



SEPTEMBER 2026

Fighting the future

INSIDE

Tomorrow's airborne artillery

Mongolia: Where the road ends

From the grime and grit of the gun pit - to a new legacy

GUNNER

#FINDandSTRIKE

The Larkhill based team that supplies you Gunner.

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GUNNER



SEPTEMBER 2026

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Our cover picture this issue:

Lance Bombardier Davies, 21 Air Assault Battery Royal Artillery with the PUMA drone system which he piloted during Exercise Rhino Bizz at British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada

Photograph: Corporal Jamie Ayling, Defence Imagery

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A New Brigade for a New Era

By
Brigadier Chris Coton
Commander 9 Deep Recce-Strike Brigade

“Warfighting is changing. Recent conflicts have reinforced a simple truth: success belongs to the force that can find and strike its adversary first. Range, precision, speed of decision making and the ability to integrate information from multiple sources now matter as much as mass.

Our Army is changing, too. A dramatic reinvigoration of Corps-level warfighting has seen the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps assume a central role. It is SACEUR's Strategic Reserve Corps. Consequently, it is common to every one of the NATO Allied Land Command's operational plans. A number of command relationship changes (most notably realigning the British Divisions to the Corps), and a sweeping structural reform has further reinforced its utility.

These changes have prompted the formation of 9th Deep Reconnaissance-Strike Brigade - a formation, organic to the Corps headquarters, capable of sensing in the Corps deep, deciding rapidly and striking precisely at range. It combines deep ISR, AI-enabled Command and Control, and long-range fires into a single operational system.

The Brigade brings together the capabilities required to command and coordinate the Corps' deep fight, enabling the Corps to fight persistently in depth and deliver multi-domain effects at the time and place of the Commander ARRC's choosing.

Despite these changes, much should feel familiar to us Gunners. For generations, we have specialised in integrating sensors, decision making and effects. Technology will continue to change how we fight, but not the enduring requirement to turn information into action and effects.

As the Army places ever greater emphasis on Recce-Strike, the skills that have long sat at the heart of the Royal Regiment become increasingly important. The establishment of 9th Deep Reconnaissance-Strike Brigade is recognition that the Royal Artillery's traditional strengths remain central to the Army's ability to find, strike and win.”



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SCAN ME





PREPARATION TO EMPLANE



AIRDROP

HOOKING UP THE LIGHT GUNS TO UNDERSLING



CHINOOK INBOUND



FORGING THE FUTURE OF AIR MANOEUVRE

By Lt Josh
Preston RHA

As Brigadier Cartwright, Commander 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, declared 2026 'the year of air manoeuvre,' 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery is leading the way. From major parachute drops and Chinook operations, to pioneering new drills with the A400M, the Regiment is redefining how airborne artillery will fight, deploy and win in future conflict.

Air manoeuvre spans a broad spectrum of activity: from airborne operations using A400M aircraft - including both airdrop and airland - to aviation operations with the CH-47 Chinook, encompassing air assault and air mobility tasks. 7 Para RHA is addressing air manoeuvre across all these areas and has already achieved key objectives in each.

Parachuting remains central to regimental activity. In March, members of the Regiment took part in the largest parachute insertion in a decade, supporting 3 PARA with a drop onto Salisbury Plain. Earlier in February, troops deployed to work alongside the United States Army's 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment. This included observing heavy drop serials, participating in parachute operations, and exchanging foreign wings.

Training for Tomorrow's Battlefield

At sub-unit level, G Para Battery (Mercer's Troop) has led the way through Ex Mercers Aviation, a year-long series of activities designed to cover the full spectrum of air manoeuvre, from Chinook operations to A400M integration.

The quality and quantity of aviation support has enabled valuable lessons to be identified and acted on at pace. For example, it was found the L118 Light Gun and Pinzgauer were not initially RAL (Rapid Air Landing) compatible with the A400M. This issue was swiftly addressed and rectified at JADTEU (the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit) at RAF Brize Norton, where revised rigging schemes were successfully trialled, delivering immediate operational benefit.

Preparation has been critical. Under the direction of WO2 Lowthian, training has ensured all personnel within the Gun Group are qualified as either Landing Point Commanders or Rigger Marshallers. Significant effort has also gone into building relationships with RAF counterparts, enabling better alignment between pilot training and regimental requirements, thereby increasing the likelihood of success.

This preparation paid dividends in April, when the Gun Group deployed to Longmoor to train with 18 Chinook Squadron. Over the course of a week, 16 sorties enabled troops to refine rigging drills, conduct gun raids, and practise urban assault scenarios. Concurrently, the echelon enhanced its capability through an air dispatch serial with 47 Air Dispatch Squadron RLC. The lessons identified will continue to inform and refine regimental SOIs.

Joint Interoperability and Looking Ahead

A key lesson from the year so far has been the critical importance of joint interoperability. Support from RAF units has been fundamental to success, from 18 Chinook Squadron to Air Movements Wing at Brize Norton and beyond.

Looking ahead, further ambitions remain. Deepening interoperability with the US 82nd Airborne Division and 4-319 AFAR in Germany is a priority, alongside proving the capability to deploy the L118 Light Gun via air dispatch from A400M.

Exercise Cypher Strike will also test the Regiment's ability to move an eight-gun Battery by air under a single period of darkness; a significant undertaking that will demonstrate 7 Para RHA's leading role in air manoeuvre within the Brigade.

The Regiment demonstrated its air manoeuvre capability at the Cosford Air Show in June, including a live gun raid. It 'won the best live display', as part of the Chinook Display Team, before hosting a stand in support of the Airborne Gunner Trust.



Mongolia: Where the road ends

Endless horizons, punishing climbs and an unforgiving climate tested a team of Gunners on an unforgettable Adventure Training expedition through Mongolia – proving that resilience, leadership and teamwork can flourish, even in one of the world's most remote landscapes...

By Gnr Monte, 23 HQ Cdo Bty

As a first overseas Adventure Training expedition, it would be difficult to imagine a more distant and challenging location than Mongolia.

Before this trip, Mongolia was not a country that featured highly on my list of places to visit, but the opportunity to mountain bike across some of the most remote terrain.

Unlike anywhere I have ever been, Mongolia's landscape is simply astonishing. The sheer scale is difficult to comprehend; with endless green plains stretching towards distant hills, mountains and forests, interrupted only occasionally by wandering livestock with the occasional ger (a Mongolian yurt) dotted on the horizon.

The cycling itself was both demanding and hugely rewarding. Long days in the saddle tested fitness, patience and determination in equal measure. Day five, in particular, seemed intent on teaching us a lesson in resilience, with a relentless headwind and seemingly endless climb reducing us to less than 4kph.

Four seasons in one day

Throughout the expedition, the weather frequently reminded us who was really in charge; with snow, sunshine and scorching heat all possible within the space of a couple of hours.

Riding through Mongolia also provided a unique perspective on leadership and

teamwork. In such a remote environment, there is little room for complacency. Small acts of support, encouragement and humour became surprisingly important, particularly when conditions were at their toughest.

Leadership was not always about making major decisions; often it was simply about maintaining a positive attitude when everyone else was questioning why they had voluntarily chosen to pedal into yet

another headwind or tackle another 40km of uphill climb....

Nomads

Equally impressive were the nomadic communities who call this landscape home. Families living in isolated gers, herding horses and yaks across vast open land,

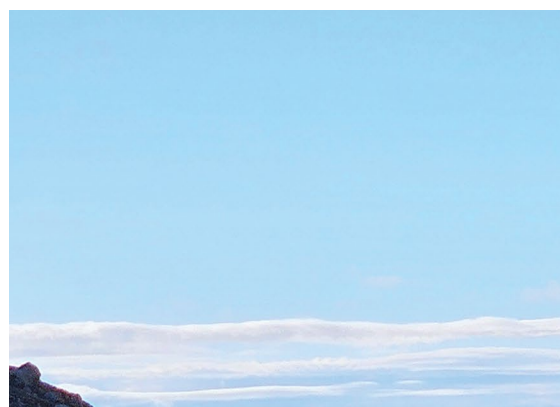
demonstrated a level of self-reliance and resilience that was impossible not to admire. Their off-road driving skills were equally remarkable, with the locals managing to get a Toyota Prius to places I would never have believed possible!

Experiencing their hospitality and observing their way of life provided a useful reminder that many of the challenges we faced on the expedition were relatively minor by comparison.

Overall, the expedition was an outstanding experience, combining adventure, personal challenge and cultural immersion in equal measure. The mountains of the Khangai Nuruu National Park are among the most spectacular landscapes I have ever encountered, and no photograph can truly do them justice.

Beyond the cycling, the trip reinforced many of the qualities that Adventure Training is designed to develop: resilience, teamwork, adaptability and leadership.

It also taught me that no matter how bad a headwind seems at the time, there is usually a downhill section waiting somewhere ahead.



With our thanks to the Fairfield Guesthouse and Bakery in the AO and the Royal Artillery charities for supporting us.



FROM THE GRIME AND GRIT OF THE GUN PIT - TO A NEW LEGACY

By Bdr Iman Gurung

Transitioning from a decade in the Light Infantry to becoming one of the pioneers of the King's Gurkha Artillery (KGA) is more than a career shift - it is an historic evolution. As part of the first ever tranche to enter this field, I am not just operating a weapon; I am forging a new legacy for the Brigade of Gurkhas and the British Army.

