epi gave GRMS a lesson in football smashing them 5 – 0. The goal of the game came from **Cpl 'Tommo' Thompson** who was on hand for a 2 yard tap in. The icing on the cake came in the second half when **Sig Andy Overs** and **SSgt Wood** combined well in the area to slot home the 5th goal.

With the inevitable PFT coming up the Tp have been pushing themselves as hard as they can in the PT sessions. If that wasn't enough, they also get extra "fizz" at the end of each day with press ups and sit ups. Each person has to max out as much as they can and that score is then recorded and everyday a certain percentage of that total is done. **Sig 'Billy' Elliott** is now regretting maxing out on 100 sit ups and is finding it hard to get out of bed due to this.

Finally it is with great pleasure that the Tp gets to announce the arrival of a new Inst Tech for the first time since July 2007 in the form of **Sig Luke Sainthouse** from Blandford.

CS OPERATORS' LEAVING PARTY – DARTS NIGHT 08

This month Episkopi Tp finally said goodbye to the Tactical Radio Cell, who now head off to Akrotiri to form part of Airfield Service Flight. The event was organised by **Sig Clark** and open to all comers.

To mark the occasion the Tp held a darts night up at JR's Families club. Each team chose their own walk in music and original nicknames. The best nickname went to **Cpl Richie '180…….stone' Barlow,** although **Sig Dave 'Ted Bundy' Tannock** did come a very close second!

Four teams entered the competition; 'Beat Us And You Get Extras' captained by **Lt Dusty Miller**, 'The Blanket Stackers and Bin Men' captained by **Cpl Richie Silcock,** 'The Smooth Operators' captained by **Sig Matt Clark**, and 'Norfolk n' Chance 'captained by **Cpl Gaz McCoy.**

The first round saw 'Beat Us and You Get Extras' play the 'Smooth Operators' and 'Norfolk n' Chance' play 'The Blanket Stackers and Bin Men'. The winners of the first game were the 'Smooth Operators' with a 3 – 2 win and the 'Norfolk n' Chance' who also ran out 3 – 2 winners.

The Grand Final went right down to the wire. This saw **Sig Andy Overs** (who was honorary operator for the night) play **Capt Dave Watson.** After establishing an early lead, his inexperience began to show and the much older and experienced player pulled the game back. It was eventually decided with a "closest to the bull" shot, where **Sig Overs** bottled it and hit double 3! Although you may think this was probably the worst shot of the night, it wasn't, as earlier in the night **SSgt Wood,** who only had to hit the board to win….. missed!

In the end the competition was won by the gatecrashers from the QM's department who upstaged all of the Episkopi Tp teams and now proudly display the trophy in their building. It has no doubt already been entered onto the stores list and has a serial number, well done guys.

The 'Blanket Stackers and Bin Men' with their trophy

The night was a great success and a big thank you goes to **Sigs Tannock** and **Clark** and also to the bar staff who gave up their Saturday night to help us enjoy ours.

JOINT FORCES CIS (MIDDLE EAST)

Comd **Lt Col C R Sutherland**
COS **Maj PD Jones**

ROLE OF JOINT FORCE COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIDDLE EAST)

Based in the Contingency Operating Base (COB) Basrah, Joint Force Communications (Middle East) (JFCIS(ME)) has operational control on behalf of PJHQ J6 of all communication and information systems supporting the British Military in the Middle East.

This essentially involves supporting 4 components:

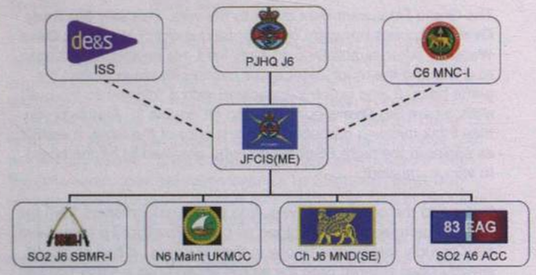
Senior British Military Representative – Iraq, based in Baghdad.

Maritime – UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain.

Land – Multi National Division (South East) based in Basra.

Air – 83 Expeditionary Air Group based in Al Udeid, Qatar.

Close liaison is maintained with DE&S ISS through staff officers integrated into the JFCIS(ME). We also work with our US Coalition partners to provide them with UK comms and ensure that their services are provided to UK military.



JFCIS(ME) wiring diagram

As expected for an organisation supporting the entire military effort, JFCIS(ME) is itself totally Joint and Royal Signals officers are in the minority amongst personnel from all 3 Services.

JFCIS(ME) is also supporting the UK strategic intent in Iraq by aiding the development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and rebuilding the Iraqi economy. Royal Signals G6 mentors are integrated into the Basrah Ops Centre and Iraqi Army 14th Div HQ providing technical advice and support to the ISF.

The ultimate aim is for the ISF to provide security for Basrah independently of any Coalition Forces. JFCIS(ME) has been heavily involved in renovating the Basra International Airport and has installed a state of the art digital exchange to help create a business hub in Basra to encourage economic development.

VISIT OF THE MASTER OF SIGNALS

In his first official engagement as the new Master of Signals, **Lt Gen R Baxter CBE** visited Royal Signals officers and soldiers in Basrah on 11 October 08.

Following a briefing on the diverse roles the Royal Signals are undertaking on Op TELIC, he met representatives from the many formed units in theatre, including 10 Sig Regt, 14 Sig Regt, 21 Sig Regt, USSO and 7 Armd Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (207) as well as individual augmentees from across the Corps.

The Master of Signals with the senior Royal Signals command team in Basra: WO1 (RSM) Greenwood, Lt Col CR Sutherland, Master of Signals, Maj A Greenfield, Maj PD Jones

LIFE IN THE JFCIS(ME)
- by Leading Logistician (Personnel) Emme Thomson Royal Navy

JFCIS (ME), emphasis on the 'Joint'. Usually top-heavy with Army, the RAF are swooping in and taking over (bet you thought you would never hear that!). Working in this joint environment has been a real eye-opener.

Normally a sea farer and working purely with Navy, this tri-service environment is definitely something I have written home about.

Whether it be the Aussie aerobics on BFBS to start the day (and trust me if I had a body like that I think I would join them) or trying to avoid the low flying remote controlled aircraft that whiz around the office as the Majs and Sqn Ldr crash them into anything that gets in their way, life in JFCIS(ME) is different on a day to day basis. It could be manic one minute then steady the next.

It's always easy to tell when the steady days roll on in, that's when **Maj Jones** sits back in his chair and the feet rise to the desk and **Lt Col Sutherland** produces a perfectly formed cake from a battered package sent by his wife (thanks **Mrs S** – they are greatly appreciated). There is no losing weight in this office!

If working with the RAF sounds like a daunting task, relax they are not as bad as you might think! So long as there is a large stash of coffee (percolated not instant!) as **Sqn Ldr Dart** can't even function without his 8 cups of coffee infusion (5 if it's the Columbian bean special).

If he was staying for Christmas instead of the doing the pink and fluffy tour, he would be getting an IV drip in his Secret Santa stocking. It's not just the RAF doing pink and fluffy tours though, is it **Maj Jones**?

Now on to the Senior Service. Obviously I know what its like to work with Navy guys but in the desert where we don't usually sail, it's slightly different! Bring on the rain so we can puddle jump, back in the water where we belong!

WO2(YofS) Trev Austin RM is a rare breed who transferred to the Royal Marines from the Army after many years service for the Corps. And his punishment for this betrayal; a 9 month tour...ouch! Think of the money Yeoman.

32 SIGNAL REGIMENT GROUP

CO **Lt Col HA Jenkins**
RSM **WO1(RSM) B Thornton**

32 Sig Regt Gp is a newly formed Regt to undertake duties on Op TOSCA in Cyprus. Formed at 1600hrs on Tuesday 16 Sep 08, 32 Sig Regt Gp brings together 254 personnel from 33 units across 2 Div to create the largest formed unit to be mobilised since the Suez Crisis in 1956.

32 (S) Sig Regt have taken the lead on this deployment and were themselves responsible for staffing the Support Sqn in conjunction with 51 (S) Bde. 42 (NW) Bde were responsible for the Ops Sqn with most of the troops coming from 4 Lancs and 75 Engr Regt, while 15 (N t) Bde provided personnel for the Mobile Force Reserve with a large contingent from 34 Sig Regt.

The Regt mobilised in 3 tranches through RTMC starting in the first week of September. This was followed by a very intensive 3 week training package at Nesscliff camp where we were put through our paces by the UNFICYP training team. The training was great and included everything from public order training for the Mobile Force Reserve right down to virtual tours of the buffer zone for the liaison officers.

With **Brig Hargreaves** taking the salute, the Regt donned their UN blue berets on a magnificent Regimental parade, ably supported by the Corps Band and **Sgt MacKenzie**.

The Regiment marching passed on the day they donned their UN berets

Since arriving in Cyprus in the first week in October, the Regt has been extremely busy patrolling the buffer zone, delivering humanitarian aid to the Marionites, hosting the Elders and **Caroline Flint** (amongst others), supervising minefield demolitions and much, much more!

VISIT OF THE ELDERS

We had barely said our farewells to the outgoing Regt when we had to turn our attention to the visit of 3 Elders: **Desmond Tutu**, **Jimmy Carter** and **Lakhdar Brahimi**. All 3 had come to Cyprus to lend their support and encouragement to the peace talks and to interact with the youth communities. Our part in their visit was to host a photo call and press conference in the bi-communal rooms at the Ledra Palace Hotel.

The photo call took place on the rear steps of the Palace, outside the messes with representatives from political parties from both sides of the Island. This was followed by a private meeting with the politicians before the Elders were whisked away by the secret service to their hotel. However, they weren't quick enough to stop the RSM, Adjt and Provo from catching a quick photo with **Desmond Tutu** as he returned from the ablutions.

Meeting Desmond Tutu

The following day saw the Elders holding their end of visit press conference in the Palace. With media from as far afield as Australia present the Palace was a hive of activity with journalists desperate to catch that exclusive sound bite or photograph.

NORTH WIND PATROLS

Every other Tuesday we carry out a North Wind Patrol. This is the delivery of humanitarian aid to the remaining Maronite communities living in the villages of Kormakiti, Karpasha and Asomatos in Northern Cyprus. After an initial brief we leave Ledra Palace Hotel to meet the convoy parked up at the Turkish checkpoint. Once we are ready the Turkish Secret Police turn up in an unmarked car to act as our escort and off we go.

The lady we deliver food to at the first village was away on holiday so we went straight on to Karpasha. We stopped outside the town hall and unloaded the food and gas bottles onto the pavement where the local mayor divided it up amongst the residents. We had been warned about one old lady, nicknamed '**Yoda**' due to her height and large stick. She soon let us know when it was time to help her carry and if you didn't walk quick enough she gave you a gentle nudge with her stick.

Unloading stores at Karpasha on the North Wind Patrol

The last drop off is at the small town of Kormatiki. Here we unloaded the water and gas bottles outside the local café and the residents unloaded the food truck themselves. Whilst they were doing that we went to the local nunnery where they gave us some lovely cherry cake and juice as a thank you for bringing the aid. It was a fantastic day out and the scenery is absolutely stunning.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj P McElwee**
SSM **WO2 McCracken**

With most of the advance party comprising of personnel from Support Sqn, the first week was a rush of information as we took over the running of Ledra Palace and the surrounding barracks.

It might have been a five star hotel in its day but the old Palace is severely lacking in places, not to mention the pool pump being broken. In reality, of course, it is some of the best accommodation you will come across on an op tour.

The MT have been busy getting to know routes around the island, the chefs have been getting to grips with haloumi and keftedes whilst the PTIs have been re-adjusting the mirrors in the extremely well equipped gym. Some poor souls have fallen foul to the resident barber, whilst some of the troops have started to look out a tailor already to make themselves a new suit.

The Sqn is looking forward to passing its initial inspections and being allowed to venture beyond the front door and enjoy the cultural delights that Cyprus has to offer.(And I didn't even mention **Capt Rich Bennett** getting lost on a 5km orienteering course at Akrotiri because he tried to navigate with his mobile phone!)

CISTAT SENNELAGER

OC **Capt (Tfc) Emsen**
YofS **SSgt(YofS) Webster**

To my knowledge this is the first time Communications Information Systems Training Advisory Team (CISTAT) have featured in *The Wire*, so I will start by informing you of who we are and what we do.

CISTAT is a 9-man team which works in the Field Training Group element of the Land Warfare Collective Training Group (Germany), LWCTG(G). We are currently based in Sennelager and were previously known as the COMSEC monitoring team.

Our main role within the team is to provide C3 support to other Training Advisory Teams (TATs) within LWCTG(G) and provide assistance to all BGs conducting pre deployment training, such as a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX). While deployed on exercise, we provide Bowman to the TATs and monitor the MOVECON net in order that all movement by vehicles within the training area is conducted within a safe environment.

Furthermore, we also operate a Defence Monitoring System (DMS) which scans and records all insecure nets being used by the exercising troops. This information will then be shown at the After Action Review (AAR) to inform the exercising troops and management where compromising transmissions were made which could have had a detrimental impact on personnel deployed on operations.

When the team is not exercising, we often get together to enjoy something outside of the work environment. An example of this was when we had the recent change over of hierarchy within the team. We have just seen the arrivals of a new OC, **Capt (Tfc) Emsen** and YofS, **SSgt(YofS) Webster**, who we would like to welcome to the team. Obviously the new arrivals meant we had to say goodbye to **Capt Tabor** and **SSgt(YofS) Wilcockson**, also known by the senior members of LWCTG(G) as **Yobbit**.

We would like to wish those departing the best of luck in the future. This change within the team was an ideal opportunity to go carting for the afternoon. Unfortunately **SSgt Webster** missed it as he had to return to the UK but the carting was an extremely enjoyable event, especially for me, as I won. **SSgt(YofS) Wilcockson** managed to sneak 3rd place on the podium but later confessed in the bar that he had cheated by cutting out half the track.

THE SANGCOM TEAM RIYADH

SANGOM DINING OUT

An auspicious event took place on 12 June in the British Embassy Riyadh when SANGCOM said farewell to 5 of its military members with a collective service totalling 120 years. **Majs Dave Ball, Stu Gillespie, Mick Purves** and **Scott Steven** together with **WO1(FofS) Andy Draper**, and their wives **Shirley, Emma, Sylvia, Donna** and **Caroline**, were all dined out in style.

