



MARCH 2024

**GUNNERS  
FIELD GUN CREW**

**RA GOLD CUP  
Ex SECUNDRAS SLING**

**ROYAL ARTILLERY  
ALPINE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

# **GUNNER**

**#FINDandSTRIKE**



The Larkhill-based team that supplies you Gunner.

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### Gunner Rules

#### Guidance on Submissions

We welcome articles and pictures on all Regimental matters these articles must be submitted through the chain of command, in accordance with the Gunner content framework.

Articles must be written in Microsoft Word. Photographs must be original JPEGs; at the highest resolution; (not embedded in the article).

When using abbreviations in an article, please write the abbreviation in full, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

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# GUNNER



## MARCH 2024

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Sgt Kennon Wilson of The King's Troop and LBdr Daniel Emery of 16 Regt RA

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**Major Dickie Davies**  
The Royal Artillery Association Secretary

As I write this editorial, I am just a couple of months shy of having been your Association Secretary for two years. The time has quite simply flown by, in part because of the amazing people that I have met during this time, people from both our serving and veteran communities and I am as motivated today with my role and responsibility as I was on my very first day. The support and engagement I have received, which includes all our Gunner family; from my weekly fireside meetings with our Phase Two leavers, all the way through to our Chelsea Pensioners and even a couple of Normandy Veterans whose stories and experiences are even more poignant in this, the 80th year since Normandy.

It is also my absolute privilege to be able to say that for the second year running our active membership within the RAA is up. This is not simply attributable to the development of our National Branches – Old Comrades Associations (OCAs) and Interest Group Association but also to membership increases in several of our regional branches, as well as the exciting prospect of having more new branches opening and I look forward to working with Sheffield, Morecambe, and Fylde along with development opportunities in Worcester, Southampton and Portsmouth.

I have also just returned from the planning conference in Blackpool for this year's Annual Assembly and I am genuinely encouraged by the amount of work going on at the Norbreck Castle Hotel. We all know the staff at the hotel are supremely helpful, but I believe that the current refurbishment, which has been ongoing since January, will ensure that our RA Assembly experience in May (17th-19th) is even more enjoyable. I do encourage as many of our serving personnel and branch members, including our national groups to get booked in, it would be amazing to see some of our new membership including

the Riders Branch, E-Sports Association and possibly a Late Entry Officer table this year. We also have the RA Boys and Junior Leaders Regiment Association who are not only attending, but they are physically uplifting their wonderful museum from its home in Nuneaton to be publicly displayed for the first time in the Ballroom during the whole weekend.

As I mentioned at the top this year is the 80th Anniversary of Operation OVERLORD and whilst many of you are aware we will not be formally gathering in Normandy this year as a Gunner collective. The Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum on 13th July will very much have a Normandy foundation and focus. We are also this year dovetailing our event in the morning with the 5 Regt RA NMA Pilgrimage in the afternoon, and to continue on from last year we will be retaining the ASPECTS Centre all day, so post service we will have our own refreshments and bar area, as well as location for the Lancashire Artillery Band to deliver their post service performance.

Finally, I would just like to personally thank all the RSMs, BSMs, Regional Representatives, Branch Committees and Chelsea Pensioners for all your support during my time and whilst on the subject, I would like the opportunity just to mention our two annual events at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The attendance and interest in these have substantially grown and as a reminder, these limited ticketed events which this year are being held on - Gunner Sunday 28th Apr and Founder's Day on the 6th Jun. If interested please do contact me or indeed Cas Thoburn, the Assistant Secretary with your interest.

So that's me, once again could I thank you for your support, help and guidance and I look forward to seeing you at any of the events above or just within our regimental lines over the coming year.



**Press Release**

February 2024

**Armed Forces Pensions set to rise significantly for the second year running**

The Forces Pension Society welcomes the Government's decision to increase Armed Forces pensions in line with the Consumer Prices Index for another year. It means this year's increase will be 6.7% and follows last year's uplift of 10.1%.

For those serving, there will be an even better deal than last year, with an increase of 7.7% in line with average weekly earnings (AWE), compared with 7% last year.

The uplifts will begin in April 2024.

Commenting on these increases, Maj Gen Neil Marshall, CEO of the Forces Pension Society said:

**“With everyone serving now on AFPS15, which is one of the most beneficial of public services pensions, this news will have a positive impact on the well-being of our Armed Forces personnel. It will increase the individual worth of everyone across the military community.**

**“It's appropriate that those who continue serving should see their financial worth grow over time. The equivalent value of their pensions in the private sector would run into substantial six-figure sums.**

**“For our part, at the Forces Pension Society, it's gratifying to see our efforts in championing Armed Forces pensions being recognised so emphatically, with our membership numbers rising to record levels.”**

The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that serves as a pension watchdog for the whole military community. For further information about how guidance from our Forces Pensions Consultants might support you, visit [forcespensionsociety.org](https://forcespensionsociety.org)





## Exercise SECUNDRA SLING - Live Firing in Estonia



Battery Photo

The last few months have been a period of significant change for the soldiers of 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery. If you had visited Albemarle Barracks in April you would have found a Light Gun Regiment, with D Battery RHA recovering from live firing with the L118 in Kenya on Exercise ASKARI STORM. By December, the Battery had returned to the ranges, but a lot had changed during the intervening period.

The snow on the ground provided evidence enough of a dramatic switch in scenery – shiny D Battery are now deployed in Estonia on Operation CABRIT 13. The most notable difference, though, is the weapon system that the Battery now fields. Following direction under the Integrated Review, 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery have completed a regimental re-role to the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System. Alongside 26th Regiment Royal Artillery, the soldiers

of 3 RHA now field the Army's precision fires weapon system, and in so doing have doubled the number of Divisional Fires regiments in the Field Army.

It had been a summer of change, with both C and D Battery RHA seeing an almost total (95%) turnover of personnel from Light Gunners to MLRS operators. Many soldiers who had made the journey to 26th Regiment Royal Artillery in Larkhill from 39th Regiment Royal Artillery, formerly based in Newcastle, were keen to return to the Northeast. The timeline was tight, with D Battery RHA forming as an operational launcher Battery in June before deploying to Estonia in September, working in Tapa Camp alongside the Forward Land Force Battlegroup under the 1st Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Operation CABRIT has provided the opportunity to get valuable time on exercise,



sharpening individual skills and cementing the Battery's readiness. Ex SECUNDRA SLING was the latest in a series of increasingly complex exercises. The Battery have progressed from driver training to a conventional tactical MLRS exercise, into a significant live firing exercise.

At 0900Hrs on Friday 22nd December, the peace of the festive scene on the Estonian Central Training Area was abruptly broken by US Army High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) opening the day's firing. Once their rockets were complete, two of the Battery's M270 launchers made their way onto the firing point and the first rockets fired by the Regiment in our new role headed downrange. Observers from 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery provided

the missions, and a US Army AN/TPQ-53 radar detachment tracked the Reduced Range Practice Rockets (RRPR) on their journey to the impact area.

Over the next day the Battery fired 89 RRPR – the last remaining in the British Army's stock. MLRS detachments, the command post, and the echelon were all tested by the conditions and the tight timeline to fire the rockets by the end of the exercise. After a successful recovery and rehabilitation, the soldiers of D Battery enjoyed a welcome period of downtime over the Christmas period, while preparing for the remainder of our time in Estonia.

by Lieutenant Sam Jones RHA  
D Battery  
3rd Royal Horse Artillery



MLRS





## Ex HIMALAYAN VENTURE - 4th Regiment RA take to the Himalayas to trek the Dhaulagiri Circuit, Nepal



The specs of the team as they traverse the snow on the footstep of Dhaulagiri

Walking back down Harter Fell in the lake district, legs sore and soaked through in the middle of Storm Agnes, the final team of 11 Service Personnel had an unexpected skip in their steps. After weeks of fitness tests, command tasks, numerous interviews and team building sessions, this final unexpectedly wet trek was the last of the selection criteria to be offered a place on a once in a lifetime trip to Nepal. Fast forward one month later, and the quiet tourist town of Kentmere was replaced with the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu. At 8167 metres, Dhaulagiri is the seventh highest mountain in the world and the highest mountain contained solely in Nepal. First summited in 1960, it is one of the most difficult 8000m peaks to climb due to its remote nature and unforgiving terrain. It was over this terrain, that 11 soldiers from 4th Regiment Royal Artillery, together with two Mountain Leaders and the expedition doctor, conducted their long circuit trek around this mountain.

Ex HIMALAYAN VENTURE was a high risk and remote, T3 Adventure Training (AT) expedition to conduct a summer mountaineering foundation (SMF) course in Nepal. As you can imagine, mountain rescue in Nepal is not an established emergency service and they are certainly not sat on the end of the phone waiting on immediate notice to move to collect you if anything goes wrong. Whilst Nepal does have some first-class medical facilities, they have a distinct lack of hospitals that are within the medical timelines which are required for emergency care within the British Army. The only access to the mountain side is via walking or Helicopter, that will take a minimum of over 8 hours just to reach you. With this in mind, it was only natural that the route selected is one that's referred to as the 'hardest trek in Nepal' by all of the popular guide magazines. The Dhaulagiri circuit trek is one of the lesser known and much less attempted



treks in Nepal. Whilst popular routes such as Everest Basecamp, The Annapurna and the Langtang circuits can see thousands of hikers per day, the Dhaulagiri circuit has less than 400 people attempt it in a single year. This is due to a number of factors. The Dhaulagiri circuit lacks all of the tourist things that are often taken for granted. There are limited teahouses, you regularly sleep on uneven terrain where you establish a tent and there is limited signs of life. It is very much viewed as a hardy trek by the tourism board and it is not recommended for those who aren't physically fit and robust or for those with little experience of trekking.

### Day 1-2. Kathmandu.

Arriving in Kathmandu international airport, this was the first time abroad for 2 of the team members. Walking through the security with ease, using the diplomatic lane, and being picked up from the airport by the guide company, things were going surprisingly smooth for a Military trip. Less for the constantly gridlocked traffic, which can only be described as 'non-contact Mario Kart' in the rare occasion it moves, the team arrived at their first hotel and had a few days to take in their surroundings, conduct final kit checks and get an in-country safety brief. Fortunate enough to be based just outside of Thamel, the tourism centre on Kathmandu, they were given 48 hours to explore. There was lots on offer from new cuisines to sample, temple trips to see, protests to avoid and even the opportunity to buy Christmas presents from reputable brands such as 'North Face'. Exceptionally congested, it is the 7th most polluted city in the world and is ever expanding to keep up with the influx of people moving from more rural parts of Nepal. Beautiful in its own right, it was summed up by Gnr Hudson as 'an assault on the senses' on the first night.