My expertise has been built on the grime and grit of the gun pit. I have mastered every role on the L118 Light Gun, progressing through the technical demands of Operator No. 2, 3, 4, and 5, followed by the heavy responsibility of Detachment 2IC. Now, completing Level 4, I am on the professional route as a Gun Detachment Comd.

Lethality

This journey, forged in the mud of SPTA (Salisbury Plain Training Area) and the high-octane environment of Ex Combined Warrior in SENTA (Sennybridge Training Area), has

given me a 360-degree understanding of our lethality.

Although I have traded the section weapon for the Light Gun 105mm "Big Weapon," my decade of Infantry experience up to the role of Sect Comd on the frontline, remains my greatest asset.

So, I am moulding myself as the "Infantry Gunner"; a versatile soldier who possesses the tactical grit of the frontline and the technical precision of the Artillery. From the meticulous maintenance of the gun to managing the full spectrum of my detachment, my priority is simple: operational effectiveness with excellence.

Bone-shaking shockwave

Operating the L118 Light Gun is a visceral experience that demands both physical grit and sharp mental focus. I felt the immense responsibility of handling such a high-performance weapon while experiencing the full intensity of the "gun effect".

Firing live rounds from such a well-maintained weapon creates a massive, bone-shaking shockwave that highlights its raw strength. The enthusiasm of the Detachment was matched by the gun's clinical accuracy and precision, proving its reputation as a highly effective area weapon capable of dominating a large diameter at significant range up to 17.5 kms.

It is not only about operating and leading the gun Detachment but also "the feel and soul of being a Gunner in the artillery world".

My foresight is to mentor the next generation, ensuring the KGA remains the sharpest edge of the Strike Brigade. The L118 is the heartbeat of the modern battlefield, and as a Gun Detachment Comd, I am "On It", ready to face the war to win, lead my men, and cement our name in the annals of the Artillery world.

The greatest honour of all is to be known as an Infantry Gurkha Gunner.



“IN THIS ARENA, I LIVE BY A SINGULAR COMMAND PHILOSOPHY:”

THE 3 Ps

PROACTIVE

PRACTICAL

PROFESSIONAL



United in Service, Bound by Tradition

By Dickie Davies, Royal Artillery Association Secretary

Every year the Royal Artillery Assembly brings together the Gunner family from across the UK for a weekend that is equal parts business, tradition and reunion.

Serving soldiers, veterans, association members and supporters gather in Blackpool to celebrate the Regiment's rich heritage, recognise outstanding service, reflect on the year gone by and, perhaps more importantly, renew the friendships and comradeship that remain at the heart of our Gunner family.

The 2026 Assembly once again demonstrated the enduring strength of those bonds.

Following the now well-established format, the weekend formally opened on Saturday with the Standard Bearers' parade and competition. More than just a display of ceremonial excellence, the event recognised the vital role played by the regimental standard bearers, whose presence at remembrance services, military parades, funerals and commemorative events across the country provides a visible symbol of the Royal Artillery's history, dignity and enduring spirit.

The attendance was both high in number and enthusiasm, particularly as this year it would provide the platform for the selection of the National Standard Bearer.

William Morrison, Edinburgh Standard Bearer,

was successful in winning the competition and appointed the National Standard Bearer. William's turnout, the quality of his drill, and his bearing on parade marked him out from his fellow competitors to win the award, which was presented by Lt Gen Mike Elviss, the Master Gunner St James's Park, in the afternoon. WO1 (RASM) Fisher is thanked for pulling together a quality team to run, judge and support the competition.

The Assembly began with an address from Gen Elviss. Given his day job (Commander, ARRC), he now provides the Assembly with a very privileged opportunity to receive an informed and detailed update, capturing the topics of the day and the general mood. He spoke about some of the challenges both on the home front and abroad, as well as the incredible recent visits to the Regiment, in both Larkhill and Thorney Island, of the King our Captain General. We are truly privileged.

The RAA AGM was chaired by Brig Mark Pountain CBE who delivered his Chairman's Report, focused on RAA events and activities over the past



Lance Bombardier Taraivosa Radinivugalei receives the Mansergh Memorial Award

12 months. The Chair was assisted and supported by the Regimental Secretary Col Paul Bates who focused on this year's financial report.

Outstanding service

The Regimental Secretary, and me, the RAA Secretary, delivered presentations and updates and this saw the Assembly move seamlessly to the annual awards, as always presented by the Master Gunner.

Awards are presented to individuals as well as the Branch/Regiment for outstanding service and support to the RA Charities.

All our award winners were listed in July's edition of Gunner and Artillery House would like to send its warmest congratulations to the award winners. It would be remiss not to highlight a couple; the Royal Artillery Association Medal was presented to Mr Teddy McKenzie, who could not attend but received his award from the RAA Chair and the RAA Sec the following weekend at the RAA Garden Party. The prestigious Mansergh Memorial Award was presented to Lance Bombardier Taraivosa Radinivugalei from 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery, a remarkable young woman who is a credit to her family, her regiment and all of us in the Gunner family.

For many of our Gunner events, we are truly blessed to be able to call on the Lancashire Artillery Volunteer (LAV) Band. They, as always, were immaculately turned out, and it is with sincere thanks to 103 Regt RA who not only supports with the band but also supplies displays, workforce, and equipment throughout the weekend. The LAV Band also routinely provides an opening set for the Gala Dinner, and this year outdid themselves with a magnificent musical programme that entertained the Gala Dinner well into the evening.

I would like to specifically acknowledge all those who made this year's Royal Artillery Assembly such a resounding success, particularly the RASM and his team, along with a whole host of individuals both serving and veterans, and not forgetting the outstanding support the management and the team at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, who all come together to make the weekend such a worthwhile and successful event.

So, a huge 'Thank You' to you... the Association Members, Veterans and Serving Soldiers from across our Regiments who turned up and supported. The weekend completely exemplified the strong comradeship within the whole Gunner community and 'esprit de corps' that this and occasions like it seek to promote.

We look forward to seeing you next year: **We'll Meet Again! 14th-16th May 2027.**



“FROM NOVICES
TO CONFIDENT
SAILORS.”

By Sgt Andrew Stanyard



Representing Gunners beyond operations and the training area, soldiers from 12 Regiment recently embarked on Ex Mediterranean Ubique – a unique challenge on board the Royal Artillery yacht.

Swapping their working dress for sailing gear, this wasn't your typical deployment; it was a blend of adventurous training, teamwork and leadership skills, with seamanship and a taste of Mediterranean life.

The journey formed part of the RA's long-standing sailing programme and was on board the St Barbara V.

It kicked off in Malaga, where the crew quickly got to grips with the boat and the basics of sailing through intensive training sessions.

Their first real test came on the two-day leg to Alicante. With the wind filling in, the team hoisted sails and pushed the yacht to speeds over eight knots, mastering tacking, jibing, and knotwork along the way.

Docking wasn't without its challenges — a tricky 20-point turn to find the right berth had everyone on their toes — but spirits remained high, and the leg was eventually capped off by a well-earned celebration in the harbour.

From Alicante, the crew sailed on to Benidorm, Valencia, Castellón de la Plana, Sant Carles, and Tarragona, soaking up the stunning coastline and local culture.

Wind, waves... and seasickness

Between drills and navigation exercises, there was time for fishing, snorkelling, and sampling

local dishes. The team faced the usual maritime hurdles: choppy night sails, seasickness, and sudden gusts of wind that tested their newly acquired skills and nerves.

What stood out most was the crew's rapid progression. From novices to confident sailors, they learned to handle the yacht in all conditions, from calm motor-powered stretches to windy, sail-powered legs.

They practised person overboard drills, anchoring, and navigation near fishing zones and wreck sites, all while rotating roles to gain a full spectrum of experience.

A journey in more ways than one

Each port stop offered a chance to unwind and explore - dancing in Benidorm, local ice cream in Castellón, and friendly encounters

with fellow sailors in Tarragona. The exercise wasn't just about sailing; it was about building camaraderie, resilience, and a shared sense of adventure.

As St Barbara V finally sailed into Barcelona, the crew of 12 Regiment Royal Artillery returned not only with sharpened maritime skills, but also with greater confidence and a stronger appreciation of teamwork.

They also arrived with memories of an unforgettable Mediterranean voyage — a perfect blend of Army discipline and seaside adventure.



By 2Lt Charlie King

Normandy is one of the most valuable classrooms available to military professionals. As part of the Troop Commanders' Course, our study visits to the D-Day battlefields provided an opportunity not only to examine one of history's defining campaigns, but to consider its enduring relevance to today's Gunner officers.

Arriving via overnight ferry to Caen, our first stop was Pegasus Bridge, where

Battlefield lessons that still matter

presentations explored Major John Howard's famous glider assault. The operation demonstrated the value of meticulous preparation, realistic training and decisive leadership; principles that remain fundamental to modern day junior commanders.