The evening, apart from a slight blight on the transport front (no driver for the coach), went extremely well. Seventy three attendees, including GPT, BAE and civilian expat guests, sat down for the meal.

Catering by the Sheraton Hotel ensured that everyone was well fed and watered. Some excellent piano playing by one of the Music Staff of the British International School created a most convivial environment.

The PMC for the evening, **Maj Pete Stoddart**, ensured the maintenance of military standards by fining a number of attendees, for various misdemeanours, virtual bottles of Port – this is Saudi Arabia after all.

The Corps Band Master kindly faxed sheet music to Begone Dull Care and thus the Top Table, with the

leavers, subsequently left the dinner to the sounds of the Corps March.

Earlier in the day a SANGCOM Desert Hash took place for Team Members and their families, organised by **Maj Pete** and **Mrs Jo Stoddart**, as a desert farewell for the 5 leavers.

Following a 1½ mile undulating route around the Diplomatic Quarter, in 45 degree heat, everyone ended up at a small oasis and partook of a most pleasant buffet lunch.

The SANGCOM Hashers

FROM 'DORSET TO DESERT' - *by Maj Mark and Caroline Tivey*

When the term 'Culture Shock' originated, it must have been specifically designed to describe the experience of arriving in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia! For some reason trying to get through customs and immigration at the airport makes you feel like a criminal, yet we had nothing to hide and nothing illegal.

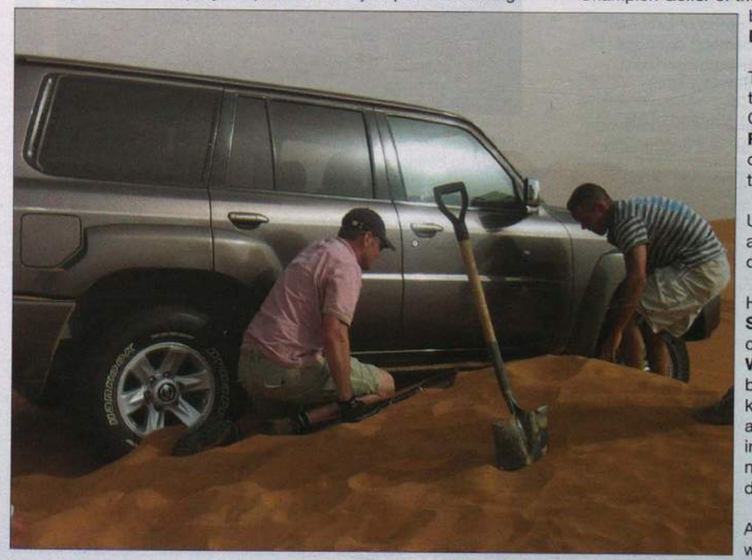
However, once clear of the immigration authorities, we departed the terminal and headed off to our new home. The vast, sprawling, urban scenery changed upon arriving at our fantastic and extremely spacious villa in what can only be described as a 'holiday style' compound. It looked inviting in the dark, we couldn't wait for daylight!

Just walking around the villa on the first morning tired us out! We then decided to explore the compound and were not disappointed, great facilities and clearly somewhere we could easily get accustomed to enjoying.

Then followed 3 working days for us both in our new work places with the expectation of a quiet weekend recovering from the rigours and turmoil of house moving and travel, we were so wrong!

In SANGCOM the opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment are different to those we expected and on only day five since our arrival in the Kingdom we found ourselves on a desert driving introduction day in an area called the 'Red Sands' approximately 75kms South West of Riyadh.

During the day we were briefed on the various safety (snakes and scorpions) and medical (sun burn and exposure) matters related to being in the desert (very hot!) and a full day of practical driving and recovery skills. Inevitably one vehicle ended up getting bogged-in within 50m of leaving the road. After much pushing, the aforementioned vehicle managed to extract itself. This was, however, only the first of many bogged in vehicles during the day. Some were more spectacular than others with **Dave Warriner**, a newly arrived Civil Servant, achieving a 5 star award for the most bogged-in.



Majors Paul Meehan and Mark Tivey realise that all that training in Iraq was for nought. They still got stuck!

Following a hearty lunch the reason for his recent award was highlighted when it was seen that his tyres, instead of being at 15 PSI, were at 35 PSI!

Lunch was followed by yet more digging and pushing with the intrepid explorers finishing the day off by driving through a ferocious sand storm which limited vision to a few metres – very exciting.

Finally driving onto hard gravel at approximately 1600hrs, the elements were not yet finished with us. While tyres were re–inflated to road pressures, a thunderstorm came through soaking everyone – and this was September?

All in all a fantastic and informative day. Yes, I managed to bog in at least twice (just to keep up with SO2 G6 – **Maj Paul Meehan**). Yes, we spent several hours digging vehicles out in this difficult and harsh environment. Yet, surprisingly, it has gone down as one of the most enjoyable days of our lives. If this is an indication of what is to come, then Dorset is already a distant memory. Bring it on SANGCOM!

SANGCOM GOLF SOCIETY 2007-2008 ROUND UP

Regrettably June brought with it the time of year when golfers need to get up at a ludicrous time in order to play, before the unbearable heat of the day is sufficient to make even hardened golfers think twice about heading out to the course. In our case that means it was time to draw the curtain on another year's golf within the SANGCOM Golf Society.

The very enjoyable and successful 2007 – 08 Golfing Season came to a close with the Prize Giving Dinner on Wednesday 11 June (the evening before the SANGCOM Dining Out which made for some very tired people on 13 June!) when 37 people sat down for a formal dinner.

Prizes were awarded for a number of events as follows: The Champion Golfer of the year was **Maj Stu Gillespie** hotly pursued by **Mr Gary Richardson, WO1(FofS) Andy Draper** and **Lt Col Ian Hunter**.

The annual Matchplay trophy was awarded to **WO1 John Walley.** Most improved Golfer was awarded to **Mr Gary Richardson** and the award for most contribution to the Society was presented to **Wg Comd** (recently retired) **Sean Ellis.**

Unfortunately we also had to say farewell to a number of people, too numerous to detail.

However special thanks must go to **Maj Stu Gillespie** who, almost single-handedly, coordinated most of the year's events; **WO1(FofS) Andy Draper** who kept the books in order; **Mrs Emma Gillespie** who kept the flag flying for the lady members and **Maj Dave Ball** who had been instrumental in producing the Society's newsletter and keeping the website up to date.

Although some, thick skinned individuals will keep playing through the heat of the summer we now look forward to the new season in commencing in October.

HEADQUARTERS 1 MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRIGADE CHICKSANDS

SO2 G6 **Maj Andy Campbell**

A little known fact is that HQ 1 Military Intelligence Brigade (1 MI Bde) has a Royal Signals Maj SO2 G6, the first was a Tfc Officer (Radio) and the second now a mainstream Tfc Offr – me!

The Bde HQ is set within the splendid grounds of Chicksands – the home of the Int Corps and has 3 Regular MI Bns, 2 TA MI Bns as well as the specialist units of 15 (UK) Psyops Gp (15 POG) and the Weapons Intelligence Specialist Company (WIS).

All of these units (less TA Bns) also have Royal Signals personnel attached, so it can be seen that the Corps presence is far reaching and able to provide support previously never offered.

This has mainly been predicated by the delivery of some Bowman elements but the Bde units also deliver JOCS and numerous specialised ICS and databases, which our soldier's support.

BRIGADE BATTLEFIELD STUDY – EXERCISE GREEN HORRIFIED

The first thing to stress is that this was a Study, not a Tour that took place in Sicily over the period 1 – 5 September 2008. It was centred upon Op HUSKY, the Allied Invasion of Sicily in 1943. The main aims of the exercise were to:

Provide Comd 1 MI Bde with an opportunity to lead, develop and exercise his newly appointed Bde Staff in studying the enduring characteristics of conflict, particularly with regard to the role of Intelligence. Understand the military importance of the Operation and examine the effect of not acting upon known intelligence.

Examine and understand the complexities of a combined and joint campaign, conducted in extremes of terrain against a determined, ideologically motivated armed force. In true military fashion the deployment RV at Heathrow was at the ungodly hour of 0430hrs for the flight to Catania, Sicily via Rome. Unfortunately delays there resulted in a late arrival at the hotel in Mascali, so the initial briefing and lectures started at 1900hrs.

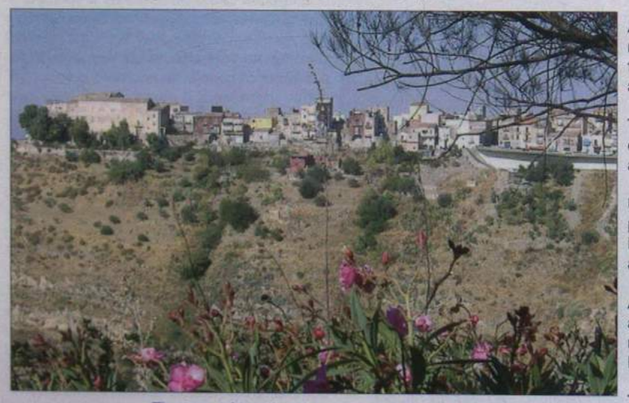
Each morning then began at 0800hrs with a series of lectures, either within the "Fuhrer's Bunker" (hotel basement) or on the ground across the Island; some of which offered magnificent views not just of the Island but of the battlefields of 1943.

In particular the stand at Centuripe demonstrated the endeavour and scale of bravery shown by soldiers not as well equipped or trained as we are now, as the Inniskilling Fusiliers surmounted an undefended cliff to secure the town on the high ground. This ensured the next push to Adrano was able to take place. The type of terrain encountered at Centuripe can be seen in the photo.

The most poignant moment of the study was the opportunity to visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Syracuse where **Col Nick Hubberstey**, Comd 1 MI Bde laid a wreath on the grave of **Lt C Hemingway** Int Corps.

Whilst there, I discovered that 9 Royal Signals soldiers are also buried there, 7 of whom lost their lives during Op HUSKY in July 1943.

Col Hubberstey laying the wreath in the Syracuse War Cemetery



The type of terrain encountered at Centuripe

A couple of unexpected events also took place, namely a hurricane with golf ball size hailstones which felled trees to block Route N114 between Syracuse and the Primosole Bridge.

This was closely followed by a theft from the minibus of a number of day sacks including passports, GPS and other personal items.

Undeterred we pressed on and amended the programme to ensure we completed the study at Messina on Friday lunchtime and made tracks to the airport for the early evening flight.

As expected the flight from Rome was delayed, although both Sicily and Italy customs officials showed no surprise that some of the party only had Police Reports in lieu of passports!

The bleary eyed end of study and farewells took place in the baggage hall at Heathrow at 2300hrs that night.

SPORT

2008 LAGOS TROPHY
ROYAL SIGNALS SAILORS EMERGE VICTORIOUS

The Lagos Trophy is presented for the best placed team in the Army Inter-Corps Dinghy Team Racing Championships. The 2008 Lagos Trophy proved to be one of the closest fought Championships for many years. With 5 teams entered (Infantry, REME, AAC, Royal Signals and RLC), the Thorney Island Watersports Centre (TIWSC) was the ideal location on 18 – 19 September. With light winds and strong spring tides, there were many challenges on the race course but this resulted in close racing and a considerable amount of team racing required.

After 2 round robins, at the end of Day 1, Royal Signals were in a 3 way tie for 2nd place and the AAC having won all their races in 1st. Day 2 saw a revived Corps team heading onto the water with determination and confidence. The final round robin saw the Corps team return to form and gaining a place in the finals against the AAC with the Infantry taking 3rd overall.

The wind remained faithful to provide an excellent final for the Lagos Trophy. The final between the AAC and Royal Signals was exceptionally tight with all team members finishing within a few boat lengths of each other. The first race saw the AAC picking up a red flag and then the Royal Signals had to take a penalty so it was all to play for when 4 of the 6 boats (2 from each team) came to a mark at the same time. The strong tide pushed them all together and onto the mark!

With the AAC on the outside and being penalised, this gave the Corps the advantage and able to take the first race. The second race was likewise very close but again the Royal Signals gained the advantage to take the second race and the 2008 Lagos Trophy. Congratulations must go to all the team for a hard fought victory.

The Royal Signals Team:
Lt Col Julian Bunce
Capt Rachel Thompson (Captain)
SSgt Stu Southan
Sgt Bernie Steadman
Sgt Tony Smith
LCpl David Wingate

The Royal Signals team Lt Col Bunce, Sgt Smith, Sgt Steadman, Capt Thompson, LCpl Wingate, SSgt Southan

ARMY ANGLING FEDERATION
INTER-CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008

ARMY ANGLING FEDERATION (COARSE) – INTER-CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008 HELD AT WILLOW PARK FISHERY, NEAR ALDERSHOT, 8 SEPTEMBER 2008

Historically the Corps has been the bridesmaid on a number of occasions, but this day was to be the most successful to date as for the first time, the Corps finished the day as Army Inter-Corps Team Champions. The successful 6 man team consisted of **Maj Chris Kidd**, **WO2 Kev East**, **SSgt John Hatch**, **Sgt Ben Bentley**, **Sgt Lance Buckle** and **Cpl Chris Treweeks**. All bar **SSgt Hatch** had represented the Corps in the past. The team was supported on the day by our President, **Lt Col (Retd) Chas Dale** who while claiming to "run the bank" actually strolled (an age thing) to pass on encouragement, vital information and changes to tactics.

At the start of the day, the team were quietly confident as they were considered non-runners but we knew the team had proven talent; **WO2 East** is the current Army Team Captain, **Sgt Bentley** has recently broken into the Army Squad and **Sgt Buckle** attended the recent Army trials but just missed out on selection. **Cpl Treweeks** has since gone on to be 3rd in this year's Army Individual Championship.

For the competition, each angler fished his own section of 8, with the angler with the most weight in his section securing a single point. On what can only be described as a complex venue in difficult conditions, the team initially stuck to the game plan but went on to develop individual tactics and work hard to beat those around them. The end result was a surprise to most and much closer than we would have liked, but with a total of 23 points we beat the Army Air Corps Team into 2nd place by a single point.

Section wins by **Maj Kidd** and **Sgt Bentley** helped but the star performance came from **SSgt Hatch** who put in the performance of his life to beat the Army Anglers on either side of him and won his section in his first championship – well done **John**! As the defending Champions, the Corps will now host the competition in 2009 and in closing this report, the team acknowledges that without the support of the Corps Sports Board and the Chains of Command, they would still be bridesmaids in waiting.