### Day 3. Pokhara.

Up until early 2023, the use of domestic flights in Nepal were not advised for all Military personnel due to the safety concerns of flight standards with all of the recent and unfortunate crashes. Despite the distance from Kathmandu to Pokhara being 200km, it takes in excess of 10 hours to drive due to road quality. Metal roads often get eroded during the monsoon; reasons due to floods, rock falls, landslides or overuse leaving dirt tracks that meander through the mountain side. Due to an earthquake happening upon our arrival in the western part of the country, we were fortunate to be able to get a flight, taking us less than 50 minutes from take-off to landing and giving us an additional day to explore Pokhara a lakeside tourist town and gateway to the mountains. Whilst the flight was just constant turbulence from take-off to landing, it did offer us our first view of the Himalayas and our first impression of Dhaulagiri. Once landed, we found our final hotel and made the most of the last comfortable bed for the foreseeable future before taking some time to explore the lake and local cafes.

### Day 4. Darbang.

Unable to avoid wheeled transport any further, the team split onto 2 small coaches to be led further into the Himalayas. Spending no more than an hour on a metal road, our progress slowed to walking pace once we got onto gravel. The further into the mountains we got, the slower our progress became where at some points we were crawling along dirt tracks. Whilst we can't recall exactly how long this part of the journey took, it was too long. We spent much longer staring down the side of the mountain as our bus teetered over the edge of sheer cliffs with nothing, but a river bank a few hundred feet below us than we ever could have





asked for. Driving along the remnants of roads battered by mother nature, watching rocks falls in real time and seeing the vehicle graveyard at the bottom that is only beaten by the REME hanger at RSA, it was a very uncomfortable day and probably the scariest part of the whole trip. On the first day, our instructor told us of how when he first came to Nepal, he would often just get off the bus and walk over stretches he found frightening which we thought was a far-fetched story, until we wished we could do the same. Fortunately, we made it to Darbang in one piece where we would not have to face the fear of transport again until our return journey.

#### **Day 5. Sibang.**

Having slept in the garden of the Darbang community centre, we were up and the camp was collapsed before first light. Immediately, once leaving the compound, we walked over our first of many rope bridges spanning the valley sides. Whilst it was not as high as some of the others we would come across, it was still long enough to bounce and swing the moment you stepped foot on it, giving us our first flavour of the adventure to come. The average temperature was about 28°C in the midday sun, with the wind warm and slight. We walked all day through the foothills, walking through popular villages and farming communities. Arriving at Sibang late afternoon, we were ushered to a campsite in a school playground. Quite a large town, there was a shop selling much needed cold drinks, a local football game to be enjoyed and a festival we were thrust into.

#### **Day 6. Muri.**

Another early morning, we continue up the valley. A quick and steep incline see's us offered our first view of the snow-capped mountains in the distance. Our guide points out Dhaulagiri, currently just a far-fetched distant dream as the rift between the group and our target never seemed to get any closer. Still in the foothills, the temperature is hot and pretty unforgiving in

the dust. However, we are offered a more rural view of life. The populous towns and villages now give way to small farming communities, whilst the occasional shop still offers beverages that have been marked up in price, the ability to refrigerate them is no longer a viable option. Constantly gaining height as we zig-zag through rice paddies, our slow speed is shown up by the local village elders carrying large weights in their Dokos. Camp for the evening is another village school, this one built by the Gurkha Welfare trust whose work can be seen all over Nepal.

#### **Day 7. Boghara.**

At this point we have accepted fairly early mornings are inevitable and always in the realms of 0500. However, due to the lack of phone signal and wishing to conserve the battery life of our lights and power banks, early nights become the norm. Farmland and rice paddies start to reduce as the angle of the valley quickly sharpens. We move from fairly flat and commonly used walkways to contouring the edge of valleys and having to consciously think about foot placement. The scenery now starts to resemble alpine forests. There is the occasional farmstead set upon any flat area they can find, but the opportunity for anything slightly tourist related no longer exists, for the next week the group will have to be self-sufficient.

#### **Day 8. Dobhan.**

Waking up to a blanket of thick fog that has drenched the campsite, in the blink of an eye we move from alpine forests to thick jungle. Whilst hot and humid throughout, rain is on and off numerous times within the hour. Even with a waterproof jacket on, the humidity ensures your clothes are soaked the moment you put on the unbreathable layer of clothing, meaning we eventually just embraced the rain. Bamboo grows all around and the jungle plays host to a variety of wildlife, including water buffalo. High up on the cliffside, honeycomb over 2m



in height clings to the cliff. This honeycomb is often the target of 'honey hunters', which is our guides' job outside of the traditional trekking season. A small pot of this honey, due to its medicinal properties and remote location, can sell for over £70. The temperature starts to drop rapidly in the evening now and for the first time we start to notice the cool temperatures as we get into our sleeping bags.

#### **Day 9. Sallaghiri.**

Now deep in the mountains, tracks and bridges are no longer well looked after and often rely on locals to make repairs. During the monsoon seasons, these are then destroyed, and the process starts anew. Due to this, we end up rock hopping over numerous small rivers and rapids from the glacial run off. We navigate various landslides and progress further up the next valley before we make camp in the final farm we come across. Thunder can be heard in the distance and the cloud is often pushed down onto us. Today is Remembrance Sunday so we host a small ceremony as a group, made all the more sombre by the heavens opening up as we start our two-minute silence. The freeze level is just above us now, where you can physically see the change in temperature as a line indicated in the mountain about 50m above our heads. Everytime a cloud rolls over the mountain side, it deposits rain on top us and snow just above.

#### **Day 10 and 11. Italian Base Camp.**

Rounding the corner of the valley, we push out of the jungle and straight into the expanse of clear mountain sides. We get our first glimpse of Dhaulagiri after numerous days, and we know we will be camping on its doorstep tonight. Before this though, we have to walk up what looks like an apocalyptic wasteland of broken trees, large rocks and soil deposits. This walk takes the best part of the day, it was not until we got to camp that we were told it was the result of a huge avalanche the previous spring,

covering numerous kilometres and destroying everything in its wake. By mid-afternoon we make it to the Italian Base Camp, from where the first summit attempts of Dhaulagiri happened nearly a century ago. Day 11 is an acclimatisation day. With the snow level just above us we utilise this time to practice ice axe and crampon work and do some more rehearsal of casualty evacuation drills. During this time, we hear the large crash of an avalanche somewhere in the distance, before seeing the tell-tale white cloud of it coming down the valley we are ascending tomorrow.

#### **Day 12 and 13. Japanese Base Camp.**

We continue up the valley where we saw the avalanche the day before. It's well below freezing when we set off. Whilst some people still strive to the 'be bold start cold' approach, the rest find sanctuary in their large down jackets for the first time. After approximately an hour, we step onto the foot of a glacier that we will not come off for the next couple of days, meaning warm toes are a thing of the past. Rockfall is a constant threat from the deep valley slides and you can always hear the rumble of landslides and small avalanches up ahead. All campsites previous to this one had a set area for tents, Japanese base camp, also referred to as Glacial camp due to being on the Glacier itself, is our next destination. Due to being on a glacier, a bedspace has to be dug into the ice with a pickaxe and shovel to create anything that resembles a pitch for the tent. Due to the steep incline at what is already a high altitude, we opt for another acclimatisation day as some of the team members are showing small symptoms of altitude sickness.

#### **Day 14.**

An additional rest day was the right choice as everyone wakes up on this morning feeling well rested and fit enough to continue on the trek. Anyone who was severely ill from this point would have to be evacuated via helicopter





due to how remote we were, so we decided to err on the side of caution. Today's goal is to continue further up the glacier to Dhaulagiri basecamp, from where the modern approach to the summit of Dhaulagiri now starts. The air is noticeably thinner here as small tasks start to require substantial effort. The valley is so narrow, we can only appreciate the sun's rays for about 2 hours a day, everything outside of this sits below freezing temperature. Everest basecamp has previously had a rehab suite, massage parlour, cinema and numerous morale raising events. The only thing at Dhaulagiri basecamp is the remains of a crashed rescue helicopter from a failed rescue attempt a few years previous and the litter of summit parties over the last decade. There are mixed emotions staying here, due to the result of a beautiful Western slope of Dhaulagiri lit up by the sunset, the years of accumulated litter and the fear of avalanches constantly hanging above us.

#### Day 15. French pass.

Today is the hardest day for the team. No other day compares in both distance and altitude gained; this is only worsened by the lack of oxygen already being experienced and only getting worse. The altitude also gives way to freezing temperatures and trying to wear the appropriate clothes becomes a task in itself. The average pace of the group slows to about 1km/hour as we break through the snow and face steep inclines. Now wearing our winter mountaineering boots instead of approach shoes, the extra 1kg in weight in each leg feels like a 10kg kettle bell attached to each foot. Reaching the summit of the French pass at just under 5400m after a steep incline, the hyperventilation forces everyone to collapse onto their day sacks at the top as they try to suck in any oxygen they can. The rest is short, just enough time for a few photos before we retreat from the

windchill that causes the sweat to freeze to your face. Anyone with a camelback finds out the hard way that their water has frozen in their straws as they start to decant their bags into any water bottles they can find. We quickly retreat off the pass, glad that the highest point of our trek is now behind us. Tired legs carry everyone downhill towards our campsite for the night in the 'hidden valley'. By the time we reach our campsite some members of the group are at the stage of complete exhaustion. This is where the group had to rely on their training, dig deep for the last reserves of energy to establish camp, get some shelter and eat and drink to help recovery for the next day. It was our coldest night, temperatures plummet well below -20°C and our hot drinks freeze in their metal cups if left idle too long.

#### Day 16. Damphus pass.

Another strenuous day. After sleeping at 5100m throughout the night in such a hostile environment, some people wake up with signs of altitude sickness. The group rally around each other checking everyone is okay and despite the fatigue from the day before everyone is in good spirits. At this altitude even tasks such as tying your shoe laces can leave you out of breath if done too quickly. We go straight into an incline as we begin to cross Damphus pass at 5300m. With no path to follow, our guide 'breaks track' which sees him carving a route into the snow by simply fighting through it the hard way. The wind is biting throughout and there is no escaping the cold as we make too slow progress to warm up properly. Snow drifts see people up to their neck in snow if they put their foot in the wrong place. As we approach the high point of the pass, it quickly becomes worth it as we have a panoramic view of the Annapurna range. Despite the Annapurna circuit being one of the most popular tourist walks in the world, very few people will get to see this mountain



range in the way we have. Again, the break at the top is quickly over as we want to get down the mountain and out of the wind. This hope is short lived as we spend the majority of the day traversing the mountain side over 5000m through what is referred to on the map as 'Windy pass'. Once we do decline, we do so rapidly and drop close to 1000m within an hour.

#### Day 17. Martha.

On the final day we rapidly come down the mountain to Martha. The air feels thick and all of our aches and pains start to disappear in the excitement of the end being so close. We walk through our final ecosystem which feels like the dry plains of the Pyrenees with very little vegetation, allowing us to switch back to the much lighter approach shoes. The Tibetan plain sits to our left, with the multicoloured hills looking tiny in comparison to our current elevation. We finally get into the small tourist village of Martha, famous for its apples. Making the most of this, the group indulges in the likes of apple pie, apple brandy, apple juice and copious amounts of cider in a well-deserved celebration. Despite the bustling nightlife Martha offers everyone is in bed early, enjoying the comforts of a mattress.