Innovation wins battles

From there we moved to the landing beaches, where discussions centred on amphibious operations and the innovation behind the so-called Hobart's Funnies. We learned about specialist vehicles used for a number of tasks from clearing mines



to laying tracks for other armoured vehicles to manage the beach terrain. With the Royal Artillery's mantra of 'Armed Science,' it provided inspiration on how we should always look to innovate and solve problems in our trade, sometimes unconventionally.

We visited the impressive Grand Bunker. This fortress was everything from an OP and medical centre, to billeting for troops, and an armoury. Presentations from 2Lt Dunston and 2Lt Mould examined German air defence, and how we, as a regiment, would look to do it now. It produced an interesting conversation discussing the capabilities of the regiment and how they would be utilised to create a layered system for having an effect at long range, medium range, and short range.

Standing in the observation post overlooking the coastline offered a powerful reminder of how commanders used to sight and range Allied ships to send fire missions to guns in neighbouring batteries. Here we were presented to by 2Lt Sell and 2Lt Robinson. They spoke on the offensive operations that occurred on D-Day and how artillery was used to support these. And more importantly how we could look to use the lessons

learnt in today's conflicts.

Logistics: The decisive edge

The second day took us to Arromanches, where the remains of the Mulberry Harbour illustrated the scale of the logistical effort required to sustain the invasion. I presented alongside 2Lt Gray. We analysed how Field Marshall Rommel prepared the Atlantic Wall for the Allied Invasion and how he looked to use artillery in his plan. Although Rommel had an extensive static defensive plan, D-Day showed that fixed defences are vulnerable to being cut off from supply lines and communication - especially with the Allied air and naval superiority.



For our penultimate presentation we listened to 2Lt Jarman and 2Lt Turner discuss the combat service support of the day. With the saying "G4 wins wars" ringing loudly in our minds it became clear that without the complex logistics chain established on D-Day the invasion would have certainly faltered. We recognised the importance of paying suitable attention to the supplying side of planning

to enable operational success.

It reinforced a simple but often overlooked truth: operational success depends as much on combat service support as it does on combat power.

Fighting the right way

Our final stop in Caen focused on the Law of Armed Conflict (presented by 2Lt Fraser and 2Lt Stone). They discussed how we balance what is right and what is necessary. And how the modern British Army is held to a higher standard than some other armies due to subscribing to the Geneva Convention.

Beyond the tactical and operational lessons, the visit also served as an opportunity to reflect upon the human dimension of conflict. The cemeteries, memorials and preserved battlefields stand as a reminder of the cost paid by those who fought during the campaign. For many of us, seeing these places first hand added depth and meaning to events that could otherwise feel distant in time.

Eighty-two years after D-Day, the landscape continues to offer lessons in leadership, planning, logistics, combined arms warfare and, above all, the decisive influence of artillery. For any young Gunner officer, there are few better places to study the profession of arms.



The Spitfire

The Grand Bunker



GUNNERS GIVE BACK

Swapping guns for garden tools, our brilliant Commonwealth soldiers have rolled up their sleeves alongside their regimental colleagues to lend a hand to two community projects – proving service doesn't stop at the gates.

By SSgt Jay Williams

Commonwealth soldiers from 16 Regiment Royal Artillery have spent four days alongside the wider regiment supporting vital projects in West Sussex, providing both practical assistance and an opportunity for soldiers to demonstrate the Army's commitment to service beyond the military environment.

They contributed their time, effort and skills to improve facilities at Bosham Burial Ground and Tuppenny Barn and help with the ongoing work of local volunteers and charities.

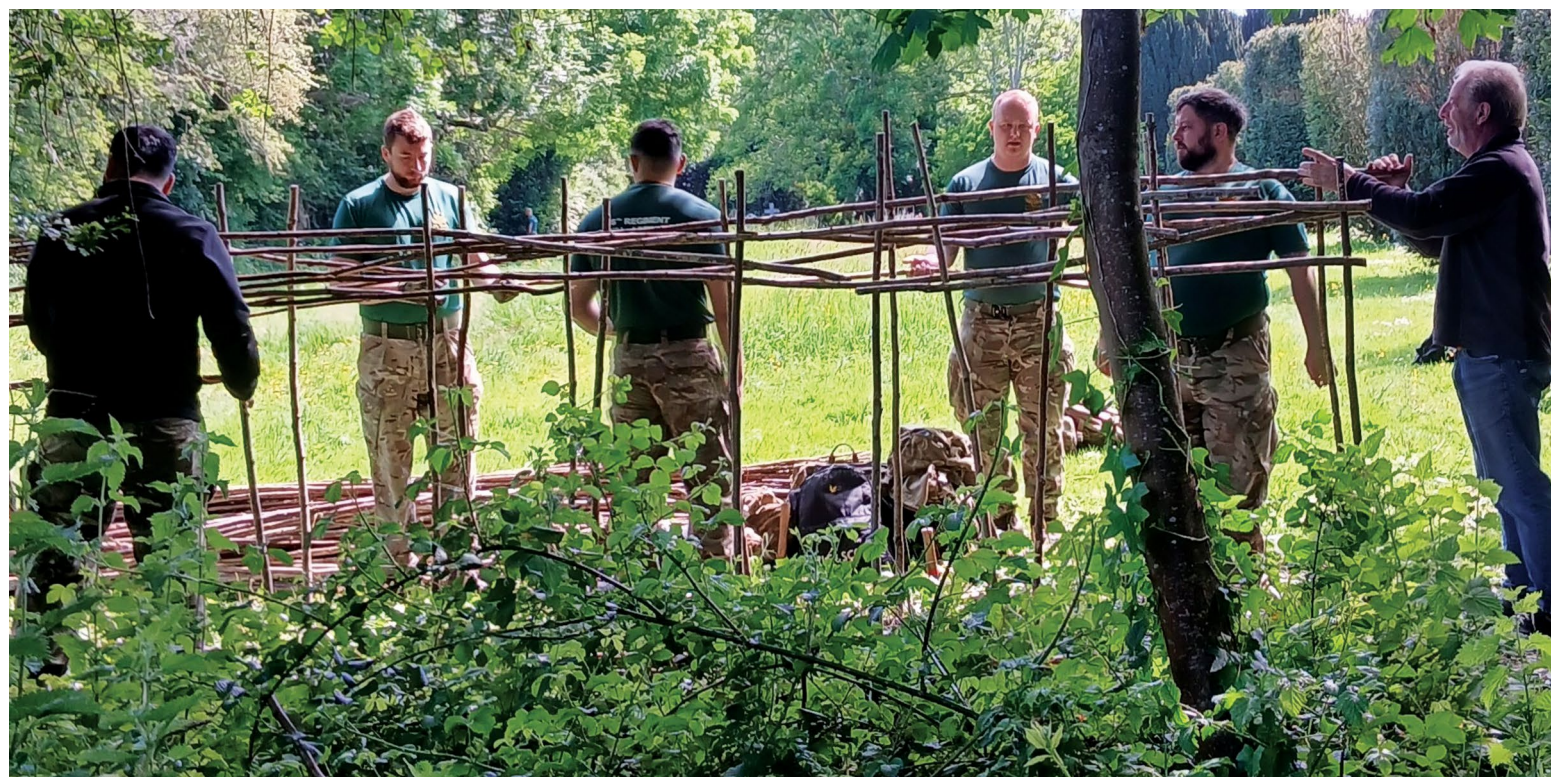
Clearing the way

At the burial ground, they worked with local representatives and undertook a range of practical tasks aimed at improving both the appearance and safety of the area.

Large sections of ivy that had spread throughout the burial ground were cleared, helping to restore the site's presentation and protect existing structures and vegetation.

Soldiers also assisted with the construction of a dead hedge, a traditional conservation feature that provides valuable habitat for local wildlife while making productive use of natural waste materials.

Additional work focused on improving accessibility and safety. Depressions and holes within the grounds were filled and levelled, reducing trip hazards for visitors and enhancing the overall condition of the site.



"The support provided by the soldiers was invaluable. Tasks that would normally have taken us weeks to complete were achieved in a matter of days," Maggie Haynes, Tuppenny Barn CEO

While the tasks themselves were physically demanding, they provided soldiers with a clear sense of achievement, and they contributed directly to the preservation of a location that holds historic and cultural significance for the local area.

Building something lasting

At Tuppenny Barn - a charity that promotes environmental sustainability, education, and community wellbeing through a range

of horticultural and conservation projects - soldiers helped staff and volunteers with major improvement projects.

The most significant, involved building a new 25-metre fruit shed; others included reconstruction work on several flower beds, replacing ageing sleepers, ground levelling and landscaping. All helped create a safer and more accessible environment for visitors, volunteers, and staff.



"Community engagement projects like this are a great opportunity to give something back to the local area. It was rewarding to see the difference we could make over just a few days of hard work."

LBdr Wilson, 16 Regiment Royal Artillery

The project offered an excellent opportunity for soldiers to engage directly with members of the local community, gaining a greater understanding of the charity's work and the positive impact it has on residents.

Conversations with staff and volunteers highlighted the importance of community support and demonstrated how collaborative efforts can help charities achieve more than they could alone.

Beyond the uniform

For our Commonwealth soldiers serving within the British Army, community engagement activities provide an opportunity to give something back to the people who have supported them throughout their careers.