AAF(C) Inter-Corps Champions 2008 Team: Maj Chris Kidd, WO2 Kev East, SSgt John Hatch, Cpl Chris Treweeks, Sgt Lance Buckle and Sgt Ben Bentley

ARMY ANGLING FEDERATION (CARP) – INTER-CORPS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2008 HELD AT HORSESHOE LAKE 1 – 3 OCTOBER 2008

The Royal Signals team certainly bagged up on Horseshoe Lake this year and finished with a fantastic result in 2nd place. **Sgt Alex Rockett** and **Cpl Chris Burley** won 3rd place out of all 48 pairs in the competition and we each received a trophy.

This was the 4th annual Inter-Corps Carp Angling Championships and things looked promising. The venue this year was the famous Horseshoe Lake in Gloucestershire and the Royal Signals team was very strong, so we had every chance of stealing the title of Inter-Corps Champions. In addition we had a sponsor this year in 'The Bait Kitchen' which helped us out massively.

The peg draw was different this year compared to the last time the Corps entered a team, as the lake had be split into 3 sections and we were to have a pair from each Corps in each section with the peg being drawn out of a hat. The draw was all down to luck and how we applied ourselves in the swim that had been drawn. We pulled peg 6 out of the bag, which is not what we were hoping for but still we cracked on and tried to make the most of the cards we had been dealt.

The first fish caught for the Corps was an immaculate 20lb 12oz mirror bagged by **Sgt Alex Rockett** at 1320hrs on the 2nd day. **SSgt Carl Hindson** and **Sgt Bill Morrison** were getting frustrated in their swim as 7 swans kept attacking their baited area. After a long hike to their swim, **Sgt Gaz Ward** and **LCpl Gaz Ward** TA were rewarded with a beautiful 14lb Horseshoe mirror. What an amazing result from the Royal Signals, well done guys, see you on the bank next year! The winning team was the Royal Engineers, well done!

Sgt Rockett with his first fish

CORPS RUGBY

President	**Brig Davies**
Chairman	**Lt Col Hall**
Director of Rugby	**Maj Whitley**
Manager	**WO2 (SSM) Morgan**
Head Coach	**Sgt Francis**
Coach	**SSgt Wood**
Coach	**SSgt Lovell**

PRE-SEASON TRAINING CAMP 14 – 18 JULY 08

For the past 3 years the Corps rugby squad has held its annual pre-season training camp at RAF St Athan, just outside Cardiff. St Athan has excellent facilities including swimming pool, large gym with an indoor running track and 2 good quality rugby pitches. The focus of the training camp was fitness and preparation for the season in Merit Table 1.

FITNESS TESTS

First up was the MSFT (Bleep test) followed by the press-ups and sit-ups and after this the squad moved on to the 500m rowing challenge. Broken down into teams of 3, the players and management had to complete 500m within 1 min 45 secs on the rowing machines set to level 10.

This exercise was completed 5 times each; each repetition had to be within the time limit. After a lot of sweat and blood the first morning was over. Listed below are the basic fitness standards expected by Royal Signals rugby.

MSFT (Bleep test)	Backs and Back row	– 12.5
	Front five	– 11.5

Standards listed above were not achieved by every squad member but it has given us a good benchmark to start from, players will all be regularly tested throughout the season as well.

The rest of the week was split down with the players taking part in 2 sessions per day, 1 session of hard fitness training on the morning and the afternoon session on skills, drills and team play.

On the Wednesday morning the squad moved to Merthr Mawr sand dunes, which are about a 30 min drive from St Athan. Merthr Mawr sand dunes are the highest in Europe and it was a bit of a shock for some of the larger players in the squad because it was one of the hottest days of the year. The session was devised by the team manager **WO2(SSM) Mark Morgan** and basically entailed running up and down and around the dunes for 2 hrs.

Anybody who knows **Mark Morgan** will tell you that he is the most competitive person they have ever met and he had been secretly training on the dunes for about 6 weeks prior to the training camp to give him the edge over the players. Unlucky for him he was in a group with some of the fittest squad members **2Lt Rory Thompson** and **Sig Sean Thomas** and he trailed in 3rd every time.

As Head Coach, I placed myself in a group with players of the larger variety including **Sig Steve Jackson**, **LCpl Leroy Kent**, **Sig Toddy Toduadau** and **Cpl Seru Naivalu**.

Wednesday night was put aside for a squad bonding session in Cardiff but after the sand dune session no one even made it to the NAAFI bar – poor showing really.

The training camp was a great success and has given the squad a head start on other teams in Merit Table 1 in regards to the fitness standards required. It also gave the management the chance to have a look at some young and emerging players such as **Sig Webb** from 1 Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt (ADSR), he has become a very good addition to our squad for this season.

PAUL COLLINS MEMORIAL CUP 2/3 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Paul Collins Corps rugby tournament is played in memory of the late **SSgt Paul Collins**, who was a great Royal Signals and Army back row forward who sadly died of a form of bone cancer. This year's tournament took place at Blandford over the period 2 – 3 September 08 and was played in the format of a 10's competition.

Eight teams entered from around the Corps and a special mention goes to **WO1(FofS) Gaz Clapham** for driving the 1 ADSR team over himself at 56mph the whole way. The 8 teams played in 2 leagues throughout the day and games were 15 mins each way, ensuring a good work out for all the players. After a very hard day's rugby, it was good to see around 70 rugby players in the bar that night to carry on the motion. Well done to 14 Sig Regt for managing to keep the amateur rugby ethos and spirit upheld.

On Day 2 it was down to the serious business, in the plate semi finals were 1 ADSR easing through against a spirited 10 Sig Regt. In the other semi 14 Sig Regt beat 3 Div HQ & Sig Regt (DSR). In the cup semi finals it was 30 Sig Regt winning through against 18 Sig Regt and the shock of the competition was an excellent display by 11 Sig Regt which saw them beat pre tournament favourites and holders 21 Sig Regt.

The plate final was played out between 14 Sig Regt and 1 ADSR and 14 Sig Regt took the honours 27 – 12 after a very close match. The real match winner turned out to be the Dental Corps hygienist winger who scored a brace of tries (shame he won't transfer to be a lineman).

The cup final of the main competition was played out between the surprise package of the tournament 11 Sig Regt and 30 Sig Regt. 30 Sig Regt fielded a very strong team with 5 Corps first team regulars including **LCpl Leroy Kent** and **Sig Sean Thomas**, their experience paid off with a winning score of 32 – 10, including 6 tries. A special mention goes out to player of the tournament **Sig Sean Thomas** who was the leading try scorer in the competition and who was the real difference between the sides in the final with his sniping runs from scrum half and his pace.

Thanks to the new President of Royals Signals rugby, **Brig Davies** for presenting the winners prizes and also Royals Signals Corps colours to **SSgt Bob Lovell** and **LCpl Leroy Kent**. **LCpl Kent** has represented the Royal Signals for 5 seasons and he captained the side to promotion last season. **SSgt Lovell** has played for the last 6 seasons and has also captained the side on numerous occasions.

CORPS CRICKET

Suddenly the 2008 season was on us and it brought a change of direction with a new Captain and Secretary being appointed. Thanks to the outgoing skipper **Capt** (now Maj) **Alex Senneck** (don't stay away too long) and **WO2** (now Capt) **Shaun Fardy** for a fantastic job.

The new skipper **Cpl Keith Ford** and secretary **WO2 Ross Thubron** knew they had their work cut out and set about trying to emulate their predecessors and continue with a successful Corps side.

So the season began in early May with the customary Chairman's XI *v* President's XI which saw the Corps side come out healthy winners. In order to make a game of it, the Chairman's XI had 2 innings but at least it allowed the batsmen some early season practice and **Billy Williams** duly cashed in scoring 102 not out. The following 2 days brought the challenge of the Royal Marines and the REME in 2 highly competitive friendlies.

Both brought good wins for the Corps with some outstanding performances notably from **Sgt Stuey Houghton** with the bat scoring 86 and 64 and **Sig Dave Wade** who took 3 for 9 and 3 for 43; a trend they were to continue throughout the season.

The 1st Merit table game of the season was against tournament favourites the RA, a game in which we knew we had to put in a strong performance to have any chance of winning the Merit table and to lay down a marker. A solid team effort saw the Corps amass a challenging target of 260 for 7 with top batting performances from the skipper who scored 81not out, **Stuey Houghton** 59 and **SSgt Steve Fox** 43 and saw **WO2 Ross Thubron** almost have his teeth removed by a vicious ball that bounced up into his face.

We then tore into the Gunners with some tight bowling and bowled them out for 127 gaining a victory of 133 runs. **Cpl Ray Harrison** bowled brilliantly with figures of 5 for 32 and **Steve Fox** 3 for 26 to see the Corps home.

Next up was the token friendly against Welbeck College and provided the opportunity to write a wrong from the 2007 season. In keeping with his outstanding form **Stuey Houghton** tore the bowlers apart and scored a hugely impressive 124 which helped the Corps to an impressive 250 from 40 overs. In response the students never got close and **Ray Harrison took** 5 for 23.

The next 2 games saw the Corps in strong positions but the weather got the better of what could have been commanding victories. We had a gut feeling that this was going to come back to haunt us later in the season – how right we would be!

The next match saw us up against the RLC but once again the Corps put in a strong batting performance and racked up 280 with **Stuey Houghton** smashing another brilliant 108, **Steve Fox** scored 47 and **Daz Winfield** scored 37.

The weather put pay to 10 overs of the game and reduced the RLC to a target of 220 from 40 overs but some tight bowling reduced them to 181 all out with good work during the middle of the innings by **WO2 Ross Thubron**, 3 for 38 and **Cpl Ray Harrison**, 3 for 45.

Confidence was sky high now and next up were the RE at Blandford. Again the Corps bowled really well as a unit and bowled the Sappers out for 171 with **Warren Deeming** claiming 4 wickets for 37, **Ross Thubron** 2 for 28 and **Steve Fox** 2 for 28.

We then made light work of the target and chased it down with ease as yet again **Stuey Houghton** came in and smashed an unbeaten 115 not out supported by **Ross Thubron** barely able to get the ball off the square scoring a pathetic 46 not out and the Royal Signals won convincingly by 9 wickets.

Bring on the next opponents and next up was the AGC at Blandford and a similar performance in the field saw the bowlers restrict the AGC to 173 all out with **Ross Thubron** taking 4 for 23 and **Ray Harrison** 2 for 28. We could not have been more confident of victory and set about chasing down the AGC's total.

The batsmen took the field but for the first time **Stuey** failed and some really poor batting saw the Corps suffer its first defeat with only 1 real performance of note from **Sig Jitendra Rai** who scored 36 and we were all out for 142 – how gutted we all felt.

Due to the weather and the loss to the AGC, it was now make or break time against our foes the RLC with first playing second in a winner takes all match. Not only did **Fordy** lose the toss but our 2 stars **Sgt Houghton** and **Dave Wade** were absent playing Army cricket meaning the Corps were really up against it.

The RLC put us in to bat on a wet track and after a good start we ended up collapsing to149 all out, which was largely thanks to a Captain's knock from **Fordy** who scored a battling 68 and was very harshly given out to a shocker.

Both teams knew it would be a challenging total on that deck and we realised we had to strike early to pressure the RLC top

order. As it was, the RLC openers batted really well to make a solid start and suddenly the Corps was staring down the barrel.

Some tight bowling by **Sgt Dave Hudson** and **Ray Harrison** just couldn't establish a stranglehold on the game. In a desperate attempt to find a breakthrough and in a pit of desperation, **Fordy** introduced **Cpl Stu Jackson** to bowl and out of nowhere we saw **Jacko** claiming 3 quick wickets and between him and **Ray Harrison** it was going to be a tight finish.

Unfortunately the game was a game too far and it wasn't to be, with the RLC running out winners scoring 150 for 6 and with it the Merit table trophy for 2008 seeing the Corps beaten into 2nd only by 9 points. Well bowled **Jacko** who claimed 3 for 29 and **Ray Harrison** who took 3 for 35.

The Corps Skipper, Cpl Keith Ford with the Plate 20/20 Trophy at Aldershot

In the second Army Inter-Corps 20/20 Competition, the Corps was seeded 4 and really fancied their chances but the competition looked like being a complete washout on Day 1 with an absolute downpour but after some sterling work we managed to get the games started on Day 2.

The rain caused 3 teams to drop out, meaning the groups were re-organised and we were up against the RLC and once again the Corps had a bad start as we had in the league with a poor batting performance held together by **Billy Williams** and totalled only 109. The RLC again won a tight contest and frustratingly we were now in the plate competition.

This time the batting clicked and saw us win the plate competition comfortably. Roll on 2009 were we look forward to challenging for the main competition.

In hindsight a season which started out with so much promise saw the Corps fall just short in both competitions but nevertheless Runners Up and 20/20 plate champions really does suggest a case of so near yet so far.

It wasn't all doom and gloom as the Corps provided 4 members of the Army XI seeing **Maj Alex Senneck**, **Sgt Stuey Houghton**, **Cpl Jacko Jackson** and **Sig Dave Wade** playing at Lords in the Centenary match; well done guys, thoroughly well deserved.

2009 really does promise much and starts early with an overseas tour to Barbados first on the agenda before the Merit table commences in May. COs are thanked for their continued support in releasing players throughout the season, regardless of work commitments. Cricket Officers and interested players are encouraged to come forward and give the trials a go.

For information on Corps trials contact **WO2 Ross Thubron** on 94714 4034 or email 34SR-RHQ-YofS@mod.uk

Finally we must bid a sad farewell to **LCpl Billy Williams** now **Mr Billy Williams** and good luck in Civvy street we wish you all the best.