#### Day 18-20.

Despite the freezing temperatures, biting wind, cold toes and constantly manoeuvring your body to limit the amount of rocks pressing into your back when you're in bed, you miss all of these experiences as soon as you get back onto a bus and once again find yourself staring down a cliffside with nothing to hold onto except sheer hope you are not about to die. Not fortunate enough to be able to get a return plane journey, the drive from Martha to Kathmandu takes close to 14 hours and some nail-biting moments. During this time, we started to gain signal again and returned to some form of normality.

Waiting for us was a quote from our home bank support lead, Lt Nick Kelly who left a very appropriate message of support stating, 'The hardest mountain to climb, is the one within'. For many of the team, this was beyond true as there were many emotional moments of true self-reflection throughout this journey. Once departed from the transport, we resided in Kathmandu Guest House for our final evening before getting an early flight to the UK. All good things must come to an end, but not for those who were in the Fire Support Teams who had 6 hours to turn themselves and their kit around before deploying to Otterburn Training Area for TQCC. Fortunately, they were adequately acclimatised for the cold.

The team would like to thank all those who helped make the expedition such a success. Notably RACPD, Genesis and The Sandhurst Trust for their financial support; Gurkha Adventures for guiding and logistics; Surg Lt Cdr A Najman RN the expedition doctor; and Maj A Mason AGC (ETS) and Cpl E Tomkins RAMC for their mountaineering instruction.

by Capt Brennan RA  
4th Regiment Royal Artillery

Interested in organising an AT expedition for your Regiment?

Twice a year the Army Adventurous Training Group accept bids for expedition slots to Nepal. These can range from a trek to summiting Mount Everest. If you are interested have a look at the latest DIN 2023DIN07-100 (at time of publication).

Or contact the OIC of this expedition, Capt CH Jefferson RA, who will be happy to share some advice, [charles.jefferson101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:charles.jefferson101@mod.gov.uk)





## Undaunted, the Royal Artillery Field Gun Crew put their heads down and trained hard



Royal Artillery Field Gun

Following a trailblazing foray into the sport by a team from 29 Cdo Regt RA in 2015, the Royal Artillery's Field Gun Crew was formally brought into being in 2022. The Gunner team is the most recent addition to a sport which traces its roots back over 115 years to the Royal Navy's first Field Gun Competition. The sport is a brutal one. It demands strength, speed and no small amount of physical courage as the 18-strong crew haul a one and a half tonne gun and limber 'out back and home' bringing it into and out of action, disassembling and reassembling it and performing two quick actions of three rounds Fire for Effect. A real Gunner sport if ever there was one!

Whilst the more established Crews from across Defence welcomed the Gunner team in their first season, they were sceptical about their prospects. No ab initio crew had

ever made it out of the bottom third in their first three years of competition. Undaunted, the Royal Artillery Field Gun Crew put their heads down, trained hard, mastering the complex series of drills required for success, getting faster and stronger with every run.

The crew learned to rely on the outstanding coaching staff, believe in their own ability, come together as a team and go forward, as one. On the day of the competition, against 18 far more experienced and established crews from across the Royal Navy, Army, RAF, and NATO in front of a crowd of thousands of spectators, the Royal Artillery Field Gun team knuckled down and delivered a stellar performance.

Their placing, ninth of 19, was the best performance by a first-year crew in living memory. Without resting on their laurels, the crew went straight back to work,



advertising, growing the pool of talent and ensuring the profile of the sport was raised.

From the youngest Gunner to the most senior Major the team dug out to spread the word about this exciting new opportunity to carve out a niche in the top tier of the Field Gun world.

With 2022's crew now representing the 'old hands' of the sport the team was augmented with fresh blood resulting in an outstanding season in 2023. The Crew made it to the grand final – another first for a novice team – and finished fifth of 19 teams, crucially posting the fastest time of any Army team, beating the Sappers and previous champions, the REME.

The Royal Artillery crew have quickly embedded themselves within the wider Field Gun Community with veteran crews commenting on their impressive achievements in such a short space of time. Elements of the team have now rooted themselves in the sport's Executive Committee, ensuring the Gunners have a voice which outweighs their relative experience. They have quickly become the lead for ensuring wider Army engagement and participation within the sport.

Always with one eye to the future, the Royal Artillery Junior Leaders Field Gun crew stood up during the 2023 season. Giving our most junior soldiers the opportunity to compete in a challenging tri-service sport whilst developing them as soldiers and ensuring the sport will endure within the Royal Regiment.

Despite having existed for less than 24 months, the Royal Artillery Field Gun Crew have made an unparalleled impact on and

off the track. They have out-performed even their own expectations, rising to the top tier of the sport in only two seasons; securing a place at the heart of the sport's governing body and working to ensure a sound future for the sport within the Gunners.

It is hard to imagine what more they could have achieved. Dedicated, hardworking and fantastic company, the Royal Artillery Field Gun Crew are a group the Gunners should be proud of. What's more, they are always on the look out for new members! If you would like to join the team, or are interested in finding out more about the Field Gun competition, email [ArtyCen-RA-FieldGun@modgovuk.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:ArtyCen-RA-FieldGun@modgovuk.onmicrosoft.com)

by Major P D Home RA  
Director Royal Artillery Field Gun







**93 Battery visit to 100th Birthday of oldest surviving member**



Walking to visit Lt Col Guild on his 100th Birthday

On 25th January 2024, Lt Col Stuart Guild celebrated his one hundredth birthday in Edinburgh. The oldest surviving member of the Battery, Lt Col Guild joined 37/47 Field Battery (later to become 93 Battery) during World War II and was deployed to Burma in 1944. During his time in the Royal Artillery, he also served in Vietnam (then French Indochina) and Malaya, before returning to Britain. In celebration of his birthday 2Lt Thornton and Sgt Leppard visited him at his home, along with representatives from 105 Regt RA and the Royal Artillery Association, where they were warmly welcomed by the centenarian gunner. As advice from the oldest officer of the battery to the youngest, Lt Col Guild attributes his good health to regular games of golf. Our grateful thanks to the RAI who assisted in funding this visit and allowed the Battery to assist in celebrating such a momentous occasion.







## Mr Sidney Stopp was 100 years of age on Wednesday 10th January



A party was held for him where he lives at Raleigh Manor Care Home in Exmouth. As a World War II veteran it was fitting that his former regiment celebrated with him, so the care home contacted the Army and it was arranged for Major Richard Lupton (RHQ RA) and WO2 Kerry Roberts (HQ SW) to attend the party. His son, Brian, added that it was a huge surprise for Sid and made his day to see us lined up in the corridor in his honour.

It was a large party with standing room only for most, as the place was packed with his family, friends and fellow residents. Raleigh Manor's Deputy Manager said, "We wanted this day to be a truly special one for Sid so being able to involve the groups that mean so much to him in the celebration was emotional and heart-warming. Local charity, Launchpad made

an amazing cake depicting the white cliffs of Dover, local singer, Julia, provided entertainment including all Sid's favourite Vera Lynn songs and the Exmouth Royal British Legion Standard Bearer attended too. It was perfect!"

The Salvation Army Band also played – a very special moment for Sid as they are a favoured organisation of his ever since they so generously cared for him and his fellow Gunners with tea and cake during World War II.

Sid joined the Home Guard as a teenager and was soon enlisted into the Army. He served as Gun No.3 in 218 (Bournemouth) Battery, 94th (Queen's Own Dorset Yeomanry) Field Regiment RA, which was part of 43rd (Wessex) Division. Landing shortly after D Day at Gold Beach, he saw action across Normandy (notably Operation



EPSOM and then Hill 112), up through France to Arnhem (Operation MARKET GARDEN) and then into Germany.

Major Lupton has served in 43 (Wx) Bde and WO2 Roberts wears the Wessex Wyvern today – this was not lost on Sid and added a further welcome link to his past.

Sid received a Birthday card from the King & Queen, which was read out to him by WO2 Roberts. He was also presented with a card on behalf of the Master Gunner St James's Park and the Royal Regiment, a framed embroidery of a WO1's rank badge from the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major on behalf of the RA WOs and an official video and booklet on the history of 43 (Wessex) Division in World War II. Major Lupton read out the message in the Royal Artillery card, finishing with, "Once

a gunner, always a gunner" – to the delight of Sid, his family and friends.

Major Lupton said "It is a pleasure and a privilege to honour one of the few still with us from such a crucial event in British history. I live near Exmouth, so will personally deliver Sid his copy of Gunner Magazine. On the day it was a good party and there was little time to hear Sid reminiscence of Normandy; I know Sid is so keen to share some more. My grandfathers fought over the same ground as Sid, so I would really like to also hear much more about it from Sid's gun line perspective."

As a Normandy veteran, in 2016, Sid was awarded the Legion d'Honneur by the Government of France. Quite rightly, he had it proudly on display.







Larkhill Civil Servants recognised in London Medal Ceremony



On the left Andrew Walker and right Mr Andrew Burge

On Monday 15th January 2024 Mr Andrew Burge and Mr Andrew Walker, both long serving members of the team at Larkhill's Fargo ammunition site, were awarded their King's Coronation Medals at a Civil Service ceremony, held at Lancaster House in London. Both men received their medals for their pivotal roles in Op GOLDEN ORB: Mr Walker was responsible for the logistical supply of ammunition for the salute fired by 14th Regiment Royal Artillery at Stonehenge to mark the Coronation. Mr Burge, as OC Fargo, was responsible for overseeing all ammunition logistics for the day, including demanding the correct ammunition and ensuring that the event ran smoothly.

The medals were presented at Lancaster House, part of St James's Place, by the current Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service Simon Case. The event was also attended by Defence Permanent Secretary David Williams. Following on from the medal ceremony, afternoon tea was taken within the grounds of St James's Palace. Mr Burge and Mr Walker, both Gunner Veterans, were also pivotal in the Death Salutes that marked the sad passing of Her Late Majesty the Queen.

On the day itself, Mr Walker said 'the day was very poignant and I felt very honoured to be the recipient of this medal'. The medals mark their continued service to The King after leaving the Regular Army.

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## Sandown 2024



A picture to prove that racing does actually take place

The Royal Artillery Gold Cup, affectionately known as the Gunner Reunion, has gone from strength to strength in 2024 which saw many of the serving and retired community join to celebrate the 169th meeting and the 139th running of the race. The event has undergone significant change to the good old days of regimental tents where people never saw the light of day, to what it is today, a celebration of all the family aspects of the Royal Regiment. Gazebos a plenty, RA Standards, the RA Museum, 17 members of the Pipes and Drums, and most importantly the King's Troop RHA, not forgetting the flashes of tweed, regimental ties, and brooches, as well as a fantastic display of silver.

For many the day started with one of two things, the dreaded long coach journey, or a champagne breakfast in one of the Messes, all descending on Sandown Park for an 1100hrs

start. Initial meets and greets done, inspections of gazebos complete, Master Gunner St James's Park reception underway, it was quickly time to witness the flair that is the Pipes and Drums followed by the opening of the RA Gold Cup. This is marked by the firing of the gun by the King's Troop RHA. Ceremony complete it allowed just enough time to make it to your start locations, mark your territory, place your first bets (for those that enjoy a flutter), before the commencement of the first race.