These projects enabled personnel from diverse backgrounds to work together in support of shared objectives beyond routine military duties.

They also reinforced the values that unite soldiers across the Regiment: teamwork, selfless commitment, and service. And they allow soldiers to represent the Royal Artillery positively.

By dedicating their time and effort to local projects, personnel showed that the relationship between the Armed Forces and the communities they serve remains as important as ever.



Next generation Gunners

The Chief of the General Staff visited the Royal School of Artillery to see first-hand how training, technology and people are preparing us for the future fight.

The Royal School of Artillery at Larkhill welcomed the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), General Sir Roly Walker, for a comprehensive visit showcasing the training, innovation and people at its heart.

During a detailed programme, CGS observed training across the spectrum of Artillery development, from Initial Trade Training through to Specialist Trade Training, gaining a valuable insight into how today's Gunners are being developed and prepared for operations.

The visit highlighted the breadth of skills required across the modern Artillery, with soldiers building the technical expertise, tactical understanding and operational readiness needed to deliver effects on the battlefield.

Technology was also firmly in focus, with Gen Walker visiting the Joint Fires Synthetic Trainer. The cutting-edge system provides an immersive environment in which personnel can hone their skills, practise complex scenarios and develop operational readiness in a safe and controlled setting.

The visit also marked a historic milestone for the King's Gurkha Artillery (KGA), which welcomed CGS for the first time with a Guard of Honour and Regimental Colour Garland.

As a lasting reminder of the occasion, he was presented with a 105mm cartridge case fired in honour of His Majesty The King's Birthday - a fitting memento marking both the visit and the continuing development of the KGA within the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

The programme concluded with CGS presenting Major (Retired) Billy Lister with a CGS Commendation, recognising

his continued excellence and outstanding support to the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

From the training ground to the latest synthetic technology, the visit demonstrated the people, skills and ingenuity that are preparing the Gunners to meet the demands of tomorrow – while maintaining the traditions that have defined the Regiment for generations.



Gurkha Gunners make history in Edinburgh

By Bdr Rabin Chamiling Rai



It was an historic summer as E Battery, 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (1RHA), went north to Scotland for Exercise Gothic Castle – combining ceremonial tradition with soldier development, adventurous training and, for the first time, a landmark moment for the King's Gurkha Artillery.

At Edinburgh Castle, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with their British counterparts to fire a 21-gun salute to mark the 79th birthday of HM Queen Camilla – executed with exceptional precision, discipline and professionalism, exemplifying the highest standards of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

The second phase of the exercise focused on developing soldiers and strengthening unit cohesion. They undertook adventurous training at Kinloss, attended the Defence

Train the Trainer Course, and participated in a Battlefield Study Tour from Balmacara House.

These activities provided valuable opportunities to enhance leadership, resilience, instructional ability and broader military knowledge.

Beyond its training objectives, the deployment further strengthened the integration of Gurkha and British soldiers.

Living, training, and working together fostered trust, teamwork, and lasting friendships; reinforcing the strong bonds that underpin operational effectiveness.

Ex Gothic Castle demonstrated E Battery's adaptability, professionalism and commitment to excellence, while highlighting the enduring partnership between Gurkha and British soldiers that continues to contribute to the Battery's success on operations and beyond.



Eyes on the enemy

Six weeks in the blistering Mojave Desert. One of the world's toughest combat training environments. Find out how our Gunners rose to the challenge in the infamous 'Box'.

By Gnr Callum Marsden, L (Néry) Battery, 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery



Forward observers from L (Néry) Battery spent the summer at the National Training Center in California alongside an American armoured brigade on Exercise Diamondback.

Operating from US Humvees and covert observation posts, we provided the reconnaissance element for 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, during their time in 'The Box' - one of the world's most demanding combined arms training environments.

Two of our Fire Support Teams and a Tactical Air Control Party deployed for six weeks alongside the Royal Dragoon Guards; providing the surveillance and targeting expertise to Find and Strike, 24-7.

Supported by American M109A7 155mm howitzers from 1-9 Field Artillery Battalion and

AH-64 Apache gunships from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, we were the brigade's eyes and ears, tracking and identifying the opposing forces before delivering lethal fires in support of our American colleagues.

This was no Estonian winter

With temperatures reaching more than 40C, surviving in the desert is a deliberate operation and it provided a new challenge for us. We have become more accustomed to Estonian winters, having only returned from Op CABRIT at Easter.

However, the opportunity to train at scale alongside an American brigade and to live fire both artillery and aviation has been incredible.

"It is a world beyond anything we do on Salisbury Plain."



THE GUNNER FAMILY REMEMBERS

The Royal Artillery community came together once again at the National Memorial Arboretum for the annual Service of Remembrance, a cherished event honouring those who have served and sacrificed in the name of duty.

Organised on behalf of the Regiment by the Royal Artillery Association, it remains one of the most significant dates in the Gunner calendar. This year, more than 340 members of the Association attended, underlining the importance Gunners continue to place on remembering their comrades and preserving the Regiment's proud traditions.

As always, the day began with the inspection of the Standard Bearers, whose numbers continue to grow year on year. Twenty-six Standard Bearers stood proudly on parade, joined by 13 Chelsea In-Pensioners.

The inspection was conducted by the Royal Artillery Association Chair Mark Pountain, Regimental Colonel, Paddy Farrell, Regimental Secretary Paul Bates and Royal Artillery Sergeant Major Keith Fisher.

The service itself was led by the Royal Artillery Association's Chaplain General, the Venerable Stephen Robbins, who also led the Act of Remembrance in the Royal Artillery Garden - a poignant occasion of reflection, remembrance and gratitude for those who have served across generations.

The event also recognised the invaluable contribution made by members of the Royal Artillery Association. Bronze, Silver and Gold Service Pins were presented to several recipients in recognition of their commitment and dedication. To all those who received awards, the Association extends its sincere thanks for their continued support of the Association and its branches.

The day's commemorations were enhanced by the continued support of the Lancashire Artillery Volunteer Band (103 Regiment Royal Artillery). In addition to providing music during the service, the band entertained visitors with a concert in Heroes Square.

The Royal Artillery Association was established on 26 May 1920 by the RA War Commemoration Fund to create a 'Gunner Friend' network organisation in every part of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth



13 HQ Bty (MARTINIQUE 1809) PPMA

The inaugural meeting and bi-annual reunion of the 13 HQ Battery Past and Present Members Association (PPMA) have taken place at the excellent Bosworth Hall Hotel & Spa, Market Bosworth.

The association brings together past and present members of 13 (Martinique 1809) Field Battery, 13 HQ Battery, and former members of HQ Battery, 19 Regiment Royal Artillery. Over 50 members and guests made the most of the unseasonably warm weather and enjoyed an informal reunion with old friends and comrades.

Saturday's programme began with group photographs and a champagne reception, followed by a welcome address from Jimmy Edge and a stirring piping performance by LBdr Owen Freeman. Guests then enjoyed a three-course meal, during which the RAA Secretary, Dickie Davies, a former Martinique Battery member, spoke about the benefits of the PPMA and its role in strengthening links between serving and former soldiers.

WO2 (BSM) Duane Marriner provided an update on the Battery's current commitments, re-rolling and personnel changes before the traditional Toast to Absent Friends was delivered by Bambra Freeman. The evening concluded with music, dancing and plenty of reminiscing as members renewed old friendships and forged new ones.

The PPMA continues to strengthen the bond between serving and former members while preserving the pride, traditions and camaraderie that define 13 HQ Battery. Members are already looking forward to meeting again in 2028.

Past and present members wishing to join the 13 HQ Battery PPMA can find the group on Facebook by searching "13 (Martinique) Bty".



ARTILLERY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION DINNER

The Artillery Clerks' Association returned to Larkhill in July for another successful Annual Reunion Dinner, attended by five guests, 28 members and 9 others from across the United Kingdom and overseas, including Germany, France and Malta.

The event marked the first Reunion Dinner organised by our new Reunion Secretary, Chris Shuter, who, supported by the Reunion Committee, ensured the occasion ran smoothly throughout.

Following the traditional reunion photograph, our newly appointed Honorary President, Major General Neil Marshall OBE, presented the Association's prestigious Kemish Award to Andy Tibble in recognition of his outstanding service as Association Secretary over many years.

We were delighted to welcome former Honorary President Lieutenant General Sir Freddie Viggers KCB CMG MBE DL, together with WO1 (RASM) Keith Fisher, WO1 (RSM) Peter Kinsey of 14 Regiment RA, and representatives of our affiliated Battery, 34 (Seringapatam) Battery, The King's Gurkha Artillery.

A highlight of the evening was the opportunity to thank Lieutenant General Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE for his ten years of distinguished service as Honorary President. In recognition of his unwavering support and friendship, the Association presented him with a specially commissioned painting by Association member Lieutenant Colonel Richard Horner MBE, depicting Roundway Down near Devizes, a location with special personal significance to the General.

Members were also proud to view the Royal Artillery Association's Ubique Cup and certificate, awarded to the Association earlier this year in recognition of its contribution to the wider Royal Artillery family.