Cpl Jacko Jackson and Sgt Stuey Houghton on the balcony overlooking Lords before representing the Army in the Centenary match against the Royal Navy

BATTING AVERAGES 2008 – 50 OVER GAMES

Name	Games	Runs scored	Highest score	Not out	Average
S Houghton	8	560	124	1	80
B Williams	6	217	102	1	43.4
K Ford	9	295	81 n.o	1	42.1
Jitendra	3	42	37	1	42
R Thubron	7	112	46 n.o	2	22.2
D Winfield	7	113	36	0	16.1
S Fox	9	145	47	0	16.1
D Wade	6	45	23	1	15
R Harrison	10	73	31	3	12.1
S Jackson	2	23	14	0	11.5
J Binder	2	11	11 n.o	1	11
I Davies	2	14	10	0	7
K Homewood	2	14	9	0	7
W Deeming	3	9	7	1	4.5
D Hudson	8	1	2	1	4

BOWLING AVERAGES 2008 – 50 OVER GAMES

Name	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wickets	Average
S Jackson	8	1	29	3	9.6
D Wade	40.4	7	135	11	12.2
R Harrison	95	17	309	25	12.3
J Binder	12	1	58	4	14.5
Min	23	2	98	6	16.3
W Deeming	13	0	72	4	18
R Thubron	66.5	6	258	14	18.3
S Fox	40.3	3	159	8	19.8
D Hudson	54	1	225	11	20
Jitendra	11	0	36	1	36

CORPS GOLF

- by Capt Pace

The golfing season in Germany came to an end with the reinvigorated Annual Meeting. This event was last staged in 2004 and nearly didn't get off the ground this year until **WO2(YofS) Morris** stepped in and offered to take on the organisation.

The decision to play at Sennelager Golf Club did not detract those players from west of the Rhine area making the trip and some 20 players teed it up for the 36 hole event. The day started with the medal in the morning followed by the afternoon Stableford competition.

Although the weather stayed dry on the day, the course was heavy going and this did not help the scoring and so the eventual medal winner and Corps Champion Germany did very well to have an under par score.

Congratulations and well done to **Capt Greaves**, who had the lowest gross score of the day. The afternoon proved to be a closer affair with the top 2 separated by only 2 points. Well done to **Sgt Rawlings** who scored a creditable 37 Stableford points.

The Medal Winners were:

Capt Gaz Greaves	102 Log Bde	Net 70.
WO2 Andy Morris	CAST (G)	Net 71
Maj Bill Anderson	16 Sig Regt	Net 76

The Stableford Winners.

Sgt Dean Rawlings	BOWTAG (G)	37 points
LCpl Al Murray	7 Sig Regt	35 points.
Maj Si Meadowcroft	16 Sig Regt	34 points.

Longest Drive	**Sig Falkus**	16 Sig Regt.
Nearest the Pin	**WO2(RQMS) Arthur Buchan**	102 Log Bde.
Most Golf	**WO1(YofS) Ian Fawcett**	BOWTAG (G)

The day also doubled up as an opportunity to put on display the Wedgewood Inter-Corps Trophy and also present Inter-Corps League winners medals to the squad of players who represented the Corps this season:

Capt Bob Pace	16 Sig Regt
Capt Frank Cowan	7 Sig Regt
Capt Gaz Greaves	102 Log Bde
WO2(YofS) Andy Morris	CAST (G)
WO2(FofS) Gaz Walton	ISS(G)
Sgt Nic Savchenko	RSSST(G)
SSgt Tony Ramsay	ARRC G6
LCpl A Job Lee	7 Sig Regt
Cpl Nige Brennan	1 ADSR
Cpl Roge Malcolm	1 ADSR

The final match of the season was due to be played against our nearest challengers the Infantry. But with our overall points score unbeatable and an inability to arrange the match, the Infantry eventually forfeited.

Throughout the season there were some memorable performances notably from **LCpl Lee** for his consistency and special mention to **Maj Meadowcroft** who only required 11 holes to humble his Sapper opponent. Also thanks to our new squad players who helped out throughout the season notably **WO2(FofS) Waring**, **SSgt Wells** and **SSgt Ramsay**.

Also a continued thank you to **WO2(FofS) Walton** who remains a staunch member of the squad who can be relied upon in all weather.

This was our first league victory in Germany for a number of years and further good news followed in September, when the

Maj Meadowcroft presents the trophy at Sennelager

Royal Signals A Team ran away with the Wedgewood Inter-Corps trophy.

A special mention to **SSgt White** who had an excellent day with 2 very good rounds; he was ably assisted by **SSgt Blackmore**, **Capt Greaves**, **SSgt Gibbs** and **Cpl Brennan**.

In summary, this has been an exceptionally successful season for Corps Golf in Germany. It is hoped that this continues through to 2009.

Should any new players wish to represent the Corps team in Germany they should contact either, The Corps Golf Secretary (Ge), **Capt (TOT) Pace** or The Corps Golf Captain (Ge), **SSgt Blackmore** for further information.

Finally a look forward to 2009 and the Corps Spring Meeting at Ashley Wood. **Maj Anderson** of 255 Sig Sqn is currently talking his SSM and YofS out of retirement and **SSgt Blackmore** arrives soon to add to the squad of **Capt Pace**, **Sig Falkus**, **Maj Anderson** and **Maj Meadowcroft** so look out 22 Sig Regt. 16 are coming.....

Corps golf players at Sennelager

LANYARD TROPHY

21 Sig Regt had begun preparation for the Lanyard Trophy months before the date of the competition. The troops had run the routes on Ex ENDURANCE BEAUFIGHTER and prepared all the equipment and vehicles they would need, but with such a large scale event there was still bound to be some problems.

The advance party had deployed as early as Sunday 7 September and even the main body left the following day. The troops began on the Monday by setting up the main Check Points (CPs) in Crickhowell Camp and covering the routines, layout and reporting procedures for each individual CP; these routines and checks were paramount to ensuring the safety of the teams and the smooth running of the event.

Once all our teams clearly understood what was required of them, they packed their kit and waited for their transport which would arrive the following day. Early on Tuesday morning, the Merlin helicopter arrived and all were given a safety brief on the helicopter and its use before it disappeared for a short while as it conducted a recce of the routes.

On return it began lifting the teams and all their equipment to their relevant checkpoints. Starting with the teams based on the eastern side of the hills it made its way through the waiting troops but unfortunately for **Sgt Tinsley** and the rest of the team at CP 4, theirs was one checkpoint that the helicopter could not reach, giving them the unenviable task of tabbing to their CP with all their kit and equipment, which included 2 full jerry cans. While not strictly necessary, some teams did some additional tabbing, for example the team at CP 7 was delivered to within 1km of their hilltop CP but decided to tab 4km in the wrong direction.

Some say they were lost while others were adamant that they just wanted a quick walk around the rainy Welsh hills. Once the team finally arrived at their hilltop site they then realised just how strong the wind on the hills was and how robust the poles on their tent were not, resulting in some rather uncomfortable sleeping positions. Other CP teams also had similar luck with their tents bending under the intense pressure of the wind including the team at CP 4 who decided to move their tent during a storm, resulting in ripped canvas and broken poles.

Despite all of the anarchy and teething problems during the setup, the troops were in place with radio checks every 3 hrs by Tuesday. From then on, the troops would have to find their own ways to amuse themselves, including radios, books and magazines. At times, the local population also proved rather amusing, for example when **Sig Smith** and the rest of his team hid from the vertical rain and gale force winds, they were surprised to see one of the locals pop his head into their tent and wish them a good afternoon appearing immune to the inclement weather. After the waiting, the event finally began early Thursday morning.

The event started before dawn and was different from previous years as on this occasion competing teams would set off at 5 min intervals. This was partially to ensure the safety of the teams and also to make sure teams navigated their own routes throughout the competition. The route had also been kept a secret from the teams until the last minute, with the teams only aware that it would take place somewhere in the Black Mountains.

However many teams had 'done their homework' which included vast amounts of training in the area both to prepare physically for the event and also to familiarise themselves with the surroundings. Obvious trig points and other areas of interest including 'Sugar Loaf' were deemed by many teams to be likely locations for CPs and thus they had been recced well in advance. From the start it seemed clear that 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt and 11 Sig Regt would both be very close to the front with 1 Div HQ & Sig Regt who had done vast amounts of training not too far behind.

The 1 Div HQ & Sig Regt male team stops for food

Reports varied from CP to CP as to which team was looking the strongest. It was argued that 11 Sig Regt had the younger team and thus would be hungrier for the win but it was also argued that maybe the team were too young and would 'burn themselves

Team arriving at CP8 for weigh-in

out' too early. Only time would tell.
Throughout the day all the teams moved at a fast pace which resulted in everyone making it past the cut-off at CP 8 with no problems but towards the end of the competition, with the light fading and fatigue rising, times inevitably began to drag. Towards the last few hours the teams were finding it more and more of a challenge to navigate and this resulted in at least one team becoming 'temporarily unsure of their position' (You know who you are!). In any case as the day drew to a close the final team made it back to a warm welcome.

Long before the official announcement, it was clear that the 11 Sig Regt A Team had won, only narrowly beating the 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt A Team by 6 mins. Also well done to 11 Sig Regt for having the fastest female team and their B team had also taken the prize for the first full team of 10 people to finish, indicating a bright future for the Corps. Congratulations to the Veterans winners, 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt, who were the only Veterans in the event but who did finish a very creditable 4th in the overall placings.

The following day the teams would pack their bags and take down their tents, albeit rather slowly as they recovered from the previous day's efforts. 21 Sig Regt, as the organizers, would also spend a great deal of time centralising the kit, loading it on to transport and also taking down the administration and feeding tents. In its 29th year the event had been a clear success both from an organisational point of view and also from a competitive point of view. More importantly, we had seen the future of the Corps take home the main prizes which ensured everyone could go home with their heads held high.

11 Sig Regt A team – overall winners

11 Sig Regt – overall Female Winners

All teams produced excellent results and worked hard throughout the day. The final team places were as follows:

Regular competition			
Team	**Position**	**Time**	**Remarks**
11 Sig Regt - A Team	1st	9 hrs 55 mins	
18 (UKSF) Sig Regt	2nd	10 hrs 01 mins	
11 Sig Regt - B Team	3rd	11 hrs 52 mins	Saxon Trophy Winners
1 (RBY) Sig Sqn	4th	12 hr 47 mins	
1 (UK) ADSR – A Team	5th	12 hrs 50 mins	
2 Sig Regt	6th	12 hr 58 mins	
3 (UK) DSR	7th	13 hr 35 mins	
14 Sig Regt (EW)	8th	13 hr 48 mins	
1 (UK) ADSR – B Team	9th	15 hr 4 mins	
10 Sig Regt	10th	15 hr 11 mins	
ATR Pirbright	11th	16 hrs	
22 Sig Regt	12th	16 hrs 3 mins	
1 Mech Bde Sig Sqn (215)	13th	18 hrs 24 mins	
Female Competition			
11 Sig Regt	1st	13 hrs 56 mins	11th overall
1 (UK) ADSR	2nd	14 hr 54 mins	12th overall
3 (UK) DSR	3rd	19 hrs 24 mins	18th overall
TA Competition			
63 (SAS) Sig Sqn (R)	1st	13 hrs 32 mins	8th overall
Veteran Competition			
18 (UKSF) Sig Regt	1st	11 hrs 59 mins	4th overall

THE SAFETY TEAMS

Meanwhile the 2 safety/sweeper teams led by the Adjt, **Capt M-P** and 2IC 244 Sig Sqn, **Capt Warmington** rose early to ensure they were ready to react to any problems that the teams might encounter. Being very much 'fresh out of Sandhurst' early mornings were still the norm for me but I was clearly more than happy to be waking to a warm Portacabin.

After washing, shaving and getting dressed, we made our way to the food tents making sure we loaded up on food for the day's events, bearing in mind that our team leader was rather fit, so we had prepared for the worst.

The day started rather quickly and we immediately made our way in vehicles to CP2 where the first few teams were still arriving and a surprisingly large number of people were being left behind. This I later found out was mainly due to previous injuries, but most teams, as shattered as they already looked, slogged on. We then headed off in the general direction of the teams to cover the competition route through to CP3.

The pace was rather quick, we encountered quite a few teams and I was really rather surprised at how tired everyone was already. Once we arrived at CP3 we waited a short while to ensure that all of the teams were OK and once the majority of the teams were through we headed off.

At this time the 2nd sweeper team was making its way to CP4, so we could 'pepper-pot' around each other with 'one foot on the ground' allowing for greater maneuverability, while covering as much ground as possible. The next leg to CP4 was rather steep and **YofS Patrick** found himself on the floor at least once, much to our amusement.

Once we arrived at the CP we met with the 2nd sweeper team and then headed off to CP5, where we would once again swap over. So far so good, as we had not yet been needed. There were reports of minor problems but these were solved, either within the teams themselves or by our teams that were manning the CPs.

At CP5 we enquired about the speed of each team and were told that while 11 Sig Regt appeared to be ahead, it looked as though the competition was taking its toll on the younger members of the team. As the day went on different CPs would give a different perspective on what they had seen, indicating that the competition would be very closely fought.

With this news we once again set off along the competition route and again the pace was fast and I definitely had a great amount of respect for those taking part. Once we were up on the hills again, we took the chance to get some action photos of the teams running through the CP. At this point we also came across the SOinC and the Corps RSM who had made their way up the hill.

The Corps RSM with his enthusiasm decided it would be a good idea to march along with the eventual veteran winners a few hundred meters and try to spur them on but what he hadn't realised was that the SOinC had decided to take in the view from the top for a few minutes and possibly wait for the next team, meaning that the RSM would have to back track along the route – much to his dismay.

On our way down from the hill we came across a well trodden path and were moving at quite a fast pace. As we got closer to the bottom, the path began to get wetter and by the time we were almost down we were closer to ice skating than we were walking and I believe our Adjt, the team leader, was the only one not to have fallen by the time we arrived at the next CP, again the same can't be said for **YofS Patrick**.

21 Sig Regt Adjt helping YofS Patrick up again!

Most of the day had however gone without incident and it wasn't until CP9 that one of the teams had come off route and as a result we decided that the 2nd sweeper team would wait at the top of the hill until everyone had passed, while my team tabbed the final 7 or so kilometers to the finish line.

The troops at the finish line, mistaking us for a team, clapped us in until they realised that either we weren't a team or we were missing at least 2 of our number, either way this stopped them clapping. At this point we all decided to make our way to the feeding area where the chef and his team were also still hard at work.

Once finished, some of the team stayed awake while others decided to get a quick nap remaining in their 'ready to move' state.

The day finally drew to an end when the remainder of the sweeper teams returned at approximately 0130hrs signaling 'ENDEX for the competition, even if there was still a vast amount of administration to be done.

TUG-OF-WAR REPORT

10 SIGNAL REGIMENT

This season was the first that 10 Sig Regt have been on the Tug-of-War circuit. The aim for the season was to have a male and female team represented at as many competitions as possible and gain an invite to the prestigious Royal Highland Games at the end of the season.