The Royal Artillery Gold Cup is one of the oldest events in the Racing Calendar. The inaugural event was held in 1862 and, following in the footsteps of the Grand Military Meeting, which was first held in 1841, the meeting immediately proved extremely popular with members of the Regiment. This year's Gold Cup saw an overwhelming number of people back 'Broken Halo', last year's



winner. The smart ones that had done their homework would have noticed that Glorious grey Farceur Du Large, ridden by Major Will Kellard, had won the Grand Military Cup just 20 days earlier and was a firm favourite to do the double. The smart ones won the day which meant that trainer Jamie Snowden has now won both Sandown military races as a jockey and a trainer, a massive achievement.

Racing aside, the RA Gold Cup is the largest gathering of serving and retired members of the Gunner family and is a day full of stories of the 'good old days', but also a chance to forge new bonds with like minded people. Aply supported by the RA Association, Standard Bearers, and the RA Museum, there really is something for everyone. I found myself on a few occasions taking in the crowds, listening to the laughs, and genuinely felt that Our race day is one to be envied across the military, and long may it continue. The change of location and layout of the day meant that people were able to take in the entirety of what the gunners had to offer and

even manage a few chest pokes to their rival regiments. Banter was free flowing, all above board might I add, and the rebuttals were fiercely tribal, all in true military fashion. For those on their first Sandown, I am positive they will be set to return year on year and ensure that our history remains as relevant today as it did over 100 years ago.

A special thanks to Major (Retd) Charlie Lane and the Steeplechase committee for all their efforts in putting together, in conjunction with those already listed, a fantastic day that was enjoyed by so many. This year's event was pulled together with the assistance of WO2 Jamie Black who did a fantastic job in bringing together the Gunner family and putting on an exceptional setup.

We are already looking forward to planning next year's events where we hope to see many more people return or visit for the first time. Events like these are exactly what being part of the Gunner family is all about and without the support of the community, will fail to achieve its aims.



19 Regt RA and the RTR combine to put on a delightful display of Pipes and Drums





## Reunions



Royal Artillery Boys Association and Junior Leaders Association

Way back in the dim and distant past (well about 1985 to be honest) a chap called Ted Parkinson who had been a member of the Boys Regiment RA felt that the time had come to try and contact his old mates from his days in Rhyl. This he did and so the Royal Artillery Boys and Junior Leaders (as it is now called) was born.

The first Reunion took place at the Sunners Arms in Preston in 1990. Reunions have been held annually ever since (with the exception of 2020 when Covid 19 meant there could not be one held that year).

Membership of the Association is open to anybody who joined or joins the Royal Artillery under the age of 17½ years. This means that if you initially joined the Boys Bty RA, the Boys Regiment RA, the Junior Leaders Regiment RA, The Army Apprentice School Harrogate (as an Apprentice RA Surveyor), The All Arms Junior Leaders Regiment, The Junior Tradesmen Regiments at both Troon and Rhyl and the Junior

Musicians Troop in Woolwich then you are all very welcome to join us. In addition, those who commence their service at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate and graduate into the Gunners are equally welcome to join us.

Following the initial few years when the reunion was held in pubs it eventually settled down in the Garrison Sergeants' Mess in Larkhill which gave the Association a very firm base for many years to come.

Whilst there the Mess made available a room, which became known as the "Bramcote Room" and was dedicated to displaying the Regimental memorabilia from the recently disbanded Boys/Junior Units following the political decision to cease Junior entry into the armed forces.

All good things must come to an end and in 2007 it was announced that the Mess was going to be demolished and rebuilt meaning that a venue for the memorabilia and future reunions had to be found. At this point it was



decided to seek somewhere situated more in the centre of the country and therefore in 2008 the reunion was moved to the Holiday Inn in Coventry, where it stayed until 2022. During that period the Association has celebrated its 25th Anniversary (2015) which saw the Band of 103 Regt RA Beat Retreat for us outside the hotel and a 25 pounder coming into action on the lawn and firing 5 rounds FFE (or if you prefer 5 rounds Gunfire) much to the surprise of the other hotel guests. Although we hold the reunion annually it has become somewhat of a tradition to raise the stakes every five years and do something a little bit special, we are now planning for the 35th gathering in 2025.

I mentioned earlier the memorabilia that was displayed in the Sgts' Mess in Larkhill, when the mess closed the memorabilia was stored in containers. During this time one of our younger members took it on himself to start building up a collection of items that he had come across one way or another, so impressed were the Committee with his efforts that it was agreed that all the memorabilia still

stored away should be given to him. This was carried out and the Steve Collins collection is something that every ex Junior Soldier should try to visit. One way of doing that is to arrange to visit Steve's house in Nuneaton where the collection is on display, the other way is come to the reunion where a room (rather like the Bramcote Room) is set up each year for members and guests to stroll round, it is one of the highlights of the reunion.

The reunion weekend runs from Friday to Sunday although many people now arrive on the Thursday and some stay until the Monday.

Friday is spent meeting up with old friends with a casual dinner in the hotel in the evening, whilst on Saturday people go out and about but come back in time to attend the Gala Dinner and Cabaret.

Membership of the Association costs £5.00 per year.

If you are planning to attend the RA Assembly in Blackpool next year please come and visit us at our stand. We will be delighted to see you and the "Steve Collins Collection" will be on show.







## Exercise ALPINE TIGER 23/24



Ex ALPINE TIGER 23/24 saw 74 gunners from 10 regular units and the Honourable Artillery Company returning to Les Deux Alpes for the Royal Artillery's alpine training scheme and championships.

Winter sports continue to be a unique part of 'the offer', providing an intense challenge that allows the soldier to fail, to learn and, through competition, to succeed. This year's championship had it all in terms of environmental conditions – racing on ice, fresh soft snow, white out and blue bird skies. The physical demand was evident, with only 12 racers registering finishes in all three individual disciplines. Regardless, and more important, was the tangible mental resilience and stimulating propagation of confidence throughout the Royal Artillery's soldiers and junior officers:

**Bdr Hill, 26RA – MBDA Royal Artillery Slalom Champion, Winner Best JNC category and Royal Artillery Individual Combination Champion. Selected as the Royal Artillery Team Captain:**

"I have never been put out of my comfort zone so much, so regularly, with anything else

in my life. For me, the best feeling in the world is crossing the finish line, regardless of whether you did well or not. The adrenaline rush you get right after you have finished is something I don't think I could replicate with anything else. Alpine racing is something I look forward to all year long, it has kept me in the Army for as long as I have been in."

**Gnr George Brison, 1RHA – Royal Artillery Junior Champion**

"Getting the opportunity to be a part of the Regiment's Alpine ski team was a unique experience I won't forget and look forward to doing it again in the future. It was good to meet new people from various different regiments that I wouldn't normally meet through normal work life."

**Gnr Olivia Coupland, 32RA – awarded the Saab Challenge Coin:**

"My time at Les Deux Alpes was an amazing experience whilst learning how to ski as a novice. When I first put the skis on, I wanted to give up there and then, but after the first week I really got into it and was really enjoying it. I learned



a lot about myself throughout my time there. Whilst waiting in the start gate ready to take on the race, I had a lot of nerves and was even quite scared. I fell many times, however each time I got back up to finish the race as I didn't want to let myself and my team down. I was really proud to win a coin for my perseverance during the ski season and I would recommend it to anyone, especially to anyone who has never skied before."

**Bdr Jenny Cottrell, 1RHA – Second place Royal Artillery Super G and Royal Artillery Ladies Team:**

"There is a lot to be said about the virtues of sportsmanship between competitors which I believe is a big component to the spirit of racing. This year, though not as successful as previous seasons, I feel, has been more beneficial to me developmentally than any previous seasons before. A confidence knock in training as a result of a collision subconsciously affected my ability to manage fear and that manifested itself in reluctance to fully commit to the speed and to what the course was asking of me. I discovered the importance of creating the right energy to best prepare oneself mentally – letting go of any worry and focus on the job at hand."

**Sgt Rachael Margetts, Honourable Artillery Company - MBDA Royal Artillery Slalom Champion, Saab Royal Artillery Giant Slalom Champion, Royal Artillery Super G Champion, Royal Artillery Ladies Individual Combination Champion and Royal Artillery Ladies Team.**

"Along with my operational mobilisations, it is by far one of the best things I've done in my army career. It has taught me so much about myself and what I'm capable of doing. Everything we do on the slopes directly links back to improving your skills as a soldier; from the resilience and courage you need to attack a downhill, to preparing your skis just as you would your weapon."

The ability to generate such meaningful impact on our junior officers and soldier would

not be possible without the support of the Royal Artillery Institute and our sponsors' commitment to support grassroots sport. MBDA's sponsorship of the Royal Artillery Slalom, and Saab's sponsorship of the Royal Artillery Giant Slalom and Royal Regiment's new team clothing and equipment, allows Royal Artillery Alpine skiers to thrive on the slopes of Les Deux Alpes, the Army Championships, and their military careers.

by Lt Col C M Wane MBE RA  
SO1 Professional Development Policy  
Personnel Policy (Army)

**MBDA Royal Artillery Slalom: Individual Champion – Bdr Tim Hill, 26th Regiment RA; Ladies Champion Sgt Rachael Margetts, Honourable Artillery Company; Team Champions – 5th Regiment RA.**

**Saab Royal Artillery Giant Slalom: Individual Champion – Tpr James Cottrill, Honourable Artillery Company; Ladies Champion Sgt Rachael Margetts, Honourable Artillery Company; Team Champions – 26th Regiment RA.**

**Royal Artillery Super G: Individual Champion – SSgt Joe Lockeridge, 14th Regiment RA / Royal School of Artillery; Ladies Champion Sgt Rachael Margetts, Honourable Artillery Company; Team Champions – 14th Regiment RA / Royal School of Artillery.**

**Winner, Royal Artillery Junior category: Gnr George Brison, 1RHA**

**Winner, Royal Artillery Novice category: LBdr Robyn Locke, 19th Regiment RA.**

**Winner, Royal Artillery Veterans category: WO2 James Wilkes, 14th Regiment RA / Royal School of Artillery.**

**Royal Artillery Individual Combination Champion: Bdr Tim Hill, 26th Regiment RA.**

**Royal Artillery Ladies Combination Champion: Sgt Rachael Margetts, Honourable Artillery Company**

**Royal Artillery Team Combination Champions: 14th Regiment RA / Royal School of Artillery.**





APPOINTMENT OF ROYAL ARTILLERY COLONELS COMMANDANT

1. As part of the regimental Strategic Review conducted on behalf of the Master Gunner in 2018, the issue of the role and requirement for the Regiment’s Colonels Commandant was considered.
2. The Master Gunner’s Committee has subsequently approved the following allocation of the 10 Royal Artillery Colonels Commandant as permitted under King’s Regulations:
  - a. 1 x Master Gunner
  - b. 1 x Regimental Colonel Commandant
  - c. 6 x Regional Colonels Commandant based on the current six recruiting regions:
    - 1) Scotland
    - 2) Northern Ireland
    - 3) Northern Region
    - 4) Wales & West Midlands
    - 5) London, Anglia and East Midlands
    - 6) Southern

These also cover the primary saluting bases of London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast
  - d. 3 x epoch-based Colonels Commandant:
    - 1) UOTCs & Cadets
    - 2) Serving (Regimental Colonel Commandant)
    - 3) Veterans (Chairman RAA)
3. Following recommendations by the Master Gunner St James’s Park, His Majesty The King has approved following appointments as Colonels Commandant Royal Regiment of Artillery:
  - a. With effect from 1 June 2023:
 

Maj Gen R M Clements CBE

Col L M Forbes TD



- b. With effect on 1 January 2024:
 

Brigadier B W Bennett CBE

Brigadier M N Pountain CBE

Brigadier S C Williams OBE

Colonel J A B Kinloch TD DL

Colonel S O Thomas CBE

These latter appointments are for an initial period of three years.