In his farewell address, General Nugee reflected on the values that define the Association: Comradeship, Community, Confidence, Competence, Caring and Connection, emphasising the importance of friendship, mutual support and belonging. During the Tribute to Absent Friends, the Chairman, Lieutenant Colonel Joe Falzon OSJ BEM, paid special tribute to Mike Hutchinson, whose passing earlier this year has been deeply felt across the Association.

As always, the true success of the reunion lay in the fellowship enjoyed throughout the evening. Old friendships were renewed, new memories created and the bonds that unite generations of Artillery Clerks strengthened once again, leaving members looking forward to the next Reunion in 2027.



SCOTTISH REGION SUMMER MEETING

The Scottish Region has held its Summer Meeting, hosted by Tayside Branch with the assistance of 212 (Highland) Battery, 105 Regiment within the ARC in Arbroath. There were 72 guests and members of the six Scottish Branches. The day began with the Sovereign's Standard marched in by Billy Morrison of Edinburgh Branch. There was then a short meeting led by Col Jim Kinloch, the Chairman of the Scottish Region, who welcomed the Association Secretary Dickie Davies and his wife Julie.

The meeting was followed by the Standard Bearer Competition with Ayrshire, Glasgow and Kingdom of Fife Branches competing. Derek Noble of Kingdom of Fife was awarded the Major Bob Holmes Trophy as 'Best Standard Bearer'.

Members then took part in inter branch games – with the Kingdom of Fife branch the overall winner – and an afternoon of socialising and fundraising including a raffle and a money tree with the proceeds donated to the RACF.

The day concluded with a prizegiving and awards. Glasgow Branch was awarded the Bowling Trophy following the regional bowling day held in June. The runners-up Piper Export Trophy was awarded to Kingdom of Fife Branch. Willie Coupar of Tayside Branch was awarded his RAA Bronze pin badge. A great day was had by all, and many members had an opportunity to catch up with old friends.

Members of the RAA and RBL held a Summer Lunch at the Risbygate Sports and Social Club, followed by a game of outdoor bowls.

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 from carla.brawn100@mod.gov.uk or through your chain of command.



59 (ASTEN) BATTERY, ROYAL ARTILLERY

59 (Asten) Battery, Royal Artillery, established at Pirbright in 1993 under the leadership of Major Willcock and WO2 Curren, has spent more than three decades at the forefront of Basic Training, shaping generations of soldiers and upholding the highest standards of the Royal Artillery. As part of a wider reorganisation within Army Training Centre (Pirbright), the Battery has now been placed into suspended animation, marking the end of a distinguished chapter in its history.

Following extensive discussion, the successor subunit has been redesignated Stone VC Company, named in honour of Gunner Charles Edwin Stone VC MM. While the name



of 59 (Asten) Battery passes into regimental history, its legacy of professionalism, excellence, and commitment will continue through the new Company, ensuring its traditions and values endure for future generations.

To mark this significant occasion, 59 (Asten) Battery hosted its final Dinner Night in May, organised by Captain Fothergill-Kemp RA.

Attended by former and serving Battery Commanders, Battery Captains, Battery Sergeant Majors, current Battery personnel, and the Royal Artillery Regimental Sergeant Major, the event celebrated more than 30 years of achievement and service. Generously supported by the Royal Artillery Association and the Royal Artillery Institution, the evening provided a fitting farewell to a Battery whose legacy will continue through Stone VC Company.

UBIQUE!



THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM: 101'S BEATING RETREAT ROOTS ITSELF AT KINGSTON PARK

As dusk settled over Kingston Park, 300 guests fell silent for the first drumbeat of the evening, and for the third-year running, Newcastle turned out to watch 101st (Northumbrian) Regiment Royal Artillery Beat Retreat.

The Band of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Pipes and Drums of the Tyneside Scottish provided the music, with the banners of the RAA Branches on parade alongside them for June's ceremony. Guests included the Lord Lieutenants of Tyne and Wear and of Northumberland, the Regiment's Honorary Colonel and current High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear, Ammar Mirza CBE, the Regimental

Colonel Royal Artillery, and the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, who were joined by the Regiment's wider civic, employer and supporter community.

None of it would happen without generous backing from the RAA, RFCA for the North of England, and the Northumbrian Volunteer Artillery Association, whose support underwrites the evening year on year.

What began three years ago as a modest evening parade has grown steadily each year into one of the fixed points in the Regiment's, and region's, calendar; a rare chance for the people who support 101, from employers to civic dignitaries, to see the Regiment on parade close to home.

Next year's event will carry extra weight: 2027 marks the 60th Anniversary of the Regiment's formation, and Kingston Park will once again host Beating Retreat on Thursday 24 June.



THORNEY ISLAND SUMMER FAYRE 2026

The Royal Artillery Association (RAA) has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to supporting the Royal Artillery family, by generously donating funding towards this year's Thorney Island Summer Fayre.

The event brought together veterans and the families of soldiers currently deployed across 12 Regt RA, 16 Regt RA and 7 Air Defence Gp, providing a valuable opportunity for loved ones to connect, strengthen friendships and enjoy a well-deserved day of fun, while their serving family members remain away on Operations and wider commitments. The Association's support ensured the day was filled with a wide range of activities, entertainment,



and opportunities for families of all ages to create lasting memories together.

The Summer Fayre highlighted the enduring importance of the wider Royal Artillery community in supporting those who serve and the families who stand behind them. Events such as these play a vital role in fostering resilience, strengthening welfare networks, and reminding families that they remain an integral part of the Gunner family throughout periods of deployment. The generous contribution from the RAA helped make the event a resounding success, reinforcing its continued dedication to the welfare and wellbeing of veterans, serving soldiers and their families.



53 AIR ASSAULT LOUISBURG BATTERY FAMILIES DAY
5 REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY

53 AA Louisburg Battery would like to thank the Royal Artillery Association for its generous support of our Families Day. The generosity makes a real difference.

After more than ten years without a subunit Families Day, the event in August, brought serving soldiers and their families together for a day of fun, friendship, and community spirit. It provided a valuable opportunity for partners and children to meet other military families, build friendships, and strengthen support networks.

With soldiers recently returning from deployments and exercises in Kenya, America, and Canada, and further operational commitments ahead, the event was particularly timely and greatly appreciated by all who attended.

It would not have been possible without the support of the RAA, whose contribution helped make the event such a success.



26 REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY FAMILIES DAY

To celebrate the rich diversity within 26 Regiment Royal Artillery, SSgt Dupal organised a Families' Cultural Day to promote community spirit and appreciation of the many cultures represented across the Regiment.

With soldiers and families from nations including St Lucia, Ghana, Nepal, Fiji, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, Ireland and England; the event showcased traditions, customs and heritage from around the world.

Visitors travelled between cultural stands using a passport-themed activity, enjoying traditional displays, Ghanaian dancing and drumming, and a variety of authentic foods prepared by soldiers and their families.

Exhibitions featured traditional attire, artefacts and photographs that highlighted the unique identities of different cultures. It was a great success, creating an inclusive environment where everyone felt valued, while strengthening the bonds that make 26 Regiment RA such a diverse and united community.

Please donate to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund & Association

More than £1m is granted annually – and you only need to have served for one day in the Royal Artillery to be part of our family for life; “Once a Gunner, always a Gunner”.

Donate at racf.enthuse.com



Once a Gunner, always supported



Facing an unexpected setback or struggling with financial pressures? The RACF is here to provide support, helping Gunners and their families navigate challenging times.

Since our magazine edition, the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund (RACF) has assisted 427 people facing a range of needs, delivering £462,000 in support. On average, each case received £1,082 of assistance.

‘The RACF is here to support those in need. Do you know a member of your RA Association, a Gunner veteran, or a serving friend who may be facing difficult circumstances? If so, we may be able to help.

Over the past year, the RACF has committed £80,000 to helping Gunner families and their dependants replace essential household appliances that are no longer serviceable. Whether it's a washing machine, cooker, or another everyday

necessity, this assistance helps ensure homes remain safe, functional, and comfortable.

Rising case numbers continue, including 81 for serving soldiers and their families providing £104,000 of much-needed support. The RACF has spent on average £1,278 per soldier. We continue to help serving personnel and their families with much needed help.

The RACF is here to support those in need — serving, veterans and their dependants. We can provide help towards critical household arrears, helping towards utilities and food costs when money is tight, or household items. There are many things we can help with so please get in touch. We cannot, however, help with private medical or legal fees.