The geographical spread of the Regt makes fielding teams in sporting events challenging. The nature of the training required for Tug-of-War meant that the Regimental team was based around ECM(FP) Sqn, where the coach **SSgt(SQMS) Mclean** is posted.

MORRISON CUP AND HERTS COUNTY SHOW

In preparation for these 2 events, **SSgt(SQMS) Mclean** arranged a week long training camp in Blandford. The male squad was made up of total novices who had never picked up a rope before.

After a solid week's introduction to the sport and tough training, the team competed in both weights at the Morrison Cup and managed to avoid coming last in each weight. This was a good achievement for a team of total beginners.

Two days later the squad journeyed up to the Herts County Show and welcomed back the anchor, **Sgt Del Farr** from his holidays to strengthen the Squad. The team entered both weights and avoided the wooden spoon again by beating 4 Regt RA. This was an encouraging start to the season, but due to the Regt's commitments, the male team would not compete again until near the end of the season.

The female team shocked everyone in the first pull of the Morrison Cup by beating 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, one of the favourites, in the first pull of the day. The only ends the girls lost that day were against 11 Sig Regt in the final.

GUNNER PULL

The female team were released to compete in the Gunner Pull and finished runners-up in the 520kg category. The team were showing great promise for the Army Championships, but they were unable to compete due to unavailability of key team members on the day.

The month of August was spent in Northern Ireland training for the Hillsborough Oyster festival and the Braemar Games.

Training was conducted on camp and also with the Northern Ireland civilian team. The World Indoor Champions, Richhill, located just down the road from camp also conducted a few training sessions near the end of the month.

HILLSBOROUGH OYSTER FESTIVAL

The squad entered this 'Catchweight' competition with the 640kg team which would compete at Braemar. Coming in off ex to compete, they managed to beat all the 'very heavy' young farmers' teams before losing in the final to Richhill.

The experience gained in this competition was to prove invaluable at the Braemar Games a few days later.

BRAEMAR GAMES

The team exceeded all expectations at Braemar by beating 26 Regt RA in the first pull of the day 2 – 0. Failing to qualify from the pool, the Regt were then placed in the plate competition. Another outstanding pull saw them defeat 4 Regt RA to reach the semi-final of the plate competition.

The semi-final pitted them against 26 Regt RA again but it proved one pull too many for the team as they took them to the line just to go all the way forward again. The Regt had an extremely enjoyable time at the games and a few crates were owed after the team all appeared on Sky News that evening!

SEASON SUMMARY

In summary the Regt enjoyed an encouraging season finishing 2nd at 3 events and reaching the Plate semi-final at Braemar. This can be built on for next season and hopefully some silverware will start to grace the trophy cabinet at Corsham.

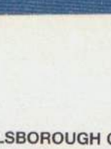
10 Sig Regt pulling hard at the Braemar Games Tug-of-War competition

Congratulations go to the following squad members on their personal achievements in the sport this season:

SSgt(SQMS) Mclean – Corps, Army and Combined Services
Sgt Philips – Army Ladies and England Ladies
Sgt Farr – Corps
Cpl Bond and LCpl White – Army Ladies

THE ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig NF Wood



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Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) IN Greig
Welfare Secretary: Miss L Rowley
Membership Secretary: Mr PJ Cuckow

Mr Peter Cuckow
Tel: 01258 482090

On behalf of us all here in Assn HQ, may I wish all members and their families a Happy Christmas. We hope you enjoy a safe, healthy New Year and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the annual reunion at Blandford 27/28 June 2009.

Branch News. **Frank Dempster**, Secretary of the Berwick on Tweed Branch, has a new telephone number: 01289 306246. After many years in post, **Jim Nelson** has stood down as Secretary of the Newcastle Branch. **Eric Frame** is the new Hon Secretary and can be contacted on: 0191 2584303. May I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere gratitude to all Branch and affiliated Association officials for their support over the past year and a special mention to the Branch Standard Bearers for their unstinting support. Thank you also to all Branch members for going along to meetings and helping to keep Branches alive and well.

RSA 50 Year Badge. The RSA 50 Year Badge is awarded to those life members who accrue a total of 50 years' service. This can be made up from Regular/TA/National Service, plus 'active support' to a branch of the RSA after leaving the Corps. This 'active' support is defined as attending monthly meetings and helping to organise other events laid on by the Branch. If you think that you may qualify for this prestigious award, please get in touch with your Branch secretary, who has the application forms.

RSA Website. Have you checked out the photo gallery on the RSA website yet? Go to; www.royalsignalsassociation.co.uk, click 'Lost contacts' then go to 'Photo gallery'. Here you will find lots of photos of our members from yesteryear.

New Life Members. A warm welcome is extended to the following members, enrolled since the last issue of *The Wire*:

Rank/Name	Service	Branch/Unit
SSgt Frank McGuinness	1985-07	
LCpl Harry Dimelow	1982-96	
Cpl Jenny Hine	1993-03	
LCpl Paul Burton	1992-99	

Cpl Justine Sorbie	1991-date	
Sgt Vernon Radcliffe MBE	1941-48	
LCpl Kenneth Heath	1941-46	
Cpl Bruce Wilkinson	1961-66	
Cpl James Alexander	1996-06	
SSgt Gareth Williams	1993-date	HMS Collingwood
Cpl Chris Davies	1995-01	
Capt Richard Dilnot	1989-date	
Cpl Mike Durward	1980-89	
Sgt Billy Bremner	1987-00	
Cpl David Cunningham	1985-97	
Sig Leslie Earl	1957-59	
Cpl Jeff Osborne	1986-96	Australia
LCpl George Smith	1950-52	Sheffield Branch
Sgt Alan Cobb	1964-78	
Cpl Bob Cruickshank	1987-94	
Sgt Archie Croft	1961-84	
Cpl Fred Plant	1954-56	
Sig John Cunningham	1948-49	
Cpl David Dougans	1985-00	
LCpl Bruce Saunders		
Sgt Max Maxwell	1987-date	
Sig Phil Burek	2002-05	
SSgt John Martin	1977-92	
Sig Zoe Holland	1992-95	
Cpl Paul Wooding	1981-89	
SSgt Scott Tomblin	1996-date	
Cpl Alistair Wilson	1991-03	
Sgt Ronald Stadius	1964-77	
Sgt Tony Knight	1975-91	Hartlepool Branch
Sig James Bennett	1950-52	
Pte Joy Bone	1943-45	
Cpl Nathan Standish	1994-07	
LCpl Alan Diplock	2006-date	Cambridge Branch
Sig Ben Morris	2008-date	Cambridge Branch
Sgt Topo Topley	1971-84	
LCpl Carl Grooms	1998-08	
WO2 Jon Ainsworth	1983-08	
LCpl David Blake	1957-59	
LCpl Brian Joplin	1977-79	Darlington Branch
Sgt Michael MacDonald	1984-00	Darlington Branch
Sgt Mick Jones	1971-07	
SSgt Paul Robertson	1984-08	
Cpl Tom Cockerill	1999-03	
LCpl Paul Kendrick	2000-06	
Sig Mark Heath	1988-94	
Sgt Jamie Matthews	1995-date	RMAS
Sig Stuart Simpson	1986-97	
LCpl Gary Wilsea	1988-97	
Sig Robert McNeil	1980-82	
LCpl Tom Venn	1960-63	
Cpl James McGinn	1979-92	
Sig David Rhodes	1994-01	
Cpl Craig Ball	2001-07	
Sig Tony Highfield	1959-61	
Cpl David James	1975-86	
Sig Ron Smith	1959-61	Chester Branch
Maj Alex Middleton	1972-08	
Sig Eliot Harper	1993-96	
LCpl Vince Edes	1983-89	
Cpl John Browne	1977-88	Chesterfield Branch
Sgt Bob Hamilton	1966-78	Aldershot Branch
Cpl Aidan Scully	2000-date	
LCpl David John	2004-date	Aberdeen Branch
Cpl Marc Wiggin	2000-date	Aberdeen Branch
Sig Alan Starkie	1965-73	
Cpl Gwylim Austin	2001-date	7 Sig Regt
WO2 Kevin Scott	1980-04	
SSgt Gaz Little	1993-date	SHAPE
Sgt Granny Groundsell	1991-date	
Sgt David Gill	1976-90	
Cpl Jayne Morris	1983-87	
WO2 Paul Redmond	1979-97	
LCpl Steve Bowman	1985-94	
Sig Keith Lovell	1996-01	
Sgt Steve (Taff) Davies	1986-98	
Sgt Iain McConachie	1984-06	
Cpl Leslie Oliver	1985-98	
LCpl Lacey Moran	1999-06	
LCpl Andy Mooney	1987-97	
WO2 Sean(Taff) Bryant	1980-05	
LCpl Nathan Gray	1995-98	
Sig Mike Yorke	1959-61	Berwick Branch
Pte Marjorie Bosworth	1942-45	
LCpl Bill Woodley	1950-52	
Sig Colin Knapman	1954-66	
SSgt Charlie Henson	1988-date	228 Sig Sqn
Cpl Derek Dixon	1988-05	
Sig Chris Gelken	1971-76	
Sig Ricky Wray	1985-90	
LCpl Russell Pollard	1985-06	
Sig Alan Lewis	1965-75	
Cpl Frank Millward	1959-68	

DONATIONS

Collection at the funeral of **Maj Ray Webb**	£245.00
Stewart May	£3.50
Certa Cito Lodge	£30.00
Funeral collection for **Doreen Hill**	£79.86
Chesterfield Branch RSA	£50.00
Tom Byatt	£10.00
Theresa and **Jack Stokes** in memory of **Mrs Doreen M Hill**	£50.00
Mrs Joy Bone	£15.00
Exmouth Branch RSA	£20.00
Guernsey Branch RSA in memory of **Lt Col Jimmy Webber**	£500.00
Maj R H Blizard	£350.00
C I Rimmon in memory of **Maj James Riley**	£25.00
R Waldron	£20.00
Maj Jack Wilderspin BEM	£20.00
Tom Venn	£10.00
Terry Poingdestre	£20.00
Reading Branch RSA	£52.00
Vernon Radcliffe	£10.00
Cheques for in memory of **Robert Summerscales**	£470.00
Bert Hodgson in memory of his father **Capt Herbert S Hodgson**	£200.00

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Chairman **Noel Moss**
Secretary **Mary Pagan**

We have enjoyed a very successful summer programme with a visit to Arundel Castle arid 2 events in August, our attendance at the RMA Sandhurst for the Final Rehearsal of the Sovereign' s Parade and our annual evening at Kneller Hall. We were joined at. Sandhurst by friends from other branches, notably as far afield as Southampton. They stayed for our customary picnic following the parade, having been given the facilities or a cricket pavilion. The parade, viewed by some critical eyes, was commendable and was suitably complimented by the reviewing officer.

This year the Royal Military School of Music had changed its format for the audience at Kneller Hall but the fact that our picnic prior to the concert took place in the 'auditorium very close to the orchestras, only enhanced the evening which fortunately was a very fine one. An unscheduled event but well patronised by the branch for its 3rd successive year since inauguration, was the biannual concert "Music on Fire" held in the grounds of the RMA Sandhurst. A rather jolly audience of thousands was assembled, equipped with picnic tables, wine coolers, gastronomic delicacies and accoutrements, which in one case was seen to include a candelabra. The panorama displayed on the college façade depicting; service throughout the ages was followed after the interval by a James Bond theme.

The entire evening was enhanced by a magnificent fireworks display and in darkness, an impressive parachute drop. Leaving the premises among thousands of motor cars was not an easy exercise but the soldiers did a magnificent job of skilfully navigating the traffic out through all 3 college entrances. The event, in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund, is a magnificent one and well deserves attendance.

EAST KENT BRANCH

Chairman **Brian Calladine**
Secretary **John Ballantyne**

On 6th September, the Lord Lieutenant of Kent organised a parade through Canterbury, the salute taken by **Gen Sir Richard Dannatt**, followed by a Service of Thanksgiving in the Cathedral to celebrate 100 years of the Territorial Army. Our standard was one of the many standards paraded at this very moving event.

On September 14th, our President organised a trip to Diggerland. Twenty one members ventured there and after lunch while the ladies watched, the men had a wonderful time on JCBs, Dumper Trucks and Diggers etc. **John Badcock** organised a competition, which entailed hooking 3 ducks out of a pond with a digger in the fastest time. **Mike Barrets**' grandson, **Steven**, won this with the fastest time of 50 secs. He was more than happy with his prize of a miniature JCB.

The October meeting was a visit to Bluebirds Restaurant in Dover. Thirty seven members met there for lunch and a table quiz organised by **John Ballantyne**. The winning table had a bottle of wine to enjoy with their lunch. **Marion Ballantyne** ran another successful raffle.

EXMOUTH BRANCH

Chairman **George Walker**
Secretary **Paul Upton**

On 11 June, **Elizabeth** and **Jack Mount** extended a warm welcome to our members at their home in South Moulton. The lunch, to which we were all invited, was a splendid meal and as the photo shows, everyone felt extremely grateful for such generous hospitality.

Branch Members at the home of Elizabeth and Jack Mount for lunch in June

Branch members were invited to a garden party on 15 July at the lovely home of **Maj Gen Ian** and **Mrs Annie Sprackling**. Our ever attentive hosts kept us well supplied with a seemingly endless supply of canapés and drinks and this combined with beautiful gardens and superb weather made for a very memorable day.

The garden party on 15 July

August was a sad month for our Branch as we lost 2 staunch Branch members. **Elsie Osborne** died on 1st August and **Doreen Hill** passed away on the 8th. They are sadly missed by all members and our thoughts are with their relatives at this time.

On 6th August, 31 members made a return visit for lunch at The Nutwell Lodge in Exmouth. The food was great and the camaraderie superb. This venue proves to be a very popular choice with our group and more visits seem likely. Later in the month, on the 28th August, we had an impromptu lunch call at The Rumblin Tum in Exmouth at which some 15 members turned up to sample a lovely meal at this recently renovated venue.

On 3rd September, our social secretary, **Mr Bob Coole** arranged a super outing to Dartmouth by rail and ferry from Exmouth. The trip, by diesel and steam train was superb and to find that our compartment on the steam train had been reserved for Royal Signals Veterans made us all feel really important.

On 25th September 20 Branch members attended The Last Night of the Proms at The Pavillion in Exmouth. I don't know what we sounded like but everyone enjoyed the evening and the refreshments, passed around by the attentive organiser, **Mr Bob Coole**.

LINCOLN BRANCH

Chairman **Fred Patman**
Secretary **Maj (Retd) Derek Wood MBE**

Sad news first, we lost 2 of our members **Colin Hall** and **Ken Maxfield** - both were loyal supporters of the Branch. The Standard and a good turn out of members at both funerals ensured that we gave them a fitting last parade. We will remember them.

A VISIT TO RAF DIGBY

WO2(FOS) David Street currently serving with JSSW RAF Digby and a branch member organised a visit to the WW2 Ops Room Museum at the Station .The museum is situated in its original bunker and as you enter it really is like stepping back in time, the atmosphere was incredible as you walked through the door and down the passage to the Ops Room which has been left exactly as it was on that last day of what we now know as "The Battle of Britain". **WO Dave Harrigan** RAF is the current museum historian and went into great detail as to the setting up of the Ops Room. All the Battle Boards giving information of the aircraft and pilots airborne were left as they were on that last day, none of the technology of today of course, just information

chalked up on the boards and the display table set in the well of the Ops Room with its model aircraft showing the locations and the long sticks used by the WRAF around the table to show enemy aircraft incoming and our aircraft scrambled. The defence of the East and South Coast and all the airfields were controlled from this very room. As **WO Harrigan** explained, there was a vast area of airspace that had to be defended against huge numbers of enemy aircraft attacking on a daily basis, day and night, then you began to see the enormity of the task for the young pilots, some as young as 17., The Roll of Honour Boards displayed on the walls were evidence that they gave their all for their Country.

The communications equipment was of course very much of interest to us. There were wireless sets recognised by many of our members as sets they had worked on, the 10 line magneto switchboards and Tele "F" sets around the room up above the table in the well, enabled all the Officer Controllers to get a clear view of the table and to scramble aircraft accordingly. Looking at it now, it looked very crude and basic but of course it was very effective then. The original signal from Number 10 stating that the Country was now at war with Germany is framed for all to see. The chairs where the King and Queen had sat when they visited the Ops Room are here too. There was a special desk for the one Army Officer. He was a Maj in the Royal Artillery who controlled the Ground to Air Gun Fire and the control of the Barrage Balloons .

I hope that other Branches reading this will perhaps see its value as a well worthwhile visit. We all thoroughly enjoyed it. Lunch was served in the WOs and Sgts Mess and we gave a big thank you to **WO2(FOS) Street** and to **WO Harrigan** RAF for organising what was for us all a memorable day. The value of serving members of the Corps as Branch members cannot be overstated. Certainly **Foreman Street** of RAF Digby and **Sgt Archie Davidson** from RAF Waddington have given us a massive boost and keep us up to date with what is happening in the Corps.

NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH

Chairman **Mr J Reilly**
Hon Sec **Capt I Wolfe**

It is always good to begin on an optimistic note; our Branch membership has begun to increase in the past few months. The best recruiters are always those on the inside, so praise must go to our regular attending members who have obviously been using the grapevine. Success breeds success of course and we all thrive on seeing "old friends" reappear. We all love to recount old stories ad infinitum. The quality of our speakers and their interesting subjects cannot be overlooked and must also be given credit.

APPEAL We need to see new members joining us soon. We appreciate how busy those serving in the Regt are these days and recall how it was, even in our time in the 60s, 70s and 80s. However something must be done to ensure the successful future of the NI Branch of the Royal Signals Association. The average age of the current membership means fewer of them are able to march the mile to St Mark's Church on Remembrance Sunday each year; 4 of us on parade in 2007. Speaking of long-serving regulars, we must give a special mention to **Miss Anna McClean** who, at our meeting on 17th September said quietly to me that she would be 97 the following day but "you are not to tell anyone". Our President knew her date of birth but in Anna's words; **"Major Johnston** is too much of a gentleman to mention it".

This says a lot about me! The first time **Anna** mentioned her age publically was to The Princess Royal HRH Princess Anne on her Clonaver visit. Some of us will remember **Anna** as a Sgt Instructor to new Comcen Operators and also for WRAC recruits. In civilian life, **Anna** for many years was a Social Worker with the Northern Ireland Health Service. Knowing **Anna** we are sure she looked after her clients very well. We also would thank our regular member **ex-WO2 Brian Chambers** without whom **Anna** would have difficulty doing the long journey to meetings as she stopped driving recently.

FUTURE SPEAKERS

We look forward to our next 2 speakers to complete the 2008 programme.

November: "Airfields in Northern Ireland in WW2." By the Chairman of the Ulster Aviation Society.
December: "The Battle of Trafalgar." by **Lola Armstrong**, who also spoke to us in April on the famous Clandeboye Family in Ulster.

HADRIAN'S WALL CHALLENGE

We are very proud of the achievement of one of our overseas members, **Mark Barrass** who lives in Northumberland. **Mark** sent us 2 items by email in August:

Email 1 sent before his adventure:

Hello all. This might be the last e-mail you will be getting from me. As you can see by the title the long range weather forecast gives me bright and breezy on Wednesday but rain every other day. For those interested here is a breakdown of where I will be (hopefully).

Day 1 (Sun) Start pm from Bowness on Solway and after a nice lunch with my wife. Will be walking 12 miles (flat and easy) and overnight at Burgh-by-Sands

Day 2 (Mon) Walk 15 miles (a bit undulating) to Bankshead, staying overnight in YH camping barn.

Day 3 (Tue) Walk 10.5 miles (very hilly) to just above Haltwhistle. Staying overnight at Hadrian's Wall campsite where me and Hamish stayed twice when walking the middle section for PDSA.

Day 4 (Wed) Walk 14.5 miles (very hilly) along some hilly, craggy terrain arriving at Chollerford and staying at the Riverside campsite.

Day 5 (Thu) Walk 17 miles (slightly undulating) moving down to meet the river Tyne and staying somewhere in a wood on the outskirts of Heddon-on-the-wall?

Day 6 (Fri) Final 15 miles (quite flat) following the River Tyne through the Toon to the finish at Segedunum Fort at Wallsend.

A total of 84 miles in just over 5 days. I could do it a lot faster but I want to enjoy it. Just finishing packing and having problems fitting everything into my bergen so I am just about to go upstairs and throw some stuff out (therma-rest, sleeping bag and some food). But don't worry I will leave enough to survive!

Email 2 sent after **Mark's** adventure:

Hello all. I've only just recovered from my 'ordeal' last week and sending out a BIG THANK YOU to all for sponsoring me for the walking of Hadrian's Wall. I finished at lunchtime on Friday so it took me less than 5 days but it was hard work. This was mainly due to the "lovely" summer weather we are all becoming used to.

It rained most days and for those of you who have been out camping, putting up a tent in the rain was not as pleasant as it could have been. Everything is dried out now except maybe my feet, thought I had the makings of trench foot at one stage and I'm not joking. It all finished OK and I got through the last 15 miles by Friday lunchtime with some brisk walking through Newcastle which was a boring end to the journey after all the scenery that had gone before. I took nearly 100 digital photos through the journey. I have had sponsorship; the total is well over £600 going to 'Help for Heroes'. Once I've shaken off a couple of niggling injuries, I can start training for the Great North Run in October.

Best regards to all, **Mark Barrass.**

Full marks to **Mark** from the NI Branch. It's good to see we still have some fit members! As always, we issue an invitation to all serving or ex-members of Royal Signals, Regular or TA and ex-members of ATS/WRAC who served with Royal Signals, to join us at Clonaver Park TAC, Belfast, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

READING BRANCH

Chairman **Mrs Pauline Tennant**
Secretary **Lt Col (Retd) Hugh Nealon**

Our busy programme of events continues. Since our visit to the Reunion at Blandford, where our Standard Bearer, **John Mumford** won the Cup, we have managed a few social gatherings, including a couple of informal pub lunches, a Quarterly Branch Business and Social Meeting, and a Summer Lunch. The Summer Lunch, organised by **Thelma** and **John Wakefield**, was a new innovation in our calendar, and was considered a great success by those who attended. It is something we shall try again next year.

In August we sent a small party, to join some of the other local branches, at RMA Sandhurst, to watch the Commandant's Parade. This is the full dress rehearsal for the passing out parade that follows 2 days later. It was a splendid day out and the music and spectacle and the picnic lunch afterwards, including a chat with the Royal Signals element of the College, was much enjoyed by all those who attended.

At the end of September the Branch held its 38th Annual Reunion Dinner at Sonning Golf Club. Our guest for the evening was **Brig David Hargreaves**, Comd 2 (NC) Sig Bde, who gave an excellent address on the current activities of the Corps. During the evening our Membership Secretary, **Col (Retd) Paddy Verdon OBE** was presented with his 50 Year Badge and Certificate, by our President **Brig Tony Verey QVRM TD DL**.

Well done **Paddy**. **Paddy** had to sing for his supper and propose the toast to our guests, during which he managed to include his thoughts on the current court case affecting some of the Gurkhas in this country. This reminded us that we continue to support the pension of a retired Gurkha in Nepal, via the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Our branch members have been more than generous in their support for this old soldier.A note for next years diary. Our 39th Annual Reunion Dinner is planned for the 3rd October 2009.

By the time this report is published, the Remembrance period will be over but we plan to support 94 (Berkshire Yeomanry) Sig Sqn at their parade in Windsor and the Salvation Army Parade of the Standards in Reading. Hopefully we won't be too late to mention that the Branch Christmas Supper is at the usual venue on 6th December, and take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas.

WEST LONDON BRANCH

In September, we held our annual Church Parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, courtesy of the Governor and the In Pensioners. On this occasion we were complimented by the dedication of the service to the Corps and for some years past the Sheffield Branch has joined us and paraded their Standard. Following the service we all enjoyed the hospitality of the In Pensioners Club where we followed convivial drinking with a good curry lunch. We thank them for their hospitality.

AIR FORMATION SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

EXERCISE LIBYA LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP
2 – 8 JUNE 2008

It may, or may not have come as a surprise to some that GB4 LRG, Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) and GB2 ASS (Air Support Signals) came on the air in 2008 with much the same crew as the 2007 but with a few additions to exercise and hone up our comms skills since last year. After some thought, it came to mind to look further back in time to the 1940s decade and to a courageous number of service men, who have perhaps been forgotten in the mists of time except by those of a certain age and some others who specialize looking into historical events, transport and equipment of that time. This was a logical sequel to last year, treating GB4TCW and GB4JHF stations with just the same high profile after some 68 years since the inception of the LRDG with ASS. This had the full support and permission of all past Cos, with in post **Lt Col David A Craft** and all ranks of 21 Sig Regt, Azimghur Barracks, Colerne Wiltshire SN14 8QY at the Training Wing also nearby Block No 52. Without them this event could not take place.

So it came about that the team started to assemble on a rather dull Monday morning on 2 June 2008 with the threat of rain and the earnest hope it would keep off until aerials had been attached, hoisted aloft on 2 of the 3 masts that had been sited by **SSgt Jassie Hodgekinson** of the Training Wing. Fortunately all nested though one would have to be moved to another place later. The very sudden appearance of the Air Formation Signals Association Chairman, **Dr A David Vickers** SWL very early that morning gave the distinct impression he must have been very keen with a very early start to cover some 200 miles from distant Southport to Colerne. However, the actual explanation was he thought we were starting on the Sunday but had arrived early. With some persuasion, the Guard Room Staff did not send him home but gave him the key to room 7 one of the 6 allocated as accommodation in Block 67 which had been put at our disposal for the week.

With the arrival the other team members **Peter Fletcher** G0RGB, **Tim Williams** G4YVY, **John S Dixon** M0BZG and **Daniel Millan** G0OZU a "double hatter" as Editor for the Air Formation Signals Association and also the RSARS North West Area Representative. He was collecting the now unused RSARS Display Unit made by the first RSARS Welsh Regional Rally Representative at a Barry ARS Rally in 1986 until 2000 when the area was passed on to **Syd D Richards** GW0PPG who died last year. As expected after lunch it started to rain but we just managed to get the north east by south west 132 ft doublet in the air before it started in earnest. We were not so fortunate with the 3rd mast that was moved by **Tim Williams** and **John Dixon** to a more suitable site; they were both thoroughly soaked in the process. By this time **Peter** has got his station set in Block 52 as last year, next to the Training Wing his "G0RGB Special" ground plane vertical sited and **Tim** G4YVY in another room. It was not until late in the afternoon that tests were carried out by **Peter** on 20m working 4 stations with GB4LRG and also from the Training Wing station GB4LRG 31 contacts were made via the 80m Net by **Alan** G4BXQ and later until close down at 2032hrs for our first day.

As Tuesday would be the first full operating day, an early start was made though weather conditions were poor, overcast and wet. However **Peter** G0RGB put GB4LRG into action on the 20m band with a call from **Tor** in Norway LA6KOA on 14:210 MHz at 0741hrs GMT and continued throughout the day and evening at varying periods both on SSB and CW modes from the location in Block 52, with a similar story from **Tim** G4YVY operating from another room with some of the other higher frequency bands. Later in the day we had a considerable improvement in weather conditions and this continued to be dry and warm for the rest of our stay at Colerne.

The lower frequency bands of 40m and 80m were very productive with GB4LRG log book No 1 throughout our stay with various operators, **Dennis Egan** GW4XKE, **Peter Fletcher** G0RGB, **Daniel Millan** G0OZU and a surprise visitor **Tony Sugdon** G3UNC who called in on 2 evenings 3rd and 5th June as he was looking after his daughter's house nearby had some spare time and so operated and worked quite a number of stations on both evenings. Regrettably **Daniel**, only had a two day visit, as he had to leave due to work commitments.

John S Dixon M0BZG also decided he had to leave due to a worsening of his medical condition with a long drive from home then back to Boston. Another visitor was **Pat F Soward** the AFS Association Publicity Office who had some publicity items for **Daniel Millan** for the National Service (RAF) Association Reunion and Parade at the RAF Museum Cosford event on the 22nd June 2008.

4 June 2008 - GB4 LRG GB2ASS – Peter Fletcher G0 RGB, Tim Williams G4YVY, David Vickers SWL.in the Training Wing 21 Sig Regt (AS) Station No 1 GW4XKE

On Wednesday 4 June, the GB2ASS call was activated by **Tim G Williams** G4YVY from his station with log book No 3 on the lower frequency bands 40m and 80m both on SSB (voice) and CW (morse) and was in great demand. Some VHF stations put in the 2m log book but was very hard going even with his 5 element Yagi.

5 June 2008 – Tim Williams G4YVY, Dennis K Egan GW4XKE, Peter Fletcher G0RGB

In the following days right up to the final day Sunday, many stations who called us world wide from all over the UK, Europe, USA, Australia both on SSB and CW and who managed to get through the pile ups, showed great interest. We thank them also for the patience with some of the weaker and low power stations. To sum up, the log books indicate that over the period 2 – 8 June 2008, less one and a half days, stand too and stand down, some 668 contacts were made. With the QSL cards we have received with SSAEs direct and SWLs indicates 700 cards were sent out but this does not include any SWLs received since the date of this report.

The GB4LRG station only was activated again 1 – 28 July from another location at variable periods, social hours as time permitted with estimated final total over 900. Many thanks to all who called with our apology to those we missed or did not hear.

THE TEAM	VISITORS	MISSING MEMBERS
Dennis K Egan GW4XKE	**Tony Sugdon** G3UNC	**John H Densem** G4KJV
Peter Fletcher G0RGB	**Pat F Soward** SWL	
Tim G Williams G4YVY		
John S Dixon M0BZG		
A David Vickers SWL		
Daniel Millan G0OZU		

Dated August 2008 Callsigns.gb4lrg.gb2ass.rpt.08

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman **Mr Mick Teague**
Branch Secretary **Mr Tony Hull**

The Beverley Ex-Boys Association celebrated their 10th Anniversary with a Reunion Dinner at the Staverton Park Hotel near Daventry, which had been recommended by the Malta/Libya Association. Originally there were going to be 109 guests but over the preceding couple of weeks, a number of people had to drop out owing to ill-health etc. The sun shone for the whole weekend and members were able to visit a number of places in the local area, such as Leamington Spa, Northampton and Braunston. Warwick Castle was within easy reach. **Alan Davies** and **Tony Hemstock** and their wives drove up to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, where there was a huge gathering of the Harley Davidson Motorbike Association, which they found very moving.

The Saturday evening commenced with a photo-call, firstly of all the male members present and then one of the wives. After this, dinner was served with military precision by the hotel staff. Our Guest of Honour was **Maj Gen Tony Boyle** and his wife, **Ann**. **Gen Tony** gave a very good speech, which was much appreciated by the guests. The Chairman of the Scarborough Branch, **Mike Stanger**, who is also a Beverley Ex-Boy, made a speech to thank **Tony** and **Beryl Hull** for all their hard work and as a token of appreciation they were presented with 2 bottles of Champagne.

After the Toasts and Speeches and to commemorate the 10th Anniversary, bone china mugs were presented to all members present and the ladies were also given a small gift to thank them for the support they give their husbands. Finally the Raffle was held and this was conducted by the Chairman, **Mick Teague** assisted by the Vice-Chairman, **Tony Bermingham**, amid much merriment. The 2 ladies who sold the raffle tickets were **Mary Wardle** and **Gillian Broadbent** and they raised the magnificent sum of £424.00 for the funds.

LAST POST

Name and Rank	Served Years	Died
Barron - Lcpl A Barron	1952/54	01/09/2008
Brechin - D Brechin	1947/49	19/08/2008
Clemetson - Sig MH Clemetson	1949/51	15/09/2008
Cooper - Sig RJ Cooper	1953/55	13/08/2008
Dickinson - Capt JA Dickinson	1940/46	27/09/2008
Faulkes - WO2 RJ Faulkes	1951/76	04/10/2008
Finister - L Finister	????/??	c 2008
Flanigan - Sig DP Flanigan	1951/53	29/10/2008
Griffiths - Maj WE Griffiths	1943/49	15/10/2008
Jackson - Sgt DP Jackson	1964/73	17/09/2008
Jupe - Sgt WR Jupe	1958/67	c 2008
Lee - LCpl RV Lee	1940/46	03/09/2008
Major - LCpl VA Major	1940/46	02/11/2008
McGrath - Sgt T McGrath	1954/76	31/08/2008
Mitchell - Lt Col DG Mitchell	1953/85	22/09/2008
Mitton - Cpl H Mitton	WW2	??/09/2008
Peebles - WO2 WP Peebles	1956/77	26/09/2008
Pellew - Lt Col FH Pellew	1930/52	23/09/2008
Pratt - Sig BW Pratt	1950/52	10/10/2008
Riley - Maj J Riley TD	1941/64	01/09/2008
Robertson - Sig HJ Robertson	1942/46	c 2008
Soutar - Cpl J Soutar	1953/65	31/08/2008
Summerscales - Sgt RL Summerscales	1940/46	01/08/2008
Tasker - WO2 R Tasker	1947/72	03/09/2008
Townsend - Sig R Townsend	1940/43	19/10/2008
Whincup - Cpl K Whincup	1964/89	26/08/2008
Wray - Sgt J Wray	1950/55	07/09/2008

OBITUARIES

KIRKBY – Col Kevin Kirkby died 3 July 2008.

Col Kevin Kirkby was born in Liverpool in 1929, grew up there in the 30s and 40s and attended one of the City Grammar Schools. He passed selection for the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth only to be failed on medical grounds because of a history of rheumatic fever. Nothing daunted, he applied for a place at Sandhurst and again was selected. This time he omitted to mention his medical history.

After 18 months at Sandhurst, he was commissioned into Royal Signals in 1949 and awarded the Agar Memorial Prize. He completed his initial training before joining 29 Ind Inf Bde Gp in Colchester and 6 months later in October 1950, he was on a troopship bound for Korea. The Korean War presented a steep learning curve for a young subaltern. His first task was to take a convoy of Sqn vehicles 400 miles on roads choked with vehicles and dust from Pusan to Pyongyang, where Sqn personnel were waiting to marry up with their vehicles. His normal duties were to provide telephone comms to bde units and this could involve laying up to 100 miles of field cable. The military high point of his time in Korea was the Battle of the Imjin in April 1951, when 29 Bde faced a Chinese Army advancing on Seoul. Vital ground was held for 3 days in fierce fighting but at a cost of 1100 casualties. In the Honours and Awards for the period covering the battle, he was Mentioned in Despatches. Undoubtedly his personal highlight was a successful proposal of marriage by Forces Air Mail to **Lorna**, the girl he had known since his schooldays. Back home, he attended more technical training and celebrated the end of the course by getting married. He was then appointed Adjt of one of the Catterick Training Regts. His next posting took him to HQ Scottish Command and then it was back to Catterick for a long engineering course which led to qualification as a Chartered Engineer and in later years to Fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers. In the 60s there was a move to the Far East and service with Gurkha Signals. In 2 tours, separated by a posting to the MOD Signals Directorate, he progressed from Tp Comd to Regimental 2IC Malaysia, Hong Kong and then back to Malaysia. Service with the Brigade of Gurkhas was the best of all worlds.

He becamed a competent Gurkha speaker and in his second tour had the opportunity to trek in both West and East Nepal. The weeks walking in the hills, visiting pensioners and families were an experience he would never forget. The 70s brought promotion ot Lt Col followed by 3 quite different postings; first on secondment to MI6, then Regimental Command and finally as the Senior Military Officer at the Signals Research and Development Establishment. Regimental Command was the pinnacle of his military ambition and he was determined to enjoy his tour with 35 Sig Regt. For a regular soldier, life in a TA unit required some adjustments. He rapidly realised that although he had no real power to make the Volunteers turn up, they would never let you down. At the end of his time in command, he left the Regt, second to none in his admiration for the spirit and achievements of the Volunteer soldier.

At the end of the 70s, he was promoted to Col and posted to the MoD in charge of the Operational Requirements (OR) Branch responsible for combat radio and EW. His technical background now came to the fore. With the job came the chairmanship of 2 NATO committees and 6 monthly meetings in Brussels to coordinate member nations' equipment programmes and establish the technical standards necessary to achieve interoperability on the battlefield. His last tour was as Liaison Officer at the British Army Staff in Washington. The task was a natural extension of the international side of his previous work in OR and involved liaison in his area of expertise with the United States Army and Marine Corps. In addition to maintaining close contact with HQ staffs in Washington, he enjoyed the opportunity to travel and visit a large number of military establishments across the country. Maintaining good liaison has a social dimension as well as purely work contacts and in this he was superbly supported by **Lorna**. Together they flew the flag to the best of their ability. Sport was an important part of his life and he played a number of games enthusiastically, if not always with great skill. However hockey became his forte as a goalkeeper and over the years, he played for a variety of sides, in the process being awarded colours by Yorkshire and the Army.

On retirement from the Army in 1984, he and **Lorna** settled in one of the South Downs villages in West Sussex. He joined industry and went to work for a company specialising in the installation of comms equipment in armoured vehicles. For the next 8 years he was involved in the development of a fibre optic system to replace all the bulky copper cabling required to distribute daya within and between vehicles. Retirement from industry should have heralded a quieter life but although he avoided any form of committee membership, he enjoyed 10 years as a volunteer driver of the village bus and became involved with the nearby College to help boys with learning difficulties. Looking after the garden and opening it to the public on alternate years as part of a village scheme kept **Lorna** and him busy.

BOSCOE – Donald James Boscoe died 12 July 2008.

Donald Boscoe was born in Prescot, Lancashire on 2 May 1949

In 1959, **Don's** father worked for Albright & Wilson and this brought the family from the North West to the village of Portishead, near Bristol. The family settled well and **Don** went to

school at St Peter's Primary and later to Gordano Secondary Modern Schools, where he achieved good grades and met some life long friends.

Having seen the light he enlisted as a boy soldier at the age of 16; telling his parents about this momentous decision after the event! He started his training in August 1965 at the Junior Leaders Regiment, Denbury, alongside the likes of **Lt Col Tim Craven** and **Maj Bob Holt**. Like many cold war veterans he served a considerable period of his service in Germany, including a tour of Berlin, but he also served in Cyprus, the Falklands and Canada and of course he, along with most other servicemen of his time, also had operational tours of duty in Northern Ireland. He eventually finished his service in May 1989 having completed 24 years as man and boy. Initially living with his good friend and brother-in-law, **Dave Colbourn** and his younger sister **Marje** and their 2 young children, he eventually moved into his own place close by. His last 6 months as a regular were spent in 37 Sig Regt. For some reason he decided he still had a lot to offer the Army and within the week he was parading with HQ Sqn 37 Sig Regt, was promoted to Sgt on his first drill night with the Regt and then completed a further 18 years service with the TA. Most of us would have thought that would be enough for anyone but not for **Don** who then applied for the Senior Storeman's post within HQ Sqn and got the job. Over his 48 year's service he'd served in many Units and made many friends, not only in the work place but also on the sports field. He excelled at all sports that he turned his hand to, but never more so then on the hockey pitch playing and representing the Corps.

He was still playing hockey in his latter years but had also converted to 'Hockey at the Halt' – Golf – and like all the other sports; he even played that better than most. Outside of the military environment he also enjoyed skittles and was always ready with advice on how best to play the alley. He readily volunteered for work with charitable causes and often assisted with quiz nights and mini marathons. We all have our idiosyncrasies and one that always bemused and brought a smile to the face of **Don's** brother-in-law was how he would complacently float around in swimming pools on a inflatable whilst on holiday even though he could not swim; when asked why after all his year's of service he had never learned to swim, he would always quip "we have a Navy for the water". Unlike his service to the Crown, **Don's** illness was relatively short lived and in true **Don** style he did not let on that he had only been given 6 months to live until his final days, he kept his sense of humour and dignity through extremely difficult personal times and sadly passed away on Saturday 12 July 2008. As a reminder that there was more to him than just being a fine soldier and servant, Meat Loaf's Bat Out of Hell played as 2 of his former comrades helped bear the burden to carry him in. In a manner that was both befitting of his extraordinary service to Queen and Country and in the best traditions of the British Army, an evocative Last Post was played on Tuesday 22 July 2008 to a chapel that was fittingly overflowing, to a degree where even standing room was limited.

Anyone witnessing his last day at Canford Crematorium could see how he was loved, respected and had touched other people's lives. After the final farewells a drink was taken in his honour at one of **Don's** favourite haunts in Portishead, where both family and friends took an opportunity to celebrate his life. **Don** was a great friend who was always there for anyone who needed a helping hand and who gave sound advice whether you wanted to hear it or not! Throughout his career he helped train a vast number of Regular and TA soldiers and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

REUNIONS

229 Signal Squadron, Berlin, BFPO 45

If that address is familiar to you then read on, if not then read on and find out why it should be. We, that is a group of ex -229ers are trying to get as many ex-soldiers who served in the Sqn between 1959 and 1963 to get together to re-open old friendships. Why? Well this was the time of the Berlin Wall coming into existence and the time we faced the might of both the Russian and East German Armies (at least we thought we did). For us it was a dramatic and potentially dangerous period. So far a group of about 13 plus members of the Sqn have found each other and have had some good meetings – this covers all trades, all ranks and both Regular and National Service personnel. We would like to get more people who were there at our next meeting, which will be in the spring, probably at the National Arboretum. If your father or grandfather was in Berlin please wake them up and tell them that many old comrades wish to meet and talk over old and interesting times. All they have to do is contact either myself bernard.bush@tiscali.co.uk or **Terry Mundin** at Mundjo9@aol.com and we will be more than delighted to meet. If no e-mail is available then contact **Bernard Bush** on 01767 650774 and leave a message.

President	**Brig RH Maxfield**
Chairman	**Lt Col PF Soward**
Secretary	**Mr JW Horne**

Members of the 19th Sig Regt met in reunion at the Hilton Hotel, Warwick over the weekend of 12 – 14 September. The main party arrived on Friday afternoon and were joined at dinner by **Lt Rachael Clayton**, who had just returned from a tour as detachment commander in Afghanistan, and **Lt Edward Bodger**, who is due to assume that post later in the year. After dinner they talked to us about conditions in Afghanistan, the work of 21 Sig Regt detachments and thanked us for the parcels that our members had sent to the detachment at Christmas. Some members then retired to the bar to speak to them further, while others watched the DVD, "Seletar – Through the Ages", a DVD produced by the RAF Seletar Association. We now have the names of the detachment commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan and so can send parcels post free. We are also investigating the possibility of giving toys at Christmas to children whose fathers are serving overseas.

The following morning a coach took us to Kidderminster where we embarked on a beautifully restored First Class carriage of the Severn Valley Railway and travelled by steam train to Highley. There we disembarked and enjoyed a conducted tour of the recently constructed engine shed and visitor centre. A quick snack in the restaurant with unrivalled views over the Severn valley and we were off again to Bridgnorth, the terminus of the line. Bridgnorth, founded in the 11th century, is described as 'virtually unique'! The low town is built along the river bank while the high town perches on a sandstone cliff overlooking the river.

Part of the conducted tour inside the new engine shed

The two are joined by a Victorian funicular railway that carries passengers 'at a stately pace through a steep defile cut in the cliff'. It was market day and the ladies particularly enjoyed walking leisurely in the afternoon sun looking at the stalls and nipping into the clothes shops before a cup of tea or ice cream and back to the station where our coach waited to return us to the hotel. **Ted Harper** and his nephew **Arnold** joined us for the outing and while they thoroughly enjoyed the ride on the steam train, **Ted** walks with great difficulty and did not feel able to join us for dinner.

Back at the hotel, the rear party had arrived and were deep in meaningful conversation. All moved into the dining room for dinner and AGM. **Brig Max Maxfield** welcomed members, particularly new members **Brian** and **Nicola Tewkesbury** attending for the first time, **Mrs Rose Harvey** and **Ray** and **Pat Cank's** son, **Carl** and daughter **Kelly** and their spouses. He continued by paying tribute to **Col Colin Gilbert**, our President until his death in April and noted that **George Brew**, our founder member and first Chairman had expressed his sorrow that he was no longer able to join us due to deteriorating health. Although the major-domo was Turkish and most waitresses were from Eastern Europe, the food came swiftly and members eventually received the meals that they had chosen! Port and Madeira were dispensed and toasts drunk. **Pat Soward** thanked the hotel staff for their willingness and 'can do' attitude that contributed so much towards our enjoyable weekend and then thanked the committee members for their untiring efforts.

Pat Soward addressing the group after dinner and thanking the hotel staff and members of the committee

Committee members were re-elected unanimously and the financial statement was passed without comment so the AGM was, as always, short and sweet. In a flurry of spending, members descended on the regalia table and stocked up with Christmas cards before retiring to the bar area for a nightcap.

After a full English breakfast, committee members met for a discussion and with little difficulty agreed to return to the Hilton again next year and **John** and **Joyce Home** 'volunteered' to investigate the possibility of a trip on a canal barge.

HERFORD BIANNUAL REUNION HELD AT LLANDUDNO 3 – 6 OCTOBER 2008

Even though the weather was not the best I am pleased to report a large number of our members, wives and partners attended this reunion. Everyone had looked forward to meeting old friends and comrades. It had been 6 months since we last got together. As time goes by and we all get a little older, its good to see your mates are getting around this aging process. What is also surprising is that some of them don't seem to have changed. Some members cannot attend every reunion due to illness or other commitments but other members do attend who you may not have seen for quite a long time. This makes every reunion unique and special. During the day our members spent time in the hotel, or walked around Llandudno. Some visited the local Royal British Legion and had a few beers – as you do. The wives had their little talks between themselves – as they do. In the evenings entertainment was provided and you had another beer – as you do. A good time was had by all. All good things must come to an end and the talk changed to our next reunion in Falkirk in the first week of March 2009. Everyone is looking forward to meeting some of our Scottish members who live way up in the north of Scotland. If any of your readers would like to know more about our Association then log on to our web site http://www.herforder-association.org.uk/ If you served in BFPO 15 or if you know any linemen, **Big Joe** one of our members is looking for some old mates. Contact me on: annlen2@hotmail.co.uk

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

FIFTY SEVEN CHRISTMAS CARDS LATER

In 1951 at the Dispersal Camp in Pocklington, Yorkshire, many Royal Signals National Servicemen were posted to their TA or AER Units for 3½ years to compulsory Territorial Service. After spending 2 years together, the famous last words were: "We must keep in touch". From 5 Training Regt, Display Team, to Speedway Team (The Meteors) we all went out separate ways back into Civvy Street but true to our word, every December we exchanged Christmas Cards. Then on 26th June 2008 a reunion of Army Speedway Riders was organised by **Trevor Davies** at the REME Museum, Arborfield, Berkshire. About 150 Riders from various Regts and Formations attended; among those were the 4 Corps Members who had kept in touch throughout the years.

What a Reunion! We could not talk fast enough, playing "Catch up" on our lives and families. When we got onto our service together, the memories flooded back – "do you remember the **RSM Busty Gay**? The **SSM Bullet Jones**? (His last three was 303)" and so we went on and on. The day was fantastic, good speeches from former riders and a wonderful buffet. The Guest of Honour was **"Split" Waterman** the Former World Champion Speedway Rider. Also in attendance were several Army riders, who after leaving the Services rode for professional teams, such as Belle Vue, Norwich, Kings Lynn etc. The day just flew by and the Royal Signals people were still talking in the car park prior to returning home. **Trevor** has written an excellent book called "Warzone Speedway".

It is a brilliant read, with 215 pages of photos, stats and information. You can obtain a copy from **Trevor Davies**, 21 Gation Way, Hucclecote, Gloucster, GL3 3DG. Price £20.00 incl P & P (cheques made payable to **Trevor Davies)**. If you have ever ridden a motorbike this is the book for you. Our thanks go to **Trevor** for reuniting 4 friends after all those years. By the way **Albert Thurling** Secretary of the Corps DRs Association was in attendance, he is also a member of the West London Branch RSA with me and would love to hear from Ex Royal Signals DRs. If you want further details, ring me:- **Dusty Miller** 01784 250756.

From: **Mr N Nield**
7 Oak Avenue, Briar Bank Park
Wilstead, Beds, MK45 3WQ

Dear Sir

I have been informed by the Royal British Legion that the Royal Signals Association have very generously contributed to the cost of refurbishment to the walls of my mobile house when I was in desperate trouble.

Although there are not adequate words to describe my deep gratitude, I must thank you from the bottom of my heart for the assistance you have given in my hour of need. The actions of yourselves, the RBL and another organisation have lifted a very big worry from the minds of me and my wife. Once again, my very sincere thanks for your kind assistance.

Yours…

BATTLE BACK - *by Lt Col Fred Hargreaves*

As Battle Back (BB) has been in existence for almost 3 months, I thought it an appropriate time to send out a quick update. Attached is the BB Summary which hopefully sweeps up all general issues and has a couple of good case studies and published articles. In slightly more detail, the BB team (**Maj Martin Colclough** and **WO2 Ash Clare**) have done an extremely good job establishing themselves in Headley Court and developing relationships with both clinical staff and patients.

The weekly water-skiing sessions are proving to be a big success and are routinely demonstrating the rehabilitation benefits of BB activities. **Martin Colclough** attended the Paralympic GB training camp in Hong Kong prior to the Beijing Games and is currently in San Diego with a team of 6 disabled Servicemen taking part in a US Paralympic Military Athletics Training Camp. Additionally, a number of injured Servicemen were identified as potential athletes at a recent UK Paralympic Talent Identification Day – 2012 here we come!

On the winter sports front, 4 members of this year's Ex SNOW WARRIOR (Adaptive) have been selected for the pre-Development Squad in the British Disabled Ski Team (**Capt Martin Hewitt** PARA, **Sgt Ian Harvey** RAF, **Sgt Mick Brennan** R SIGNALS, and **Tpr Steve Shine** RTR), and begin race training next month. We are training a further 12 adaptive ski instructors in January and are running 2 adaptive skiing serials in Bavaria alongside Ex SNOW WARRIORS 5 and 6 in March 2009. More activities are being planned and will be the subject of the next update, to be sent out by **Martin Colclough** in due course. On a funding front, BB has sufficient public funds from the 3 Service Adventurous Training Groups and the Combined Services Sports Board to allow seriously injured Servicemen to have the same opportunity to conduct Sport and Adventurous Training as their able-bodied colleagues.

Additionally, 'Help for Heroes' are providing a significant amount of backing to deliver the highly desirable aspects of holistic rehabilitation for which the public purse is not suitable, such as funding specialised equipment for individuals or funding partners to visit adaptive exs when appropriate.The BB team in Headley Court should be the first point of call for all issues relating to adaptive Sport and Adventurous Training.

Contact details are: www.battleback.mod.uk, e-mail **Maj Martin Colclough** APTC – MartColc@dsca.mod.uk, or **WO2 Ash Clare** RE AshlClar@dsca.mod.uk, or telephone 01372 381199 (Office), 07786 856542 (**Maj Colclough** mobile), or 07786 856553 (**WO2 Clare** mobile).

Finally, I would like to thank you all for the support shown to date, and encourage you to advertise BB plans and opportunities to friends and colleagues. I am especially keen to get the message to any seriously injured Servicemen who are back serving with their Units, who may be slightly 'off the Headley Court radar', as well as the chain of command of Units committed to, or returning from, ops.

DCOS J4 **Lt Col G Burrows QGM BEM**
SO2 J4 (QM) **Maj A Scott**

- by Cpl R Blackburn

ROYAL SIGNALS JIMMY'S DAY - 2008

DISC CHICKSANDS is a Tri Service training establishment with op tours ongoing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and various other countries. Phase 2 and 3 instructional training exs go on throughout the year and we can be neck deep in work – this year has been no exception. Nevertheless **SSgt Bob Lovell** still found time to organize a Royal Signals Jimmy's Day on its 88th birthday which raised £1800 for 'Help for Heroes'. The event was sponsored by 2 companies: SONIC Communications and David Horn Communications DHC. Huge thanks go out to them both for all their support.

ROYAL SIGNALS WHITE HELMET DISPLAY TEAM

To start the day off, the Royal Signals White Helmet Motorcycle Display Team gave an amazing performance, tearing up the tarmac on their 750cc Triumph Tiger and Honda CRF 450s machines in unpleasant weather conditions. The White Helmets' performance was unhindered by any distractions and provided a fast non-stop, action-packed and exciting 35 min display that was a high profile attraction. Not only were there heart-stopping fast crossover rides with closing speeds of up to 60mph but there was also riding backwards on ladders with no hands on the motorcycle controls. The display team finished with a 21 man balancing display with 6 men riding and controlling the bikes, while the rest balanced on top – this skill provided great entertainment for the finale.

One of the White Helmets flying through the flames at Jimmy's Day

Once the White Helmets had finished this outstanding motorbike display, it was onto the Corps football match between the Royal Signal and the Intelligence Corps but before the matched commenced the Royal Signals Freefall Parachute Display team parachuted onto the football pitch with precision, flying the Royal Signals Flag.

ROYAL SIGNALS *v* INTELLIGENCE CORPS FOOTBALL MATCH

Before the kick off, the station held a 2 min silence for **Cpls Sean Reeve** and **Sarah Bryant.** The Royal Corps of Signals team started the game a bit rusty but soon gained full control with the Int Corps having very few opportunities because of the solid Signals defense. We had many chances in the first half and were 4 – 0 up by half time. It was not long after the break before we were 5 – 0 up and hitting the crossbar with some great moves but a good second half substitute for the Signals sealed the game 6 – 0.

The substitute was only on for 5 minutes and his turn of pace was too much for the Int Corps defenders and he placed it straight past the keeper. A well deserved victory for the Signals on its 88th birthday. After an entertaining football game it was off to the Pimms tent for a refreshing drink with a special mention going to **CPO 'Dickie' Bird** for wearing a Hoodie all night. For those who know **Dickie** .... Enough said.

The Jimmy's Day photo

LOST COMMUNICATIONS

From: **Roger Johnson** (Tel: 0151 428 5013)

Roger Johnson is seeking the present whereabouts of **Peter Parfitt** and **Ron Russell** who served at 33 Sig Regt (V) in 1995. **Roger** was Mayor of Liverpool at the time when the unit was involved in the supply of medical equipment to a European operational theatre. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Roger** on 0151-428 5013.

From: **Mr Bill Wood** (Tel: 01333 311076)

Mr Bill Wood is seeking the whereabouts of the former **Lt Lally**, who served in 8 Sig Regt in 1958 and at Ripon before that. This is in regard to **Mr Lally's** late father's name on the Memorial at Bathgate. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Bill** on; 01333-311076.

From: **Barry Harban** (Tel: 07929 249091)

Barry Harban is trying to contact **Ron Dudley** who served in10 Sig Regt, Krefeld about 1959. Anyone who can help is asked to call **Barry Harban** on 07929-249091

ADVERTISEMENTS

University of London OTC celebrates its Centenary in 2009 and is re-launching the Regimental Association. If you, or anyone you know, were at ULOTC please visit our website and register at: www.ulotc.co.uk/alumni.

SSAFA FORCES HELP NEEDS YOU!

There are over 10 million people eligible for help from SSAFA Forces Help, the leading national charity committed to helping those who serve in our Armed Forces, those who used to serve and the families of both. We provide a reliable, caring and trusted service to more than 50,000 people each year. Volunteers can give as little or as much time as they can spare. There are positions for people interested in practical case work as well as other roles such as team leaders, treasurers and fundraisers. SSAFA Forces Help also has a network of volunteers who work within serving communities. If you would like to be part of our important volunteer team that cares for those who have left the Services please get in touch. Training is provided and all out of pocket expenses are paid.

Please contact: **Mr Glen Smith**
Branch Support Advisor-Membership
19 Queen Elizabeth Street
LONDON, SE1 2LP
Telephone: 0207 463 9273
Email: Glen.s@ssafa.org.uk

CORRESPONDENCE

From: Terry J Sampson, President
The Military Heraldry Society
65 Thorndike Avenue, Alvaston,
Derby. DE24 BNY. Tel; 01332 751 415.
E-mail; terrysampson3@ndworld.com

Dear Sir;

I am seeking information on the two Royal Signals items enclosed, especially the cloth formation sign of which the Corps Museum has no details The cloth sign has been identified as being worn by 56th (London) Divisional Signals, between 1940 and 1945 below the "Black Cat" divisional sign. I have a copy of a newspaper cutting showing the sign being worn in this configuration by 2 Signalmen in Italy in 1944; the sign is shown with the blue portion facing the wearer's front. The donor described the item as.." a red sword on blue and white.." but the design seems more like an axe, in which case it would be reasonable to expect the "head" to be uppermost. I would be very interested to learn of the origin of this design. The second item is a cap badge of WW2 vintage which is inscribed "POLISH BOYS TRAINED BY ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS". I understand the Training School was established at Mena, Egypt sometime during the war but have no other information. If any of your readers have any information or recollection of either of these 2 items, I will be very pleased to hear from them

Yours sincerely...

THE ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS

PHOTOGRAPHY

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corpsphotography@armymail.mod.uk