4. The full list of Royal Artillery Colonels Commandant, together with their regional and regimental responsibilities, is now as follows:
 

Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL – Master Gunner

Maj Gen M R Elviss CB MBE – Regimental Colonel Commandant (for Serving Regiment)

Maj Gen N H Marshall OBE (for London, Anglia, and E. Midlands)

Maj Gen R M Clements CBE (for Southern region)

Brig M N Pountain CBE (for Veterans)

Brig S C Williams OBE (for UOTCs & Cadets)

Brig B W Bennett CBE (for Northern Ireland)

Col L M Forbes TD (for Northern Region)

Col S O Thomas CBE (for Wales & Midlands)

Col J A B Kinloch TD DL (for Scotland)
5. King’s Regulations describe the role of Colonels Commandant as being:
 

“to cultivate the soul and ethos of the Regimental/Corps family; to maintain esprit de Corps; and to promote Regimental/Corps interest”.

Within the Royal Regiment, Colonels Commandant have the following specific responsibilities:

  - To deputise for the Master Gunner as required within their allocated region or functional area. This may include but is not limited to:
    - o Representational duties at military and civic events.
    - o Visits to Royal Artillery units within their region or area of functional area when invited by the unit or requested by the Master Gunner.
    - o Promoting the interests of the Royal Regiment within their regional or functional area.





REGIMENTAL AND BATTERY DISBANDMENTS

Following recommendations by the Royal Artillery Heritage Committee, the Master Gunner’s Committee has approved a revised Royal Artillery Standing Order covering the instructions for suspended and disbanded regiments and batteries. The Master Gunner’s Committee further approved recommendations for a number of regiments and batteries, which have been in long term suspended animation, to be disbanded.

The practical impact of this change is to relieve the burden on the Regimental Secretary of accounting for, and maintaining, the property of those regiments and batteries in suspended animation. This will allow that property to be redistributed across the Regiment: transferred to the RAHT Collection or the RAI Collection, or otherwise disposed of, as appropriate. It also ensures that the status of our inactive regiments and batteries more accurately reflects the order in which RHQ might seek to reanimate them in the future.

The tables below show those regiments and batteries to be formally disbanded (22 regiments and 36 batteries), and those which will remain in suspended animation.

The updated Royal Artillery Standing Order will be promulgated by RHQ RA and will be applied in the case of the newly disbanded units and sub units.

**Table 1: regiments, currently in suspended animation, to be disbanded or to remain in suspended animation.**

1947 Regt Number	Date of formation	Date of SA	Regimental title on SA	Disband/SA
2	1901	1993	2 Fd Regt RA	SA
6	1940	1968	6 Lt Regt RA	Disband
10	1899	1957	10 Fd Regt RA	Disband
15	1915	1958	15 Med Regt RA	Disband
17	1900	1995	17 Trg Regt RA	SA
18	1927	1969	18 Lt Regt RA	Disband
20	1900	1976	20 Lt Regt RA	Disband
21	1927	1964	21 Regt RA	Disband
22	1947	2004	22 Regt RA	SA
23	1899	1958	23 Fd Regt RA	Disband
24	1918	1977	24 Msl Regt RA	SA
25	1901	1984	25 Fd Regt RA	SA
27	1927	1993	27 Regt RA	SA
28	1933	1956	28 Coast Regt RA	Disband
30	1947	1958	30 HAA Regt RA	Disband
31	1900	1961	31 Trg Regt RA	Disband



33	1947	1961	33 Para Lt Regt RA	Disband
34	1924	1969	34 Lt AD Regt RA	Disband
35	1947	1958	35 LAA Regt RA	Disband
36	1947	1977	36 Hy AD Regt RA	Disband
37	1900	1968	37 Hy AD Regt RA	Disband
38	1915	1960	38 Trg Regt RA	Disband
39	1915	2014	39 Regt RA	SA
40	1900	2012	40 Regt RA	SA
41	1899	1961	41 Fd Regt RA	Disband
42	1900	1977	42 Hy Regt RA	Disband
44	1899	1958	44 HAA Regt RA	Disband
45	1924	1993	45 Regt RA	SA
46	1947	1958	46 HAA Regt RA	Disband
48	1900	1959	48 Fd Regt RA	Disband
49	1900	1992	49 Regt RA	SA
50	1915	1993	50 Regt RA	SA
94	1939	1993	94 Loc Regt RA	SA
95	1941	1977	95 FOU RA	Disband

**Table 2: batteries (in 1947 renumbered order of precedence), currently in suspended animation, to be disbanded or to remain in suspended animation.**

RHA Precedence	Battery	Date of formation	Date of SA	Battery title on SA	Disband/SA
4	V	1793	2013	V Bty RHA	SA
16	M	1809	2023	M HQ Bty RHA	SA
RA Precedence					
20	17	1757	2018	17 (Corunna) Bty RA	SA
21	15	1757	2004	15 HQ Bty RA	SA
23	25	1758	2011	25 Bty RA	SA
26	33	1759	1993	33 JL Bty RA	SA
27	2	1759	1997	2 Bty RA	SA
30	35	1765	2015	35 Bty RA	SA
31	38	1768	2018	38 (Serangapatam) Bty RA	SA
32	128	1768	1958	128 Med Bty RA	Disband
33	39	1770	1993	39 JL Bty RA	Disband
36	40	1771	1993	40 JL Bty RA	Disband
37	44	1771	1972	44 JL Bty RA	Disband
39	41	1771	1982	41 Fd Bty RA	SA
43	124	1778	1958	124 HAA Bty RA	Disband
44	51	1779	1993	51 (Kabul 1842) Bty RA	SA
45	16	1779	2019	16 Bty (Sandham’s Coy) RA	SA
46	50	1779	1972	50 Hy Bty RA	Disband
48	52	1779	2015	52 (Niagara) Bty RA	SA
49	109	1786	1958	109 Fd Bty RA	Disband
50	110	1786	1957	110 LAA Bty RA	Disband
51	54	1786	1984	54 (Maharajpore) Bty RA	SA
55	56	1786	2015	56 (Olpherts’) Bty RA	SA



## REGIMENTAL AND BATTERY DISBANDMENTS

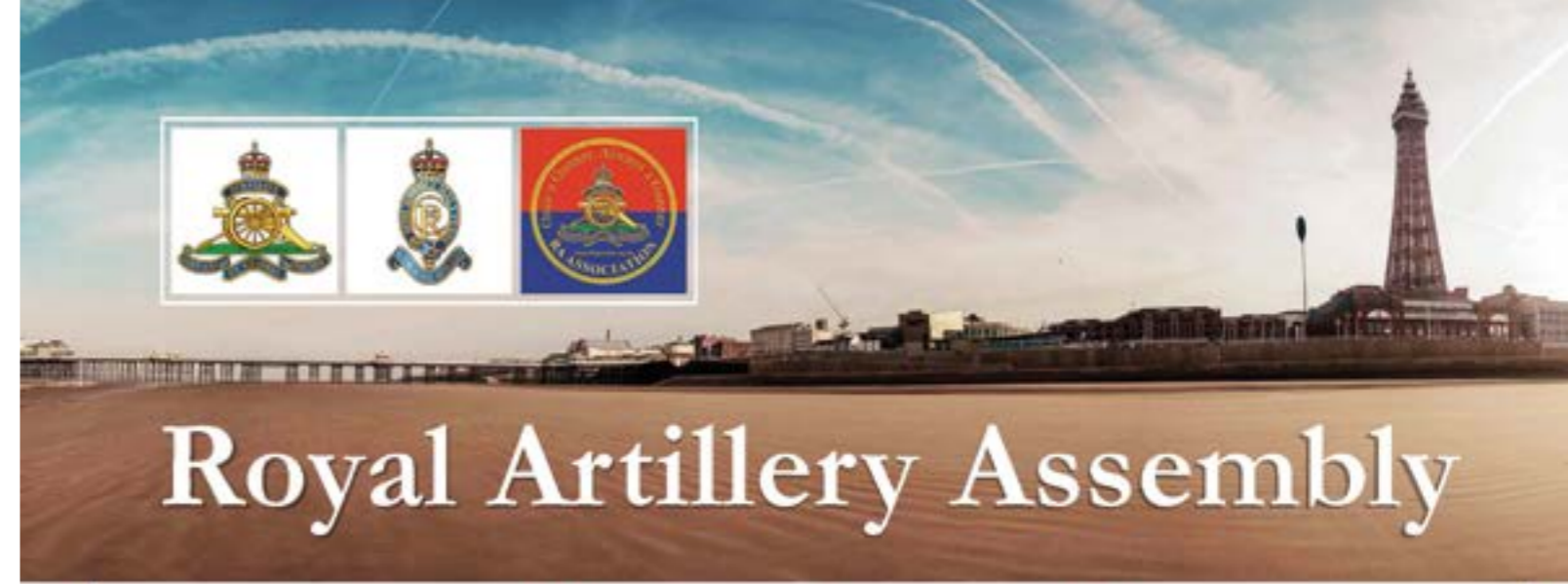


57	60	1791	1968	60 Hy AD Bty RA	Disband
63	69	1793	1958	69 Fd Bty RA	Disband
69	67	1794	1971	67 Fd Bty RA	Disband
70	68	1794	1969	68 Med Bty RA	Disband
71	70	1794	1969	70 Med Bty RA	Disband
72	77	1794	1969	77 JL Bty RA	Disband
76	76	1795	2014	76 (Maude's) Bty RA	SA
77	75	1795	1968	75 Hy Bty RA	Disband
79	78	1796	1968	78 Hy Bty RA	Disband
81	80	1799	1959	80 Fd Bty RA	Disband
82	81	1799	1961	81 HQ Bty RA	Disband
83	82	1799	1958	82 Para Lt Bty RA	Disband
84	126	1800	1958	126 HAA Bty RA	Disband
85	111	1800	1984	111 (Dragon) Bty RA	SA
88	92	1802	1958	92 LAA Bty RA	Disband
89	89	1802	1961	89 Trg Bty RA	Disband
90	91	1802	1958	91 LAA Bty RA	Disband
92	87	1802	1959	87 Fd Bty RA	Disband
93	90	1802	1958	90 LAA Bty RA	Disband
96	95	1803	1959	95 Fd Bty RA	Disband
97	96	1803	1958	96 Para Lt Bty RA	Disband
99	98	1803	1958	98 Med Bty RA	Disband
100	99	1803	1958	99 LAA Bty RA	Disband
105	107	1806	1958	107 Fd Bty RA	Disband
106	104	1806	1960	104 HAA Bty RA	Disband
107	105	1806	1961	105 Fd Bty RA	Disband
108	106	1806	1957	106 LAA Bty RA	Disband
109	108	1806	1961	108 HAA Bty RA	Disband
110	113	1808	1960	113 Loc Bty RA	Disband
119	Z	1824	2014	Z Fd Bty RA	SA
121	145	1826	1977	145 (Maiwand) Bty RA	SA
125	156	1848	1969	156 (Inkerman) Bty RA	SA
126	152	1848	1965	152 (Inkerman) Loc Bty RA	SA
127	27	1848	1976	27 Bty (Strange's Coy) RA	SA
129	160	1854	1963	160 Bty (Middleton's Coy) RA	SA
131	171	1857	1983	171 (The Broken Wheel) Bty RA	SA
133	26	1934	1958	26 LAA Bty RA	Disband

Note:

To be disbanded	
To remain in SA	

Any individual or organisation that has, in the past made presentations to any of the above disbanded batteries or regiments and who wishes to reclaim their presentation, should contact the Assistant Regimental Secretary, Lt Col Richard Carter - richard.carter694@mod.gov.uk



# Royal Artillery Assembly

**FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> - SUNDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**  
AT THE NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL



For what will be one of the largest social gatherings of Gunners, a truly memorable weekend. Enjoy a spectacular programme of entertainment, including dancing to Live Bands, Fantastic Production Shows and International Cabarets. All appearing at the Royal Artillery Grand Gala Dinner Night.

### 3 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner - Saturday 18th May) - Just **£158.50 Per Person**

### 2 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner - Saturday 18th May) - Just **£130.50 Per Person**

**Grand Gala Dinner Only - No Accommodation £31.00 Per Person**

#### FRIDAY

- Check in from 3pm
- 3 Course Carvery Dinner
- Entertainment

#### SATURDAY

- Full English Breakfast
- Standard Bearers Competition
- Annual Assembly
- Sunset Ceremony
- Civic Reception
- Gala Dinner
- Live Entertainment

#### SUNDAY

- Full English Breakfast
- Church Service
- Themed Buffet
- Entertainment

To book a Gala Inclusive Package - call **0161 923 0300** and quote **RAANB0524**

Calls cost 13p per minute plus your chosen phone company access charge.

A refundable deposit of **£35** per person is required when booking Gala Inclusive Packages. **Please remember to advise the reservationist of your branch when booking.**

**For Gala Dinner Only bookings - please call 01253 500 701**

Accommodation reservations cannot be made on this line (01253 500 701)

**FREE PARKING FOR RESIDENTIAL GUESTS, NON RESIDENTS TO PAY AT THE PAY AND DISPLAY.**





### Gunner Sunday

**Gunner Sunday** at the Royal Hospital Chelsea will take place on 28th April 2024. All serving Gunners and veterans and their families are invited to attend.

Please contact the RAA Assistant Secretary, Cas Thoburn to book your place and obtain full details. cas.thoburn603@mod.gov.uk



### Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance

The Royal Artillery Association will conduct the Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas on Saturday 13th July 2024 commencing at 1100 hrs. All members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and their families are welcome to attend. Please find further details of the event [www.thegunners.org.uk/events](http://www.thegunners.org.uk/events)



### Forces Veteran ID Card

Veterans can now apply for their Veteran Card.

Any Veteran who left the Armed Forces before December 2018 can verify their veteran status online with a new digital application service to receive a Veteran Card through the post. A paper-based application process is also available as an alternative to the digital system.

The Veteran Card will provide veterans with a clear recognition of service, a tangible link to the Armed Forces, and allow them to easily verify their veteran status to access support and services from government, charities, and local authorities.

To apply for a Veteran Card visit [www.gov.uk/veteran-card](http://www.gov.uk/veteran-card)

### 50th Anniversary - M62 Coach Bomb

February 4th marked the 50th Anniversary of the M62 coach bomb that killed twelve people, including a wife and two children; aged 5 and 2 and injured over 38 others. On that day the Catterick Garrison trooping coach was on its Liverpool-Manchester-Catterick weekend commute and the bus was filled with soldiers and their families, wives and children.

Bdr Terence Griffin aged 24 and Gnr Leonard Godden aged 22 from 4th Light Regiment RA lost their lives.

Over 500 people attended the Service; serving soldiers, veterans and cadet organisations paraded to pay their respects at the M62 Coach Bomb Memorial, within the grounds of the Heartshead Moor Service Station.

During the Service many wreaths were laid by families, RAA Branches, local dignitaries and the Commanding Officer, 4th Regiment RA. The Association was supremely represented by Branches from all over the Northern, North West and North Wales Regions. Branch Standard Bearers paraded alongside other organisations with over 60 Standards on parade.

### We Will Remember Them



### Lewes Branch

On Friday 29th December 2023, Lewes Branch RAA held their final monthly meeting of 2023 at the care home of our President, Peter Godding. The meeting took place at Lydfords Care Home in East Hoathly where Peter now resides.

Peter had not been able to attend Meetings in nearly two years and Members knew how important it was for Peter to see everyone from the Branch. The Care Home were very accommodating and provided a room for the meeting and a splendid buffet with refreshments.

At the end of the Meeting, Peter was presented with a wooden carving of the Royal Artillery cap badge by Branch Secretary Mark Harding and the Branch Chairman, Michael Hobden gave Peter a gift of his favourite chocolates and beer. It was a truly great reunion and evening.

An article was published in the local newspaper, Sussex Express where Peter said "I have had the best evening seeing everyone again. I have not stopped smiling and laughing. It is such an amazing feeling that such a loving group of people care so much about me, that they helped me to live out a dream – and I didn't even ask".

Lewes Branch RAA have arranged to hold a Meeting at Lydfords each quarter to enable Peter to remain involved and continue to see all.



### RAA Battery Grants

One of the charitable objects of the Association is to promote comradeship, fostering esprit de corps and preserving traditions. Each year the Association makes funds available to Batteries in the form of annual grants to help fund Battery events, improve conditions for members of the Battery and their dependants.

Find out more information from [emm.pagan-skelley100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:emm.pagan-skelley100@mod.gov.uk) or through your chain of command.

### 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

#### J (Sidi Rezegh) Headquarters Battery

We extend our deepest thanks to the Royal Artillery Association for their invaluable contribution towards the J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery Birthday celebration, an unforgettable event. Their generous donation has not only fuelled the festivities but also strengthened the bonds within our Battery. The Royal Artillery Association's commitment to supporting events that honour our military history is truly commendable. Their contribution has allowed us to enhance the scale and significance of the J Battery birthday celebration, creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and pride.

As we commemorated the 82nd anniversary of the Battle of Sidi Rezegh, we not only honoured the memory of Second Lieutenant George Ward Gunn VC MC, but also celebrate the indomitable spirit of all of the soldiers J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery, both past and present. Breaking temporarily from tradition, the Battery has seized an opportunity to reward its serving members with a chance to explore the lakes and to introduce its youngest members to the joy of hillwalking, this was followed by a visit to Honiston Slate mine and historical tour.



### 47 Regiment Royal Artillery

#### 43 Battery (LLOYD'S COMPANY)

On Thursday 20 July 23, 43 Battery (LLOYD'S COMPANY) 47 Regiment RA celebrated their Birthday.

The day consisted of an Officers' and Seniors' vs Other Ranks (ORs) Sports Day, where we competed in numerous sports such as Foot-Pong, Ring on a Stick, Touch Rugby, Football Rounders and Dodgeball. In the true spirit of competition, all games were close,





and the ORs certainly took their opportunity to raise the physicality against the Officers and Seniors. Unfortunately, youth could not overcome experience and the Officers and Seniors took the spoils with an overall 3-2 scoreline.

The evening was then spent in the Warrant Officers' and Sgts' Mess. Gunner's Langmead and Parker kicked off the night with an adaptation of the Battery history; safe to say this was both humorous as well as educational. We then sat down for a three-course meal and speeches. Speeches were given by WO2 (BSM) Pete Kinsey and Major Alex Cann (BC 43 Battery), who thanked members of the Battery who were moving on to pastures new and spoke about the achievements and aspirations of 43 Battery. We were also privileged to be joined by Mark Harding and Jerry Docherty, members of the Royal Artillery Association (RAA) – Lewes Branch, whom we have built a very strong bond with. Mark spoke about the importance of our relationship and how it must continue for years to come and it being vital for the younger generation to stay involved with the RAA. The Battery then retired to the Mess Bar to end proceedings.

It's important to note that without a generous donation from the RAA the Battery would not have been able to celebrate their Birthday in this fashion and we would like to thank Mark, Jerry, and the team for continuing to support us. We look forward to the next one.



103rd Regiment Royal Artillery

208th Battery

The relationship between those who have served and those who still do, is a special one. Something to be nurtured and strengthened and what better time to renew those bonds than at Christmas, our end of the year function encompassed both the serving soldiers and the RAA. Over 20 members of the RAA Aigburth-Merseyside Branch were welcomed by the Battery to share in the festivities.

Mr Dave Powell was our VIP at the Dinner, the RAA Aigburth-Merseyside Branch made a special presentation to their Treasurer for his many years

of dedicated and outstanding service. A second presentation was made to Alan Kelly for his many years of outstanding service.

The chance to talk with the RAA members is something that every serving Gunner should take the opportunity to do whenever the chance presents itself. We can learn about the past and use that gained wisdom and knowledge in the future.

(After this article was written, it is with great sadness to inform you, Dave passed away on 13 Feb 24).



Biggleswade Branch



At the recent AGM of Biggleswade Branch an era ended with the resignation of long serving Chairman, Ted McKenzie. Both the incoming Chairman Mark Aitkens (pictured with Ted) and the President Terry Harragan paid tribute to Ted's 13 year tenure as a stalwart of the Branch and wished him and his partner Kathy (former Branch Secretary) well for the future."



RACF SUPPORT TO THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

Can we help you, the RACF are here to help with those essential needs. Let us help you!

Some of the areas we can help with are household goods, funerals, rental deposits, removals, mobility aids, priority debts (rent arrears, council tax arrears, utility arrears), training, care home fees and annual grants.

Looking back to 2023 we helped our Gunner family by providing 1,187\* grants. Just under £657,000 was pledged to help those in need in 2023.

Two of our biggest areas that our Gunner family required help with were mobility needs and household goods.

17% of our total grants pledged in 2023 have been for mobility needs and 17% was also pledged household goods - Our Gunner families required help to buy those much needed items in the home.

Looking to 2024: To date the RACF have helped to provide 116 families help with essential needs.

If you have worries about finding the money for essential needs, please contact us. We cannot however help with private medical or legal fees.

Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Call SSAFA on 0800 731 4880, the Royal British Legion on 0808 802 8080 to get a case up to us or contact us on either 0300 167 3998/0300 158 7035.

We can be contacted by email: RARHQ-RACF-WELFARE-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk or through the website.

Letters of appreciation

"I do appreciate the grant that the Artillery awards me. Without it life would be a struggle"

"I want to thank you very much indeed for all you have done for me over the past years it has been a huge help to me."

"Thank you so much for your very kind offer towards the disabled bathroom.... it really is so helpful, so things will be so much better for me now"

RA Historical Society 2023/4 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
Wednesday 24 April at 1045 hrs	April Lecture Day: Newcome Hall, Larkhill SP4 8QT	A Head Ache and a Heart Ache: the Indian Army at Partition	Lt Col Mike Tickner	Wednesday 10 April	To be notified
	RA Mess: Lunch and AGM	The Experiences of a Gunner War and Military Artist	Mr David Rowlands		
	Annual General Meeting		Secretary		
June/July	Summer Webinar	Siege of Arcot 1751 and Battle of Plassey 1757	36 (Arcot 1751) Battery and 9 (Plassey) Battery		Nil

These events are open to all Gunners  
To register please email the RAHS Secretary by the dates shown  
Email Lt Col Clayton, RAHS Secretary: richard.clayton312@gmail.com

All Gunners are entitled to join the Society. Please contact the Secretary for details.





Date	Event	Location
06 Mar	WO1 Convention	Plymouth
07 Mar	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
13 Mar	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
20 Mar	RACF Welfare Committee	Larkhill
21 Mar	RA Boxing Final	Larkhill
18 Apr	RSA Training Symposium	Larkhill
19 Apr	Army Fires & (I)STAR Conference	Larkhill
19 Apr	Spring Dinner	Larkhill
20 Apr	RA Reserve Conference	Larkhill
28 Apr	Gunner Sunday	London
08 May	Charities Investment Committee	Larkhill
15 May	Charities F&GP Committee	Larkhill
17 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
18 May	RA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
30 May	RAGCT	Larkhill
20 Jun	Hail & Farewell	Larkhill
01 Jul	Master Gunner's Committee	Larkhill
13 Jul	NMA Service	Staffordshire
18 Sep	RACF Welfare Committee	Larkhill
03 Oct	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
09 Oct	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
16 Oct	Charities F&GP Committee	Larkhill
25 Oct	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
06 Nov	Charities F&GP Committee	Larkhill
07 Nov	Field of Remembrance	London
10 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	London
01 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill
01 Dec	St Barbara's Day Lunch	Larkhill
12 Dec	Master Gunner's Committee	Larkhill



REUNIONS

**ATTENTION ALL EX-25 ERS**  
 2024 will see the 40th anniversary of the demise of the best gun Regiment of its day. We have just celebrated the 38th disbandment reunion in the usual fashion, kind courtesy of 204 Battery at Kingston Park, Newcastle, with circa 120 in attendance. There is still an intent to run the same again next year (Fri 16 and Sat 17 Jun 23). The planning dates are therefore Mon 24, Tue 25 and Wed 26 Jun 24. Indeed Tom Robson has managed to secure a number of quality rooms at the County Hotel and the Vermont and will underwrite the accommodation for the period through his company as a charitable benefit. We have made provisional arrangements with Newcastle's St Nicholas Cathedral, for a commemoration/celebration service hopefully supported by the Newcastle Scottish Pipes and Drums with 25 pounder gate guards and uniformed ushers provided by 101 Regiment RA, for 1500 hrs Wed 26 Jun. We will also be providing live entertainment and a finger buffet all at no cost to those attending. So at the moment participants should arrive on Mon 24 for a free day. Tue 25 you have the choice of afternoon tea for the ladies and a pie and pint for the men or whichever way round you prefer! Wed 26 Cathedral Service at 1500 hrs and as mentioned above this would be followed by a reception for our guests and a party in the evening as the main event. Come on boys and girls none of us are getting any younger and to aim off for a 50th celebration might be pushing it a bit so this is the big chance for one rememberable great reunion. Please sign in or request to join '25 Regt RA - 40th Anniversary' for further information.

THE ROYAL ARTILLERY BOYS AND JUNIOR LEADERS' ASSOCIATION  
 34TH ANNUAL REUNION

The Royal Artillery Boys and Junior Leaders' Association will be holding their 34th annual reunion at Bosworth Hall Hotel on 12th October 2024. Full details including booking forms will be published in the January edition of "Trumpeter" which is issued to all members. Anyone who qualifies or wishes to become a member should contact The Secretary on exboysra.tm@gmail.com

SPRING DINNER

The Spring Dinner 2024 will be held in the RA Mess Larkhill on Friday 19th April at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. The dinner will take the form of a Regimental Guest Night and is open to officers of the Royal Regiment, serving and retired, and their guests. There will also be some regimental guests. The Master Gunner St James's Park, Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL, will preside. Dress for serving officers is Mess Dress - ceremonial evening (soft shirt) and dinner jacket (black tie) with decorations for retired officers/civilians. The subsidised cost is £70 per head. For places, please apply to Jennifer McGrath either by email: jennifer.mcgrath924@mod.gov.uk or for further information please telephone 01980 845788. Places are confirmed upon receipt of payment as follows: BACS: RAI, 30-11-75, 00957269 (please prefix payment reference with SD24) Cheque: Made payable to the Royal Artillery Institution. Please note a first come first served basis applies.

ROYAL ARTILLERY OFFICERS' ALANBROOKE LUNCH  
 THU 7 MAR 24



The next Royal Artillery Alanbrooke Lunch is on Thu 7 Mar 24 at the Army & Navy Club, St James's Square, London. Drinks 1200. Lunch 1245. The Alanbrooke Lunch Club is open to all Gunners officers, Regular and Reserve whether serving or retired. The lunches cost £70 and the price includes pre-lunch drink, wine and port. A cash bar is available after lunch. To attend the lunches you must be a member of the Alanbrooke Club. There is an annual membership fee of £10 but this is waived for serving officers. Members wishing to attend this lunch should make a bank transfer for £70 to the Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund (Sort code 30-11-75, Acc number 00568858) annotating your transfer with your initial and surname or send a cheque made to 'Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund' to the Regimental Secretariat Officer, Mrs Emma Pagan-Skelley. If you make a bank transfer please email the Royal Artillery Secretariat Officer on Emm.Pagan-Skelley100@mod.gov.uk to say that you have done so. Any excess of funds will be donated to the RACF at the end of the year. Do spread the message amongst your Gunner friends, and of course you may bring a guest (who may be non-military) should you wish, or bring a group of friends you served with. Commanding Officers are asked to encourage and facilitate attendance by their officers.



KOSOVO 25 - CALLING VETERANS OF  
OP AGRICOLA 1

British and NATO ground troops helped liberate Kosovo from Milosovic's violent regime in June 1999. Operation AGRICOLA 1, arguably, represents the last wholly successful foreign intervention by the British Army, at scale, in the last 25 years. Today, despite continued friction with their northern neighbours, Kosovo is a thriving European democracy. Kosovo will celebrate the 25th anniversary of their liberation in Pristina on 12 Jun 24. We have been invited to take some British veterans of AGRICOLA 1 to help mark that milestone event. This will be an unofficial visit, organised by volunteers, rather than an official British Army event. Those taking part will be expected to arrange and pay for their own travel - there are direct flights from UK to Kosovo - but we do expect some accommodation to be provided by our Kosovan hosts. Individuals who took part in AGRICOLA 1, on the ground, and are interested in taking part should contact the undersigned with a non-binding expression of interest. Once we get more detail from the Kosovan side we will go firm and flights can be booked. Outside dates are likely to be 10-14 Jun 24, with two or three nights in country. If interested, please contact: Rob Tomlinson [robtomlinson7@gmail.com](mailto:robtomlinson7@gmail.com); Martin Browning [martin@mbrowning.co.uk](mailto:martin@mbrowning.co.uk); or Dave Warner [davidcritchleywarner@outlook.com](mailto:davidcritchleywarner@outlook.com)

## DISSERTATION STUDY

You are being invited to participate in a dissertation study from the University of York researching the culture of Women in the British Army. This research aims to explore the social experiences of ex-service women whilst they were serving in the British Army, in order to further understand what it is like to be a woman in the military. The participant requirements are that you have left the military and identified as female during your time of service. If you are interested in taking part in this research or would like further information please contact Stuart Boxall-Hunt at [s.boxallhunt@gmail.com](mailto:s.boxallhunt@gmail.com) who will coordinate your participation on behalf of the researcher.

## LAST POST

## Notification of Death:

Grant Floyd 30 July 2023  
Roger Betts 13 December 2023  
Derrick White December 2023  
Barry Thackeray January 2024  
Stu Graham January 2024  
Peter Luckhurst 15 January 2024  
David Blowfield 27 January 2024  
Bernie Cowen 29 January 2024  
Robbie Ross 2 February 2024  
Lt Col (TIG) HK 'Jock' Inkster 12 February 2024

**HOBDEN** - Lt Col (Retd) David John Hobden RA (11 Jan 1946 - 22 Jan 2024) sadly passed away at home on 22 January having fought a brave battle for four years with his illness. David began his career in 39th Regt RA in H Bty (Ramsay's Troop), and spent some time flying including tours in Hong Kong and Brunei. He commanded a bty in 2nd Fd Regt RA, was an SO2 at BGTT Bovington and was Colonel John Wilson's Second in Command at 14 Fd Regt RA, where he stood-in as interim Commanding Officer in 1992. He also worked at Air Command at High Wycombe, was a keen cricketer and squash player.

**POWELL** - Capt Dave Powell (17 Apr 1947 - 13 February 2024) In March 1965 Dave joined HQ Battery 287 (1st West Lancashire) Medium Regiment RA (TA). In 1967, units were amalgamated to form 103rd (Lancashire Artillery Volunteers) Light Air Defence Regiment Royal Artillery (Volunteers). In 1969 as Goalkeeper Dave was part of the Regiment's football team which won All England Football Cup In 1970. Dave transferred to the Regimental Headquarters Battery at Aigburth Road Liverpool, then moving to its new Location at Deysbrook Barracks, West Derby where he worked in the RCP moving up the ranks to SSgt then WO2. 1977 saw Dave return to Aigburth Road now the home of 208 (3rd West Lancashire) Light Air Defence Battery. Taking up the Post as TSM B Troop his work with the Troop was rewarded with promotion in 1981 he became BSM serving in post until 1984. Taking part in Exercises Lionheart & Crusader, his dedication and service was not unnoticed, and Dave received the Lord Lieutenant's certificate. Dave then received a commission which saw him re-join RHQ and he was soon promoted to Captain in 1986 taking over the Role of BK HQ Bty 1987 and Dave again returned to 208 Bty serving as their BK until 1992. Dave finished his career after transferring to RCT 156 Regt (Manchester Squadron 234). During his Service Dave became an active member of the Aigburth Branch Royal Artillery Association commencing in 1986. Following the sad loss of the treasurer Taffy Owens of the now amalgamated Aigburth-Merseyside Branch, Dave accepted the invitation to take over the role, which he accepted for a 2-year period. The Branch activity was paused during the Covid Crisis. Dave became pivotal in transforming the collection methods of the Branch from an attendance-based payment to annual fee's, this not only kept the Branch financially active but encouraged others to join, as we were able to reach a wider membership. Dave exceeded his role by initiating and holding Committee meetings at his home. The hospitality of both Dave and Muriel saw dialogue and innovation flourish as the Branch moved forward. Despite receiving treatment for skin cancer Dave continued his role when many would have stood down, to show our appreciation Artillery House awarded Dave the Certificate of Appreciation. The Branch committee held its last meeting on the 13th Jan, where all attending received the coveted MBB (Muriel's Bacon Butty). Sadly Dave's condition worsened. Initial care was administered at home but later moved to a local hospice where he was surrounded by his family; Muriel, eldest daughter Jayne, grandson Sam, granddaughter's Faye and Niamh, Dave's youngest daughter Suzanne, Son-in-Law David and granddaughter Jessica. Dave passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 13th. Dave's sense of duty and commitment to the Branch and his total of 58 years combined service to the Royal Regiment, will be much appreciated when the Branch along with Ex Comrades from 103 Regt, say our farewells to a much loved and respected Gunner. Rest in Peace Aigburth - Merseyside Branch, Royal Artillery Association



## Major General James Templer



Much of James Templer's early childhood was spent in Hong Kong where his father, Major (later Brigadier) CR Templer, was stationed. With the threat of being overrun by the Japanese, in 1940 he was moved with his mother and sisters to the Philippines which was thought to be a safe refuge. The island was soon taken over by the Japanese and he with his mother and sisters spent the rest of the war in an internment camp. His father had remained in Hong Kong where he was wounded and taken prisoner by the Japanese. After the surrender by the Japanese, the internees from the Philippines were sent home via the USA and eventually the whole family was reunited back in the UK.

James was educated at Charterhouse which was

followed by two years at RMA Sandhurst where he took up Modern Pentathlon and was taught to ride. He passed out as an SUO and was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1955. His first posting was to 41st Regiment in BAOR where he was immediately put in charge of the regimental ski team despite having only skied once before while on holiday with his parents. Such was his proficiency on skis, having become the Army's cross-country ski champion in 1958, that in 1959 he was asked to represent the country at the Winter Olympics to be held in California in 1960. However, by then he had been selected for a tour with the King's Troop RHA and elected to follow his love of horses thus forsaking the chance to ski for GB.

It was during his time with the King's Troop as a section commander that he acquired his famous horse M'Lord Connolly on which he won the European 3 Day Event Championships, held at Burghley in 1962. After leaving the Troop he joined 6th Field Regiment at Larkhill and he continued his success in the eventing field by winning the international 3 Day Event in Munich in 1963 and Badminton in 1964. Following this he was

selected to represent GB as a member of the 3 Day Event Team for the Olympics in Tokyo later that year. During what was a pretty hectic time, in 1963 he married Delia Dunsterville, but the marriage was dissolved in 1979. Also, during this period he was riding in point-to-points and hunter chases. He rode Brigadier Maunsell's horse Pax Vobis 3 times, winning the RA Gold Cup in 1962 and 1963.

A posting to the Far East, meant that he had to sell M'Lord Connolly and as an FOO in H Battery (Ramsay's Troop) moved to Malaya where he supported long-range patrols of 10th Gurkhas in the final phase of the Borneo confrontation. On returning to UK, he attended the Staff College at Camberley in 1967 which was followed by a GSO 2 appointment in 3 Division at Bulford.

There then followed a series of operational tours in Northern Ireland first as a battery commander of HQ Battery, 5th Regiment in Londonderry. This was followed by a posting to 3 RHA in Colchester and further tours in Northern Ireland commanding J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery and C Battery in Belfast and Londonderry following which he was appointed MBE in 1973.





The photograph showing Major (as he then was) Templer riding down the gangplank on horseback was taken in 1972 when the regiment (3 RHA) was in fact departing. It had been reported that traditionally when an RHA unit was leaving a station, it was usually led out by a horse or horses. An anonymous well-wisher lent a horse which was ridden by James, who was commanding C Battery RHA at the time. For the best "photo-shot", the picture was taken with James coming down the ship's gangway so the soldiers could be included. After the photo-call they all re-boarded HMS Maidstone to return to Colchester.



James Robert Templer on gangplank

After a brief interlude as a GSO 2 in Tactics Wing at Larkhill he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1974 and spent a year as an instructor at the Staff College, Camberley. He then took command of 42nd Regiment in Fallingbostal and took them to Londonderry. Sadly, the regiment was

disbanded, but he was given command of 5th Regiment in Hildersheim taking with him 18 (Quebec) battery from 42nd Regiment. There followed yet another tour in Northern Ireland with this regiment and this time it was in Armagh. After all of that his MBE was advanced to OBE.

In 1978 he was promoted to Colonel and after a short period in MOD, was posted to BAOR as CRA of 2 Armoured Division and Garrison Commander in Lübbecke. He was promoted to Brigadier after about six months in the job. Probably the highlight of this tour was his marriage in 1981 to Sally Evans (née Rogers). The second most note-worthy event was the organisation of the firepower demonstration which he coordinated at the request of the then MGRA (Major General Ted Burgess) who thought that not enough significance of the effect of artillery fire was being recognised by umpires during exercises. Five artillery regiments were lined up and a host of various armoured vehicles were positioned at right angles to the line of fire as near as safety would allow to the target area. A large number of senior officers together with some not so senior were put inside the armoured vehicles

to feel the experience of being (nearly) shelled. Many of the armoured vehicles were less than 50 m from where shells were exploding, and for those inside it was a literally moving experience and nearly all the optics of the armoured vehicles were shattered. The lesson was well learnt.

Within the Divisional Headquarters, it was the job of HQRA to run the Divisional Ski Meeting each year. Needless to say, with all his previous experience of competitive skiing at a high level, JR (as he was known by his staff) organised very efficient meetings which were much enjoyed by both staff and competitors. Although renowned as a cross-country skier, he showed a clean pair of heels to many when on downhill skis.

James and Sally were renowned for the hospitality that they offered in Kent House, their lovely residence in Lübbecke. Guests were always well wined and dined and were often subjected to party games after their meal and no one was ever excused from taking part.

On leaving Lübbecke, there then followed what he described as, in his own words, four intellectually challenging tours. The first in 1982 was a study of "Artillery in the 90s", followed by a year at the Royal College



of Defence Studies in London. He was next given responsibility for all individual and collective training in UK at UKLF, Wilton. Finally, on promotion to Major General in 1986, he took on the job of Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff Concepts. This involved refereeing equipment acquisition between the three services while looking ahead for more than a decade into the future. He was rewarded with a CB and left the army in early 1990.

His days as a serving soldier will not be forgotten by those with whom he came in contact. He was a professional at whatever he was doing, be it soldiering or some sporting activity. He would never ask others to do anything that he would not do himself. He had great endurance and a very strong work ethic setting the highest example of both. He did not suffer fools gladly and was sometimes outspoken, but at the same time he showed great sympathy and kindness to anyone suffering distress. He was not a man to speak at length and always managed to use a paucity of well-chosen words, while also expecting others to speak concisely and precisely. This had the advantage that meetings run by him tended not to drag on for too long.

As a result of his interest in racing and the Gunner

Gold Cup in particular, while commanding 42nd Regiment he introduced a system whereby horses could be leased to specific gunner owners or syndicates in order to be able to run in the race thus ensuring a good number of high-quality runners. Before he left the army, he had become Chairman of the Royal Artillery Steeplechase Committee and throughout his Chairmanship from 1989 to 2008 he continued to ensure that there was strong regimental support for the day making it an annual occasion for Gunner Regiments and individuals to have a reunion as well as a good day's racing. It has now become an occasion at which every Gunner Regiment has a representative stand and numbers attending increase year by year.

Being such an active man with so much energy, he did not stop work in retirement. In Winterslow where they had bought a house, together with Sally, he set up the business of selling the highest quality artificial silk flowers simply called "Templers Flowers". At the same time, he raised enough money to build a new village hall and a tennis court. Some ten years later, they moved to Great Durnford where they set up another enterprise naming it

"Templers Gardening" which involved selling small essential garden equipment by mail order and at events. In addition to all this business he was able to enjoy what he described as his lifetime favourite sport of sailing, which is something that his busy life had hitherto not allowed him the time to indulge in enough. They owned a Cornish Shrimper in which they sailed regularly from Hythe and additionally chartered yachts all over the world. He was a Church Warden of St Andrew's in Great Durnford for ten years as well as being a Parish Councillor.

Sadly, after leading such a fruitful and active life, the onset of Alzheimer's disease came as a horrific blow to Sally and his children and latterly he was in a care home in Salisbury. He died on 14th December 2023 and is survived by Sally, three children from his first marriage, William, Sophie and Tristram, and also two stepdaughters, Alex and Barley. A memorial Service to celebrate his life will be held at the Garrison Church of St Alban the Martyr Larkhill on Friday 12th April and people wishing to attend should email [templerjr1936@gmail.com](mailto:templerjr1936@gmail.com) for necessary details.

It was a sad end to the life of an extremely talented man who will be well remembered and much missed.





## Lieutenant Colonel Richard (Dick) Self



Lt Col Richard (Dick) Self died at home on 23 November 2023 aged 75 after a sudden and very short illness. The son of Maj Stewart Self and Betty, he won a scholarship to King's School Rochester as a cathedral chorister. In 1964 aged 16 he joined the Young Musicians Troop of the RA Band where he played the violin, clarinet and piano. After selection for officer training he attended Mons Officer Cadet School followed by the YO's course at Larkhill and Manorbier. His first posting to 16 Lt AD Regt at Barton Stacey included a tour in Northern Ireland before moving with the Regt to BAOR. His next appointment in 1973 was to Woolwich and 17 Trg Regt where he met and married Diane, daughter of

Maj (QM) Thomas Hopper. He was then posted to 22 Loc Bty at Larkhill where he provided survey and meteorological support for the AMF(L) and completed a 4 month tour in Salalah. In 1979 he was selected to attend the Guided Weapons Gunnery Staff Course following which he was appointed as IG Swingfire and carried out a 4 month tour in BATUS. After a busy 2 years of anti-tank he was posted to 19 Regt in Dortmund to take command of 21 AD Bty equipped with Blowpipe. After moving the Bty to join 47 Regt in Gutersloh he was then posted to N Ireland as Trg Maj 102 (Ulster & Scottish) AD Regt (V). This was followed in 1991/92 by a tour as SO2 J9 (Civ/Mil Liaison Offr) in HQ BFFI. His time in the Falkland Islands gave him the opportunity to indulge his passion for classical music and he introduced an hour long popular radio programme for BFBS/FIBS called 'Self Composure'. He then returned to Woolwich before his promotion to Lt Col and subsequent appointment as CO RA Range Hebrides.

On leaving the army he became a management

consultant in London and lived for several years in Essex. He then fully retired and went to live in South Africa for 8 years before returning to their home in Faringdon and then finally to North Yorkshire for the last 5 years of his life. He remained passionate about classical music, military history and golf - he had 3 holes-in-one!

Richard retained his wonderful sense of humour and infectious laugh right to the end and will be sorely missed by his wife, family and many friends.

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