We can be contacted by email: RARHQ-RACF-WELFARE-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk or via the website - [RA Charitable Fund Application - RA Association \(thegunners.org.uk\)](http://RA Charitable Fund Application - RA Association (thegunners.org.uk))

THANK YOU

‘Your swift action has had a truly positive impact on this family, and everyone involved should feel immensely proud of what has been achieved together.’ **Commanding Officer**

‘I continue to be impressed by the way our Regimental Family comes together and supports one another whenever it is needed most.’ **Commanding Officer**

‘Once again, thank you for your support. Time and again, you stand beside our people during their most challenging moments. I am extremely grateful for the generous assistance you approved and for the speed with which it was provided.’ **Gunner soldier**



LAST POST

Notification of Death:

Major David Bartholomew
William Worley
Michael Douglas Gilbert
Harold Fenwick
David Robertson
Simon Raven
Mason Hatton
Capt David Tyler
Ian John Fairclough
William James Barker
Kenneth Bankhead
Jeffrey William Taplin

ROWELL - Colonel (Retd) Peter Rowell, died peacefully on the 28th July aged 92. Beloved husband of Ann for 67 years. Proud father of Sarah and Andrew, grandfather and great grandfather. Donations, if wished to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund <https://www.funeralguide.co.uk/obituaries/146176>

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES FOR OUR SISTER PUBLICATION THE JOURNAL

To addresses in the UK and BFPO:
The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £10

To addresses in Europe:
The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £14

To addresses in the rest of the world:
The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £17

EVENTS

OCT		1
ALANBROOKE LUNCH	LONDON	
OCT		8
RA AWARDS DINNER	LARKHILL	
OCT		14
RAA NEC MEETING	LARKHILL	
OCT		23
ALAMEIN DINNER	LARKHILL	
NOV		5
FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE	WESTMINSTER ABBEY	
NOV		8
RA CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE	HYDE PARK CORNER	
NOV		18
RA CITY AND INDUSTRY DINNER	HONOURABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY	
DEC		6
ST BARBARA'S DAY	LARKHILL GARRISON CHURCH	
FEB		18
RA GOLD CUP	SANDOWN	
MAR		18
RA BOXING FINALS	LARKHILL	
MAR		19
GUNNER 27 CONFERENCE	LARKHILL	
MAR		19
SPRING DINNER 27	LARKHILL	
MAY		26
ARTILLERY DAY		

RA Historical Society Shrapnel Lectures 2026

DATE AND TIMINGS	EVENT	SUBJECT	LECTURER/ LEAD	BOOKINGS CLOSE
Friday 23 October 1045 to 1600 hrs	Shrapnel Lecture Day, Newcome Hall, Artillery Centre, Larkhill	The threat in 1940. Operation SEALION: The planned invasion of Britain 1941.	Dr Spencer Jones RA Regimental Historian	Friday 09 October
		Defeating the V1- rapid adaptation to a threat. Lessons for the 21st Century?	Lt Col Mike Blair RAHS Member	
		Cold War: Building for Nuclear Confrontation 1946-1989	Mr Roger Thomas Fortress Study Group	
		1983: The World at the Brink	Mr Taylor Downing FRHS - Author and Producer	

These events are open to all Gunners. To register please email Lt Col Clayton, RAHS Secretary:
richard.clayton312@gmail.com by 09 October

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



The Father of Modern Surveillance Reconnaissance

From helping his soldiers tune into a Cup Final from the Sahara Desert, to conducting his infamous 'Galactic Review', Major General Tony Stone was a visionary gunner, steadfast commander of 5th Regiment, and a leader renowned for speaking truth to power. He founded the Army's Stay-Behind Special Observation capability and spent a lifetime championing the soldiers of 4/73 Special OP Battery. With his death, the Royal Artillery has lost one of its greats.

Major General A C P (Tony) Stone, CB

General Sir Tim Morony spotted Tony Stone's potential in 1977 at Staff College: 'I think he is one of the best four or five staff officers I have ever met...the only thing that will interrupt an advance to 2 star will be a meeting with some curmudgeon who resents him for ever bustling restlessly about achieving 30% more than the rest of us...'

Curmudgeons were seemingly avoided and General Tony retired in 1995 as Director General Land Systems, overseeing the full spectrum of Land equipment. He was the longest serving Honorary Colonel in the Royal Regiment's history (18 years) and founded the Army's Stay-Behind Special Observation capability.

Always immaculate, and an officer of great courtesy, Tony was born in Wiltshire on 25 March 1939. He was the elder son of Major Charles and Kathleen (nee Grogan) Stone and commissioned from Sandhurst in 1960 having been prevented from his anticipated career as an architect due to colour blindness.

As a young officer he served in 22 Independent Locating Battery, leading an expedition to Libya where his technical prowess enabled his soldiers to listen to the UK Cup Final in 1962 in the Sahara Desert using a 19 Set Radio and 'sky aerial' held aloft by meteorological balloons.

After instructing at 17th Training Regiment, he deployed from Hubbelrath, Germany to Malaya and Singapore as a Troop Commander with 22 Air Defence Regiment where he took part in joint operations from HMS Auriga (Class A Submarine) off the Borneo coast.

The British commander during the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, Major General Arthur Patterson, remarked 'from my own personal knowledge, Captain Stone is a high-class officer, full of energy and enthusiasm, who delights in the field and jungle.' 40th Regiment as a Battery Captain in Gutersloh followed.

He and Mary were married by the Bishop of Worcester at Worcester Cathedral on 29

July 1967. Staff College came in 1970 where he excelled, being selected for high profile GSO2 appointments to follow in MGW 21 (MOD) in the Rapier Projects Team, including the trials in Woomera, Australia in 1972.



Lieutenant Colonel Stone with his wife Mary, Hildesheim, 1982

A capable cricket and rugby player, he played both sports for Staff College as a spin bowler and swift centre.

Enduring connection with 5th Regiment

His connection with and love of 5th Regiment began in 1974 as a Battery Commander of Q (Sanna's Post) Battery in Hildesheim, under Lieutenant-



Colonel (later Brigadier) David Hodge. He deployed to Northern Ireland and served in Londonderry during the challenging period of 1974.

In 1977, as a Major in the Ministry of Defence, he worked for Director of Army Staff Duties (DASD), Major-General (later General) George Cooper, a Royal Engineer known for a short fuse! DASD asked Tony to undertake what he called a 'Galactic Review', namely a study of the number of starred posts within the army with

the aim of reducing the total – a government requirement at the time as the army was thought to be top heavy.

General Cooper asked to see his initial thoughts and, as a relatively junior Major, he walked his brief through to him via the office of Brigadier (later Major-General) Lord Alvingham, a calm and

thoughtful Coldstream Guardsman.

While reading the brief, DASD exploded, tore the paper in two, threw it at Tony across his desk and told him to get out, adding that, as a Gurkha Engineer, he regarded as sacrosanct their one-star post in Hong Kong which Tony was suggesting should be cut! As he was picking up the remnants of the brief, Brigadier Alvingham walked in, having heard the commotion, and asked Tony to wait outside in his office.

The interconnecting door remained open and he heard the Brigadier say to General Cooper: "DASD, that is no way to treat your staff and I don't understand why Stone's brief should have upset you so much; I have read it and I was perfectly content to let it come through to you".

Brigadier Alvingham had not read the brief and on emerging from the General's office, closing the door behind him, told Tony to prepare a second copy at once so that he could read it, following which he would resubmit it. He added, in a concerned but kind manner, that Tony had been somewhat naive to recommend cutting a post so important to the General but, if that was his view, he was to leave it in the brief.

Beyond Tony's reputation for speaking 'truth to power', the story was often mentioned by

him because Guy Alvingham's intervention and suggestion were models of courteous direction which stayed with him throughout his military career.

Command of 5th Regiment followed in Hildesheim, from 1980-1983, before which Tony learnt German. He and Mary made a striking and memorable team, renowned for holding parties with great style both for the regiment and wider German community. Their partnership - Mary's support for him, and his for her - was enduring and inspiring through their 59 years of marriage.

The Officers' Mess was described as 'very happy, with Colonel Tony leading the officers and wives off to the Harz Mountains for a day's skiing or spearheading the Royal Wedding festivities with his inimitable style and panache.'

The Special OPs

Professionally, Commander 1st British Corps described him as 'able, articulate, forceful and raised the standards in his Regiment', and it was as Commanding Officer 5th Regiment that he identified the need for a specialist capability to counter the potential of a Warsaw Pact invasion of West Germany.

His proposal was 'high risk, covert, stay-behind patrols'; small elite teams of soldiers who would hide, concealed,



often underground in secret reinforced observation posts (OPs). In his words, 'what I thought we needed was completely concealed OPs deployed right up against the IGB and allowing the advancing enemy army to pass over them so that they were then right in amongst the enemy tanks and could, with extreme accuracy, direct artillery fire onto them as well. Of course, as to themselves, it's almost a suicide mission and that would require some pretty special OPs indeed. Survivability was obviously the key issue, and this could only be achieved by having OPs dug in underground along the IGB and in depth behind the forward OPs.'

This imaginative and forward-thinking initiative was briefed to the same Corps Commander, General Sir Nigel Bagnall, and in Tony's own words on a recent podcast, 'to my surprise and delight, he readily agreed with the proposal and tasked me to get on with forming such an organisation.'

The rest is history and the 4/73 Special OP Battery has been deployed in every major conflict in the last 40 years and is now in the strongest possible position as a capability in the Land Special Operations Force.

Through his career from CO to two star and into retirement, Tony fought

numerous attempts by the Army to remove the Battery from the Order of Battle in successive Defence Reviews. His determination and success won him immense loyalty from those that served in the organisation.



Major General Stone, MOD London, 1994

'Stone Lines'

It was of huge pride to him that, in Afghanistan in 2007, the Battery found the longest, uninterrupted, long range desert patrol behind enemy lines since World War 2. The Battery named their accommodation in Catterick

after him, 'Stone Lines'. Such was his passion; his number plate was 473 BTY often raising an eyebrow from those that knew!

After command, he became the first incumbent of the joint services post of Assistant Director

(Capabilities) in the, then new, MoD Defence Concepts Directorate before becoming Director of Operational Requirements and then Director of Light Weapons Systems.

Promotion to 2 Star rank came with the appointment of Vice Master General of



the Ordnance, later renamed Director-General Policy & Special Projects, after which he held his final appointment as Director-General Land Systems.

Following retirement he became, first, the Senior Defence Adviser to Gracemoor Consultants (UK) Ltd, a Whitehall defence consultancy

Bavarian Nordic and Simrad Optronics as well as a frequent chairman of international seminars. Together with writing for defence magazines, these activities provided him with the opportunity to pursue and contribute to defence debates at the highest level as well as publish his views on contemporary topics.

His final years of employment (until 2010) were as an independent Defence Policy & Security Analyst during which he was an RUSI member of the RED Review Team for the Government's 2010 Strategic Defence & Security Review.

The 'real' James Bond

Beyond all this, in 1995 he appeared as 'a real Bond' in the ITV documentary 'In Search of James Bond' with Jonathan Ross about the fictional spy. He never recovered from the gentle ribbing he received from friends and colleagues!

His commitment to 'standards', and despair at the modern-day tendency for them to slip, was legendary. He would never be shy and always cause some shock, telling police officers to put on their hats if he saw them without in public.

His family and friends chuckle at a particular visceral irritation he carried with the increasing frequency with which the Union Flag is flown upside down.



Lieutenant Stone, Oswestry, 1963

This included responsibility for research and development, requirements' specification, approval, trials and procurement of all military equipment from tanks (Challenger 2), artillery (AS90), wheeled vehicles (Warrior) to unmanned aerial vehicles to ground-based missiles, weapons, ammunition, clothing and logistics.

and, a year later, a partner in the company for almost ten years.

He was a Fellow of the RUSI, a member of the European Atlantic Group, the UK National Defence Association (now Defence UK Ltd), the Military Commentators' Circle and a founder member of UK Defence Forum.

He was also defence adviser to Pricewaterhouse Coopers,



On one memorable occasion he spotted the flag upended during live news coverage of a visit by then Prime Minister David Cameron to the United States. With one swift phone call to the British Embassy in Washington DC from his armchair, he righted the flag within minutes and before Cameron disembarked the aircraft, preventing a potential diplomatic incident and undermining the concept that "Armchair Generals" are somehow to be scoffed at!

In addition to being the Honorary Colonel of 5th Regiment for 18 years, the importance of remaining closely in touch with the military ethos was achieved



Major Stone, Londonderry, 1974

through his appointments as a Colonel Commandant and as the 'Godfather' of 4/73 Special OP Battery. The day before he died, he wrote to the new Battery Commander offering his congratulations, support and gentle words of experience.

Until his mid-80s, he led the Special OP contingent, marching past Cenotaph.

Commitment to Veterans

Beyond defence consultancy work, he focussed quietly and diligently on the injured and the struggles of veterans with PTSD. He established 'Lateo', the Special Observers' Association, the sole aim of which remains provision of an 'over-watch and help' capability for Special Observer veterans within both the Regular Army and the Honourable Artillery Company. He cared deeply.

During the Afghanistan campaign, he drove to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham to visit an injured gunner from 4/73. 'By the book' hospital staff refused him entry as he was not 'family'. However, he was considered family and was taken around the back of the hospital by another gunner, re clothed and disguised and walked confidently straight into the ward...as 'great uncle Tony'!

A man of huge energy, charisma and determined to remain fit, he played club tennis until 2024. He collapsed suddenly in a gym and died on 23rd July 2026, aged 87.

4/73 Special OP Battery provided the Bearer Party at his family Requiem Mass in the Cotswolds on 12th August, the day of the eclipse and also

a date that would have made him smile as a keen game shot. He was laid to rest wearing his Special OP tie.

As the Special OP Association wrote about the officer they called 'The Godfather': "The finest soldiers are remembered not for the battles they won, but for the men they made braver. General Tony stood like a rock and led like a flame. His courage lives on in every one of us he shaped. With honour, love, and gratitude from a very special band of brothers who owe our proud existence to him. Travel well boss. We are his men."

He was a member of the Honourable Artillery Company since 1983, and became particularly close to them after the death of Trooper Jack Sadler HAC, in 2007. The HAC called him, 'the father of modern surveillance reconnaissance'.

A devout Catholic, he was man of huge integrity, kindness and loyalty.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Mary, and his two sons, Guy who followed him into the Army and is a serving Colonel in London, and Mark, the US Correspondent for Sky News.

There will be a Thanksgiving Service for General Tony's life at Saint James' Church, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire in November. Further details are available from guy.stone530@mod.gov.uk



Fifty years of service: Remembering the life of Lieutenant Colonel Mike Comben



Mike Comben joined the Artillery as a Junior Leader in September 1963, a few days after his 16th birthday and trained as an RA surveyor. His first posting was in Jan 66 to 27 Army Missile Regt, Dortmund, where he was promptly employed as a driver in 6 Bty rather than a surveyor. Upon the move of 27 to Devizes, he opted to re-train as a TARA (technical survey specialist) and stay with 6 Bty.

Lippstadt (a British Army base in the former West Germany) followed and promotion to Sgt in 1970 - by his own admission, far too early! He always looked back on his time with 27 with great fondness and remained friends with a many fellow members throughout his life.

In January 1972, he was posted to RSA Larkhill to join No 8 Long Gunnery Staff Course Field (NCOs) and qualified as a WO2 (AIG) in April 73.

His postings from then included RSA, HQDRA, HQ 21 Arty Bde, and Master Gunner of RAGTE Hohne. Commissioned as Captain in March 1982, he became the RTO of Second Regiment in Munster and after four years volunteered for loan service in Oman.

On return to the UK in January 1988, he joined the AMF(L) Arty HQ (part of 94 Regt, Larkhill). Then, after four years of exercises throughout Europe he was posted to HQ DRA as an SO2.

His final posting (as he thought) was to the UKLF Gunnery Training Team at Larkhill. But at the age of 52, while starting to think about getting a 'proper job in civvy street' he was unexpectedly promoted to Lt Col and went to HQ SPTA in Westdown Camp as the Range Safety Officer.

He retired from uniformed service in 2001 after 38 years and then worked as both an SO1 and SO2 Retired Officer at Larkhill for 12 years. In total, he served 50 years with the Gunners.

Warrant Officer Class One (RSM) John Stuart Innes



John Innes was born in Cheetham Hill, Manchester, on 30th December 1947 - and unexpectedly passed away on 23 May 2026.

A colossus of a man and the epitome of a professional soldier: he was smart, bold, and fearless - never afraid to confront a threat head on.

Forged in an era of Cold War vulnerability, he was a force of nature, a maverick with a keen moral compass who always had the welfare of his soldiers imbued in his heart. And always with a cheeky wide smile.

Crafted in an era of raw reality - he was a far cry from the risk assessments and health and safety of today.

In the mid-sixties he was a product of the Junior Leaders system. On mustering, he was posted to 25 Regiment at Larkhill then spent time in Hong Kong (where he married Ann) and South Korea and back to Catterick.

He spent considerable time in Germany, holding back the threat of the cold war. During that time, the Regiment converted to Internal Security duties, tackling the difficulties of the Northern Ireland troubles.

There, he bravely played his part mostly in the Intelligence Section.

He did a stint in 101 Regiment as a PSI before returning to 25 Regiment as BSM of 93 (Le Cateau) Battery,

and finished his military career as the RSM of 100 Regiment in London.

But it was always 25 Regiment that had been branded on his soul. As a strong family man, although in the bracket for an LE commission, he chose, instead, to put his family first and put down roots in South London and joined the City of London Police.

Since 25 Regiment was placed into suspended animation in 1984, he has remained an avid enthusiastic supporter of the annual reunions, held firstly at Larkhill and in later years in the Regiment's home of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

He will be sadly missed by all that knew him. John is survived by his wife Ann, children Janet and Colin and grandchildren Antonia, Luca, Evie and Lawrie.

By Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) RH Homer MBE VR RA



REUNIONS

103 REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY: ST BARBARA'S DINNER 26

On 5th December. At 216 Battery, 103 Regt RA, Nelson Street, Bolton BL3 2RW. Open to officers of 103 Regiment RA, serving and retired, and their guests. For places, please apply to Alexander.Lane102@mod.gov.uk

THE 36TH REUNION OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY BOYS AND JUNIOR LEADERS' ASSOCIATION

The 36th reunion of The RA Boys and Junior Leaders' Association will take place at the Holiday Inn Coventry M6 Junction 2, over the weekend of 2-4th October.

Full details, contact the Secretary, Ted McKenzie, on exboysra.tn@gmail.com

EVENTS

RA CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE

Sunday 8th November

1030am till 11.15am

RA Monument, Hyde Park Corner

Reserved seating available here: <https://buytickets.at/royalartillery/2298551>

The event is open to all to attend and anyone wishing to book reserved seats is requested to do so. Please note that this is a free event, however seating is limited and will be issued on a first come first served basis. All attendees are required to be seated by 10.30am at the latest and are advised to dress accordingly for the weather as this is an open air event. All retired members of the regiment who attend are invited at the end of the Ceremony to join the march past. Any queries are to be directed to Mrs Carla Brawn, Email: carla.brawn100@mod.gov.uk or via telephone 0303 380 9714.



EVENTS

ALANBROOKE LUNCH

The next Royal Artillery Officers' Alanbrooke Lunch is on **Thursday 1st October** at the Army & Navy Club, St James's Square, London. Our guest speaker at this lunch is the Minister for Veterans and People, Louise Sandher-Jones MP.



Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke

Drinks 1200. Lunch 1245. The Alanbrooke Lunch Club is open to all Gunner officers, Regular and Reserve whether serving or retired. The lunch is £80 per ticket. The price includes pre-lunch drink, wine and port. A cash bar is available after lunch. The dress code for this event is lounge suits or equivalent. To attend the lunches you must be a paid-up member of the Alanbrooke Club. There is an annual membership fee of £10 but this is waived for serving officers. To join the Club, please contact carla.brawn100@mod.gov.uk Do spread the message among your Gunner friends, and of course you may bring a guest (who may be non-military) or a group of friends you served with. Commanding Officers are asked to encourage and facilitate attendance by their officers.

To purchase tickets:



ALAMEIN DINNER

The Alamein Dinner 2026 will be held on **Friday, 23rd October at the RA Mess, Larkhill, 1900 for 1930**. The dinner will take the form of a Regimental Guest Night with partners and is open to officers of the Royal Regiment, serving and retired, and their guests. There will also be some regimental guests.

Dress for the serving officers is Mess Dress – Full Ceremonial Evening, (stiff shirts) decorations. For retired officers/civilians it is evening dress (white tie) with decorations. As this is a formal occasion, long dresses would be the appropriate style for ladies.

The cost of the tickets will be £75 per head. For places apply to Jenny McGrath by email: jennifer.mcgrath924@mod.gov.uk / 0300 1623966 and payment can be either:

BACS: RAI, 30-11-75, 00957269

(Please prefix payment reference with AD26)

Cheque: made payable to the Royal Artillery Institution.

Please note a first come first served basis applies.

Applications for double bed, twin or single accommodation in the RA Mess should be sent to the **Mess Secretary, Mrs Lucy Evans** lucy.evans544@mod.gov.uk

Please note that accommodation will be in short supply. Requests for double and twin rooms will be added to a waiting list, and allocations will be made on the **2nd October 26**.

In the event that no further single rooms are available in the main Mess building, applications for standard accommodation can be made through the Central Accommodation Booking Service (CABS) at: [DIO RD PFI-PAC SLAMIS TeamGpMail \(MULTIUSER\) DIORDPFI-PACSLAMIS TeamGpMail@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DIO RD PFI-PAC SLAMIS TeamGpMail (MULTIUSER) DIORDPFI-PACSLAMIS TeamGpMail@mod.gov.uk)



THE 66th AIRBORNE GUNNER AND 7 RHA OFFICERS' MESS REUNION DINNER

ROYAL ARTILLERY MESS, LARKHILL

FRIDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2026

£90 per head plus £15 for accommodation

16:00 – AFTERNOON TEA

19:00 – DRINKS RECEPTION

01:00 – CARRIAGES



PLEASE COMPLETE THE RESPONSE FORM TO SIGN UP: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/Spbej5B8YX>

Airborne Gunners!

We are delighted to invite you to the 66th Airborne Gunner and 7 RHA Reunion Dinner, which will take place in the Royal Artillery Mess, Larkhill. We would be delighted if you could join us to celebrate our shared history and hear the latest stories from the serving Regiment.



FOR SALE

MESS KIT

No 1, No 2 and Mess Kits complete with caps, belts and ancillaries. Suit 40-42 inch chest 42 inch leg. Contact Capt (Retd) Alistair Smith on +447557 938670 or email athsmith1964@gmail.com



LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Will you remember them?

Change starts with a Will

The Royal Artillery Charitable Fund has provided support to the Gunner wider community. We are committed to ensuring support is there to veterans, helping our historic heritage, and nurturing the unique community that makes the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund so special.

Leaving a gift in your Will is a simple yet powerful way to help secure this future. Your generosity ensures that the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund can continue to provide welfare support, and quality of life, not just today, but for generations to come.

Every legacy, large or small, has a meaningful impact. Whether you're updating an existing Will or writing a new one.

REGIMENTAL CHRISTMAS CARDS ORDER FORM 2026

A 	Foiled RA Badge £14.50 per pack of 10 incl p&p* 140x102mm With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year	C 	The Royal Artillery War Memorial in Winter £10.00 per pack of 10 incl p&p* 105x148mm With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year
B 	The Regimental Family £10.00 per pack of 10 incl p&p* 105x148mm With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year	D 	RA Coat of Arms with Ribbon £15.50 per pack of 10 incl p&p* 171x127mm With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Name and address:

Tel No:

Quantity required:

A	
B	
C	
D	

Total:

*Please contact the RAA for additional overseas postage. Payment to Royal Artillery Association BACS Account 00181906 Sort Code 30 99 88 or send UK Sterling cheque to: Royal Artillery Association, Artillery House, Artillery Centre, RA Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8QT. All proceeds raised are in aid of the Royal Artillery Association. For enquiries please email fay.chapman107@mod.gov.uk





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7th Parachute Regiment
Royal Horse Artillery




All former Airborne Gunner and 7 RHA Officers

We are looking to reconnect with as many past officers that may have lost contact with the community

Please follow the QR code and fill out your details if you are currently not part of the Airborne Gunner and 7 RHA past Officers mailing list. Or alternatively get in touch via 7RHA-AGRDMailbox.mod.gov.uk

Or search Airborne Gunner Reunion Dinner on LinkedIn

It would be great to see as many past members as possible at the 65th Airborne Gunner and 7 RHA Reunion Dinner





Looking for something different?

We are continuously looking for physically and mentally robust volunteers from the Tri-Services to become Special Observers.

To join us, volunteers must successfully complete the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Patrols Course (SRPC).

For those that are successful we guarantee a unique, challenging and rewarding career like no other in the regular army.

If you want to work with like-minded individuals, conduct high quality training and deploy across the globe; then look no further.

Contact us: 4/73 (Sphinx) Special Observation Post Battery
Email: 5RA-473Bty-Ops-Team@mod.gov.uk Tel: 07773 978878

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"The British Army's only Long Range, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) Patrols, providing specialist **Surveillance, Reconnaissance** and **Joint Effects** in the high-threat environment"

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ARE YOU WILLING?

ROYAL ARTILLERY MENTORING PROGRAMME

AN INCLUSIVE PROGRAMME TO NURTURE TALENT AND MAXIMISE POTENTIAL. COMPLEMENTARY ROLE TO ROUTINE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY, PROVIDING A BROADER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY OUTSIDE OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

WHAT?

INSPIRE OUR TALENTED WORKFORCE; MAXIMISE INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL; IMPROVE THE LIVED EXPERIENCE; DEVELOP SKILLS; BROADEN PERSPECTIVES; OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING.

WHY?

A PROGRAMME OPEN TO EVERYONE; ALL RANKS; TO BE BOTH MENTORS AND MENTEES.

WHO?

A RELATIONSHIP AND A PROCESS WHERE A PERSON OFFERS HELP, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO FACILITATE LEARNING OR DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLEAGUE.

HOW?

Mentee Form

Mentor Form



HAC NORTHERN TROOP THE OFFER

JOIN THE HAC AND USE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO GROW THE SPECIAL OP CAPABILITY

Train for a minimum of 27 paid days a year to earn your tax-free bounty of up to £2000!

Opportunities for training include:

- ✓ Support 1 (Special Op) Sqn HAC during their monthly training weekends.
- ✓ Refreshing and upskilling your core skills alongside 4/73 Bty in Marne Barracks during the week (there are no drill nights).
- ✓ Train the next generation of Special Observers on SRPC
- ✓ Be part of the CAPDEV and rapidly growing Special OP Tech Surveillance.
- ✓ Two-week annual deployment in the UK or overseas.
- ✓ AT, Sport, Battlefield Studies.
- ✓ Multiple opportunities for short, medium and long-term deployment on, or in support of Operations

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29 COMMANDO REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY

UNITED WE CONQUER

148 (MEIKTILA) COMMANDO FORWARD OBSERVATION BATTERY

As part of Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron Group, you will deliver Joint Fires and Targeting to 3 Commando Brigade and play a pivotal role in shaping the battlefield. You will infiltrate the area of operations as part of a small team of specialists by parachute, submarine, raiding craft, light armoured vehicle, or ski.

Once fully trained, you will receive Supplementary Pay and Parachutist Pay of up to £3,800 per year in addition to your basic pay.

We are actively searching for robust, driven and intelligent individuals from the Army, Royal Marines, and Royal Navy to join our ranks. We offer the opportunity to be trained in an un-paralleled set of skills, unique within Defence.

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photograph: Cpl Jamie Ayling, Defence Imagery

Soldiers from 21 Air Assault Battery Royal Artillery conducting pre-flight checks of the EAGLE drone system during Exercise Rhino Bizz at British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada