



JULY 2021

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GUNNER

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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.

Articles must be received by the 15th day of the month preceeding the magazines publication. Please send to thegunner@artycen.ra.mod.uk

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GUNNER



JULY 2021

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D-Day veteran Joe Cattini raises his walking stick like a machine gun as he and other veterans are welcomed to the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the Normandy Landings

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Dear Readers,

I would like to update you on the changes to Gunner Magazine.

From this edition onwards, Gunner Magazine will be available as both a print and online product, the online Gunner will be available through both our Regimental website <https://www.thegunners.org.uk/> and to military personnel through DEFENCE-CONNECT.

Subscribers will continue to receive a print copy, as will our Regiments, messes, libraries and associations. Serving officers who contribute to the service pays giving scheme will have access to the online product and will be able to receive a print copy on request.

Taken together these initiatives will improve Gunner, increase its reach, place it on a financially sound footing, reduce wastage and secure the future of our Regimental magazine for generations to come.

Any questions should be directed to the executive editor, simon.howe519@mod.gov.uk

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The Master Gunner St James's Park Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL

Since the terms 'coronavirus' and 'Covid-19' have entered our lexicons, there has been an acceleration in changes as to how we communicate; some of this was envisaged but others we had not predicted. Running two Royal Artillery Conferences online rather than sitting in the Newcombe Hall was not previously planned; while we missed the direct interactions over coffee and in the Messes, over 300 people joined the briefings from around the UK and from overseas, many more than we could have accommodated physically.

We have also looked at how we should best communicate to the wider Regimental family with a refreshed Royal Artillery Association website <https://www.thegunners.org.uk/> that continues to be developed. And while Gunner Magazine is, without doubt, a Regimental institution, it too needed an overhaul. This is therefore the first issue in a revised format.

Gunner will now be produced bi-monthly with an extra Christmas addition; there will be 7 editions a year. As well as the print version, an e-copy will be available on Defence Connect for all serving personnel; we are cutting the print run from 4,000 to 1,500 and are encouraging serving members of the Regiment to access Gunner electronically, both for climatic and financial reasons. While all Royal Artillery Regiments will continue to receive an allocation of the magazine to be distributed centrally in Headquarters, Messes and Sub-units, Gunner officers will no longer automatically receive a hard copy of the magazine through the internal mail; instead, we are introducing an 'opt in' scheme.

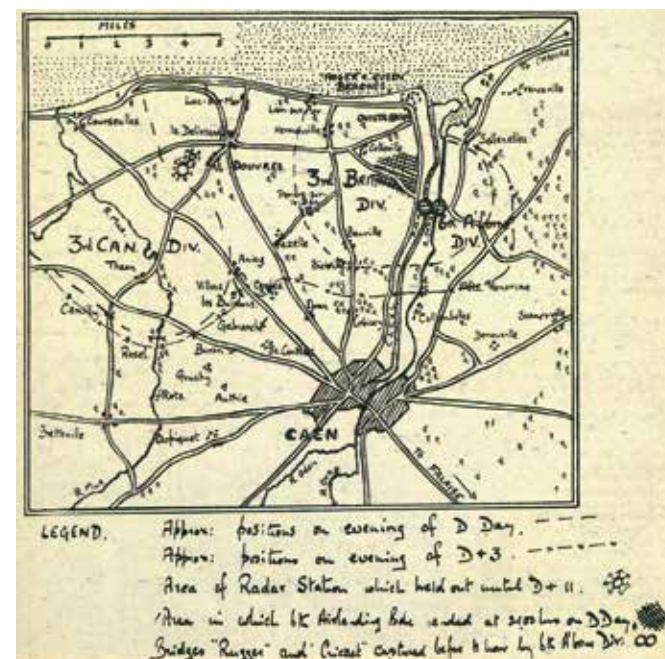
In terms of content, the page count has been increased to 48 and there will be sections allocated to formations, units and training establishments who will be asked to contribute on a regular basis. The magazine will also feature a guest editorial, a 'look back in time', sport and adventure training as well as pages allocated to the Royal Artillery Association, the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, the Gunner Inclusivity Group, The London Gazette – to include officer postings and honours and awards, and death notices and obituaries. We look forward to receiving feedback on the new Gunner Magazine.

More broadly, the Regiment has come out of Defence's Integrated Review well and while the detail is yet to be concluded any analysis that has, as its headlines, 'a shift from the close to the deep battle', targeting and the fusion of multiple effects, the use of unmanned air systems as well as significant investment in air defence, MLRS and a new mobile fires platform is good news for the Royal Regiment. Finally, we should all take great pride in what our officers and soldiers have achieved during the pandemic; whether deployed on operations and conducting deterrence overseas, training or supporting the NHS through 'test and trace', vaccination programmes or, in the early weeks, helping build the Nightingale Hospitals, they have brought great credit to themselves and to the Royal Regiment of Artillery. I thank and congratulate them. And now, please read on.



ARTILLERY SUPPORT ON D-DAY

By Capt G I D Norton MC RA



The 3rd Division was told that it was to be one of the Assault Divisions for the Invasion of N. West Europe. The Field Regiments of the Divisional Artillery (7, 33 and 76 Field Regiments) had already carried out much amphibious training, had fired 25-pounders from L.C.T. and had learned the secrets of successful waterproofing, so vital in an operation such as this. In August, 1943, these Regiments were equipped with S.P. 105 mm guns (Priests) and the next 3 months were taken up with individual training.

After many Brigade exercises in bitterly cold weather in Scotland, east of Inverness - in an area selected most closely resembling the part of the French coast chosen for the assault - exercise "Leap Year" was held at the end of February. The whole Division with its attached units (including 27th Armoured Brigade, 101st Beach Group, etc.) Took part in this full - scale rehearsal which was also used to test the efficiency of Movement Control in assembling and embarking such a large force.

During April the Division moved by road, rail and sea to Marshalling Camps in the South of England, where exercise "Fabiuous" was held in the first week of May. The gunners took part in this in skeleton only, as replacements for the S.P.'s and tanks below Class 1 and left in Scotland, had not been received.

After the new S.P.'s and tanks had been collected there were days of hectic preparation.

In the midst of this activity briefing took place. In large tents, in which were displayed maps, photos, models, etc., all officers were informed of the plans for operation 'overlord.' Place names were not mentioned and the maps which showed such details as width of road with bank, hedge or ditch, and all beach and inland defences, were complete except for place names. The typography of the beaches, dunes and ground immediately inland was explained so thoroughly that one felt one knew this sector of the French coast as well as one knew one's favourite holiday resort.

The plan was the same as has been practised on numerous exercises and is well known to all.

On June 1st units were scattered to many camps where they were assembled in craft - loads. Loading of guns, tanks and ammunition took place on June 2nd on Gosport Harbours; on the following day the main bulk of the regiments embarked on the L.C.T., which like all the naval craft in Force S, had the Divisional sign painted on their funnels. On board everyone tried to make themselves as comfortable as possible. This was no easy matter as the ammunition required for the "running" shoot was stacked all around the S.P.'s and tanks to a height of 3 feet, and with the porpoises underneath there was little room for the 70 - odd Army personnel. The F.O.O., B.C. Recce and U.L.O. parties were aboard various types of craft, in the main more comfortable than the L.C.T.

Early on the 4th it was learned that the operation had been postponed for 24 hours, but at midday on the 5th, Force S. put to sea, watched from H.M.S. LARGE by its commander, Admiral A.G.T. Talbot, and Maj - Gen T.G. Rennie, the Divisional Commander. It was not long before the efficiency of the seasick tablets was in doubt and by 18.00 hrs there was no doubt at all. It had been announced that D-Day was to be on the morrow. And roles of maps, photographs, order, code-words, etc., had been issued. The study of these whilst one was feeling ill was difficult, and the fact that 3rd Division was to land on a sector of the beach at the junction of four maps did not make conditions any easier.

At the first light on the 6th, anti-aircraft and bomb-burst flashes could be seen to the S.E. Above and at great height the fighters were flying to and fro. All around was the protective screen of destroyers and on the horizon were the battleships, cruisers and monitors which were shelling the coastal batteries. The sea was still rough and some concern was felt for the D.D tanks which were to "swim" the last 3,000 yards to the beaches.

Besides being attacked from the air, the beach defences were subjected to bombardment from the sea. This included fire from H.M. ships, 17-pdr, concrete-busters mounted in L.C.T. "hedge-rows," rocket-firing L.C.T. (which fired 1,008 rockets each) and a concentration from the Divisional Artillery from H-40 to H-5 approximately. This "run-in" bombardment by the Divisional Artillery was slightly modified from the rehearsals in that the regiments dispensed with the M.I. Radar "fix" which on exercises had not been accurate enough. Instead of this one gun per regiment was used as ranging gun, opening with a range of 11,000 yards, which was kept constant with rounds falling in the sea until the F.O.O. in an L.C.P.(L), reported the beach hit. Thereafter all guns were fired, and except for corrections ordered, the range was dropped 200 yards each minute to allow for the movement of the craft. One of the L.C.P.'s was sunk by the rough seas, but there was alternative means of, observation and communication by one of the other F.O.O.'s. On completion of the bombardment the L.C.T. returned the "lowering position" to await their turn to beach.

Meanwhile the assault troops with their F.O.O.'s had transferred from the L.S.I. to L.C.A. at the "lowering position" - about six miles from the beaches - and were approaching the shore defences. These troops found that the beach defences were not as badly damaged by the R.A.F. as had been expected and it was only after some very bitter fighting, in which casualties were high on both sides, that they managed to penetrate inland. Artillery support for this initial phase should have been provided by the R.M. Assault Artillery, which had landed in tanks at H+5.

The Gunners are currently deployed on over 10 overseas operations with formed units and individual augmentees deployed across the globe. This month we will focus on those gunners deployed on Operations CABRIT, NEWCOME, SHADER and TORAL.

Op CABRIT - Estonia

Operation CABRIT is the UK's contribution to NATO's presence in the Baltics, C Battery, 3 RHA are deployed on the 8th rotation of this operation alongside members of 9 other Royal Artillery Regiments both Regular and Reserve.

- Our Role
 - Engagement with our Estonian and multinational partners.
 - Deterring Russia
 - Readiness to deploy at a moment's notice in an austere environment.
 - Balance between Operational deployment and freedoms (Sport/AT, travel and Operational stand down).
 - C Battery RHA will provide the Close Support Artillery element to 1 MERCIAN, Battlegroup.



Op NEWCOMBE - Mali

Members of 32 Regt RA are currently deployed on Op NEWCOMBE in Mali in a peacekeeping role in support of the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission.



Op TORAL - Afghanistan

Members of 4 Regt RA, 5 Regt RA and 16 Regt RA are part of the British presence within Afghanistan as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission.



Op SHADER - Iraq

Members of 29 Cdo Regt RA are currently deployed on Op SHADER on the ongoing military intervention against Islamic State.





GROUND BASED AIR DEFENCE BRANCH



HVM Training against the ever increasing Mini UAS threat

LOCKDOWN: Despite Covid 19 (C-19) the GBAD Branch has maintained and delivered all standing commitments to the Field Army in line with the Royal School of Artillery Force Health Protection Measures. Since the New Year the Branch has delivered HVM SP, LEAPP, GAMB and GBAD Warfare Officer courses ensuring that RSA support enabled the Field Army to meet operational requirements.

RETURN TO TRAINING: Since Easter the Branch has continued to deliver training commensurate with the gradual lifting of restrictions in line with the government C-19 roadmap. The focus of the Summer Term has been the delivery of the pilot Gunnery Staff Course (GSC) (The Successor to the Gunnery Career Course) which to date has been an outstanding success. The Branch has delivered the GBAD module of the course and has achieved more output with the Trainees and in less time as the Course is now 6 months shorter in duration, a real accolade to the Gunnery Staff and the members of the GBAD staff involved.

INNOVATION: The GBAD Branch has continued to implement innovative ways of enhancing training. By utilising the Instant Eye B1 Quad copter and Puma MUAS systems we have been able to focus on the ever increasing UAS threat within not only the HVM courses but also the GAMB and LEAPP Final Exercises also to replicate the Gatwick Airport scenario from 2019 and prepare for similar scenarios that may occur in the future. This new addition to our training has also

assisted 16 Regt RA in its preparation and training for the G8 summit which took place in Cornwall in Jun of this year.



B1 Quad Copter enhancing LEAPP and GAMB Training

URBAN OPERATIONS: In line with direction from Land Warfare Centre that the urban environment is to feature as a back drop to all of our training over the next training year, the Branch is working with simulation systems such as the Thales HVM simulators on Thorney Island and the VBS2 system to create Air Threat scenarios within the urban environment.



This proving a very economic and effective way of gearing our minds to this very realistic but challenging spectrum of operations which we may find ourselves operating in in future.



HVM in the urban environment

THE FUTURE: With old enemy capabilities remaining extant coupled with new modern threats such as UAS and cyber operations, the GBAD Branch will be challenged more than ever before to continue in its evolution in training in line with current threats but will work harder than ever to do so. The most challenging, yet exciting task of all though will be the takeover of Sky Sabre training as this new and sophisticated capability is taken into the Royal School of Artillery steady state training.

Busy times ahead for the Royal School of Artillery GBAD Branch. But, good busy, not bad busy.

by Capt A J Murdoch RA
Technical Instructor in Gunnery



HVM training with the B1 Instant Eye Quad Copter



Ex SPRING STORM 21



Ex SPRING STORM 21 is the largest military training event in Estonia, and is the Main Effort for the Op CABRIT's summer rotation. Its purpose is to validate the Estonian Conscript Battalions at the end of their annual training cycle. The UK's 'Combined Artillery Group' is held at @Readiness in the UK deployed into Estonia to uplift the Royal Artillery's presence on the battlefield. C Battery RHA was the lead unit supporting 1 Mercian Battlegroup (1 MERC BG) as part of 1 Estonian Brigade (1 EST Bde) and soldiers from 1 RHA, 3 RHA, 12 RA, 26 RA, 32 RA, 101 RA, 103 RA, 104 RA and 105 RA came together to form the largest ever Royal Artillery deployment from multiple disciplines and capabilities in the Baltic States. It provided an opportunity for additional Multi-National (MN) involvement from across NATO and Allied partners to integrate and subsequently conduct Joint Fires operations and is the highlight of the enhanced Forward Presence BattleGroup (eFP BG) yearly training programme.

Three weeks, ten Royal Artillery Regiments, x16 Fire Units, x65 vehicles, x192 soldiers, +1000rnds of various ammunition natures, the exercise was highly anticipated by all.

Deployed alongside the EST HQ, C Bty's Joint Fires Cell deployed the array of fires assets at with x3 MLRS launchers, x4 105mm Light Gun, x3 155mm self-propelled AS90 and x6 High Velocity Missile System. To compliment all this, a Desert Hawk 3 detachment provided the 'find' function. A first for 26 Regiment, MLRS provided the Brigade with the ability to

prosecute High Value Targets in the 'deep' battlespace plugging a gap in the Estonian Defence Plan. The targets were located and identified for the first time by both Wildcat Helicopter and 32 Regiment's Desert Hawk 3.



Desert Hawk 3

Fire Support Team (FSTs) from C Bty were embedded with the 1 MERC's Dragon ISTAR Group, B Company and Badger Squadron, where they partook in arduous insertion tabs and extensive battle runs spanning 12-13 hours daily. They successfully coordinated UK fires in support of the eFP BG throughout the Operation and controlled the advance



of their respective units on advance to contacts during both Brigade and Battlegroup Fire Plans. Side by side with Estonian observers, eFP JTACS and TACP's called in air strikes from UK and US Apache Helicopters, demonstrating yet more capability into the immense display of firepower.

Initially outgunned and out-ranged by 'Enemy forces', both UK and EST Artillery were required to test their use of ARAs and AMAs, moving constantly to avoid detection and evade counter battery fires. This approach proved fundamental as UK and EST artillery assets were able to target the enemy Artillery positions whilst preserving their own, and thus securing the advantage with regards to firepower for the remainder of the operation.



Rehearsals were crucial and complex "Kill-Chains" were tested to the limit with layered multi-national components and the Battery deployed onto Central Tapa Training Area. Light Guns, AS90s and MLRS established their Gun Positions whilst the FSTs and JFC established Observation Posts with their French counterparts alongside the Estonian Defensive positions, ready to provide fires when called upon. The calls for fire (CFF) came throughout the night and long battles throughout the day provided the opportunity to fire all natures of fires and ammunition – an opportunity that will rarely be presented again outside of Estonia and Op CABRIT. The rates were high and missions frequent and this enabled the firing units to be tested over intensive periods of live firing.

Estonian Forward Observers sent their calls for fire to a combined British/French Joint Fires Cell, co-located within an Estonian Battalion Command Post, before being engaged by British or French FSTs with British and Estonian Guns and mortars whilst Polish and British JTACS controlled Wildcat and Apache helicopters firing both small arms and rockets, it was certainly a multi-national battlespace that aimed to deliver a highly explosive punch. The complexity was increased by the authority to fire the resources, the At My Command (AMC), was regularly held at the Estonian Battalion Command Post. Also added to the multi-national mixture of assets was the ability to call for fire and observe the fall of shot through both Estonian Puma and British Desert Hawk 3 RPAS assets. This allowed added realism to the firing as the terrain in theatre

does not always allow the observer the opportunity to observe targets at all times and these invaluable assets meant that fires could be maintained, especially throughout critical stages in the battle. With this being the final large-scale combined arms exercise of the tour, the Battery utilised all previous experience and integration training opportunities to flawlessly execute and deliver Joint Fires when called upon by our Estonian colleagues.



The largest deployment of Royal Artillery capabilities on the Ex SPRING STORM series was demonstrated from a culmination of the work from multiple CABRIT ROTOs. The 'most consistent and reliable capability in theatre' the Arty Gp were recognised by Comd 1 EST Bde who were awarded for 'excellence' on the battlefield.



The Arty Gp solidified their collective reputation and enhanced the eFP relationships, successfully setting the conditions for future deployments of the Royal Artillery in the Baltic States and Poland.

by Capt James Bush RHA
3 RHA



7th Air Defence Group Step up the pace



During a busy and exciting period, 7 Air Defence the Group have been stepping up the pace across operations, training and capability. The three regiments have continued to support overseas operations (Op TORAL, Op CABRIT, Op FLORIDAN and the Falkland Islands) as well as providing Air Defence and generalist support to UK Operations and resilience tasks. The focus though, has undoubtedly been training, at the unit level with live firing missile camps in four countries (UK, Estonia, USA and Falkland Islands), and at the Group level with Ex CENTAUR DRAGON marking a return to Collective Training Level D for the first in well over a decade.

Getting after GOC 3 (UK) Div's WARDEV agenda, Ex CENTAURS DRAGON, a Group level Command Post Exercise, was conducted from Thorney Island in May. The aim, to stress test GBAD C2 over existing platforms and across GBAD C2 points of presence at the Corps, Div and Bde levels. The first in a series of WARDEV initiatives, the Group is rejuvenating its ability to integrate in the multi-domain and multi-national environments in which it expects to fight. Taking place over two weeks, it exercised the HQ and subordinate regiments through a number of GBAD estimate cycles and execution phases ensuring training value for everyone from COs planning groups to the most junior detachment members. With the full breadth of the Formation on show, Ex CENTAURS DRAGON provided an ideal platform to host the VIPs from across the Joint community of interest, including Ch JFIB from HQ ARRC, Comd JFAC, Comd JALO and OC ASOS. These visits providing

a forum to further cement critical relationships and to increase awareness of the Group's current and future capabilities. Highlights were visits by DCG and GOC 3(UK) Div, the DCG providing some excellent insights from his service in the US Army and the Comd reinforcing the importance of the exercise and Group's wider WARDEV programme. Additionally, they proved ideal opportunities to showcase the talented soldiers, airmen and women charged with delivering UK GBAD and for them to talk about the recent experiences of GBAD deployment, at home and abroad.

From concept, Ex CENTAURS DRAGON sort to incorporate the whole force (Regular and Reserve) as well as multi-national and Joint partners. Sadly, COVID restricted the ability of US and French force elements to participate but both countries remain committed to supporting the next exercise in the series, Ex CENTAUR CHARGE in Sep 21.

The exercise was the first of a progressive series of C2 activities aimed at exercising 7 AD Gp as a united GBAD Force, operating from Corps level down to Fire Unit within a contemporary warfighting scenario.



WATCHKEEPER PILOT - An exciting opportunity

Featuring an interview with Watchkeeper pilot student Capt Rob Goodman RA

By 2Lt Jonathan McMahon RA



47 Regt RA operates the Watchkeeper Remotely-Piloted Air System. The last year has seen the Regiment committed to numerous Defence tasks. Op RESCRIPT saw the deployment of Mobile Testing Units, vaccinators, and hospital liaison officers from the Regiment. In August 2021, the Regiment deployed on Op DEVERAN which was the military input into efforts by the Border Force and Coast Guard to monitor the crossing of the English Channel by illegal migrants. A detachment also deployed on Ex WARFIGHTER in Texas as part of 3rd (UK) Division.

47 Regt RA is now flying from two locations and broadening its pool of qualified individuals. The role of a Watchkeeper pilot presents both an exciting and challenging opportunity. It requires individuals to be alert and disciplined, follow all flying procedures verbatim, but you must also be pragmatic and reactive in order to adapt to the ever-changing situation around you. Flying sorties, both in training and operationally, demands mental agility. All achievable when working within the team of aircrew inside of the Ground Control Station (GCS).

For anyone interested in becoming a Watchkeeper Pilot, upon application, you will be asked to sit a Flying Aptitude Test at RAF Cranwell. Providing a suitable score is achieved, you will begin your Watchkeeper Pilot training at Larkhill with 47 Regt RA. The training provided to all students is world class; delivered by a mixture of civilian and military personnel. It will see you operate the Watchkeeper in simulators before conducting live flying at either RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, or Keevil Airfield on Salisbury Plain.

As a pilot, you will be required to operate both the aircraft and its payload. When conducting sorties, on exercise or operations, the

aircrew work alongside our Image Analysts who provide direction of what information to gather and then produce a product to aid commanders decision making. Ultimately, a pilot is required to gather intelligence from both land and maritime targets, whilst flying tactically.

Interview with Capt Rob Goodman

Q: What made you choose to become a Watchkeeper pilot?

A: I chose to become a WK pilot because I believe it is the future of aviation as well being a key component of future operations. The WK capability is extremely versatile- supporting MACA to conventional war fighting and everything in between. I also wanted to become a technical specialist in something.

Q: How have you found the course so far?

A: The course has been really well delivered; technically very challenging but the resources in the WK training facility are very good. It starts with a technical module where you learn everything about the system in detail: GCS, aircraft, ATOLS and datalinks. Then you move onto the simulation phase, conducting emergency drills and developing crew dynamics. Finally you fly to Akrotiri to conduct live flying.

Q: What is unique about being a Watchkeeper pilot compared to other air systems?

A: WK is a unique capability within the Army: its endurance, its SAR/ GMTI and ability to provide real-time quality FMV imagery to commanders.

For further details on the process to becoming a Watchkeeper Pilot, potential volunteers can find information in AGAI Vol 2 Ch 43 P12.



HQ 1ST ISR X - ISTAR In the Era of Constant Competition

“We need our forces to shine a light into the shadows.” CGS 2020



4/73 Battery RA conducting vehicle drills on Ex ANANSI RUN

In September 2020, CGS set his pre Integrated Review vision for the future of the British Army. During this, he made clear that the Army must be able to challenge our adversaries operating in the grey zone between war and peace and that our aim should be to prevent war as much as to win one. He specified that priorities would be aligned to growing our Special Operations and Intelligence capabilities to operate unconventionally and thus provide us with an asymmetric edge.

Since then, HQ 1ISR X have been leading on the Specialised Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (Spec ISR) concept which has sought to develop and understanding of how ISR systems and sensors could support 6th (UK) Division Land Special Operations. Project ANANSI was created to cohere the lines of effort and a dedicated Development Group was formed to deliver a CONEMP by 1 May 21 through concurrent conceptual development and live experimentation. The intent was for the Spec ISR Development Group to be formed primarily of people and sensors organic to 1ISR X but with flexibility to routinely fuse and incorporate specialist capabilities from within the Division including 77X and Spec Inf, as well as PAG and Joint enablers. Due to recent operational experience integrating NATO and other intelligence assets during Op ELGIN and the high level of team skills within an STA Patrol, 4/73 Special OP Battery were selected to form the deployable ‘spine’ of the Spec ISR group. 4/73 Battery provided C2 element would head up a Spec ISR Task Group including the following units of action: STA Patrols and Jt Fires coordination, Human Terrain Reconnaissance (HTR), Electronic Warfare, MUAS, Military Intelligence, Material

and Personnel Exploitation (MPE), Counter Threat, DHU and stand-off platforms such as IA&O and CEMA.

Events took place over a series of developmental and progressive exercises including a Dstl led MAPEX designed to define, develop and test the concept. Ex ANASI CRAWL initiated the first integration event with a series of capabilities briefs and conceptual development workshops aimed to bring a common understanding and how we could exploit opportunities for current capability to operate below the level of conflict. Ex ANANSI WALK was the initial deployed exercise and focussed on experimentation through innovation.

The project peaked with Ex ANANSI RUN, a brigade level exercise across the UK with a DATE scenario wrap to provide a common situation. The Spec ISR Task Group were given a counter air defence problem to solve, alongside a partner force and supported by a Spec Inf Gp team. They effectively tracked and targeted separatist air defence capabilities across dimensions, including monitoring the movement and emissions from a 7AD Gp GAMB radar resulting in a successful intelligence led partner force offensive operation. Ex ANANSI RUN was able to demonstrate the utility of Spec ISR as part of Land Special Operations and the multiple effects it can provide the Army below the threshold of conflict. The lessons from the Spec ISR series have allowed 4/73 Battery to once again test their full array of skills. For the future, it will allow us to evolve our capability and ensure we are organised and ready to support the Field Army in warfighting.

by Maj Scott Mather RA
BC 4/73 Battery



Ex NORTHERN SKYE LOPER - 7-16 MAY 2021



Maj Lizzie Stileman & Maj Kath Brown on top of the Dubhs Slabs on Skye

When Maj Duncan Francis suggested a traverse of the Cuillin Ridge on the Isle of Skye, several mountaineers and hill walkers from NRHQ RA scrambled for their boots and dusted off their ropes.

And so began planning for AT in the time of Covid, with the intent to use Balmacara accommodation and launch mini expeditions from there into the Cuillins while remaining in our own military ‘bubble’. Unfortunately for us a couple of weeks before departure, our slot was ‘trumped’ by navy divers who needed the hut more than us. Accommodation was downgraded to ‘camping’ and we all started to monitor the weather app much more closely.

After producing a negative Covid test, Phase 1 of Ex NORTHERN SKYE LOPER saw many of us taking advantage of our colleagues with ML qualifications and practising navigation and mountain-craft in wind, rain, hail and snow. We really did see the full spectrum of ‘interesting’ weather in early May, putting waterproofs, Gore-Tex boots and a sense of humour to the test.

In those first few days, we tackled Ben Ledi, Ben Each, and the Meall an Tarmachan (1043m) traverse above Loch Tay. On another day, a sharp ascent of Stob Binnein (1165m) from the south was uncomfortable in the driving rain but once on the grassy ridge we had fantastic views as the clouds dispersed. Snow still clung to some of the upper gullies. After a year of restrictions, to come together for adventure training felt like an unexpected treat and we all felt the power of physical contact (not Teams meetings!), conversation and cohesiveness. Just a coincidence that this was also Mental

Health Awareness week and we were all benefitting from exercising both mind and body away from home.

As the week unfolded, conditions on Skye became more settled and it was decided that some of the team would head there for some climbing and scrambling. And so it was that eight arrived in Glenbrittle, spent a night under canvas and then headed towards Loch Slapin. Parking the van there, three teams headed up for the North ridge of Sgurr nan Each; this led onto the East-West Traverse of the peak, and thence to Clach Glas and the traverse of Bla Bheinn; one of the classics of the island. Late afternoon saw us dropping down the long South Ridge to a bivvi site below an old stone wall looking out over Camasunary bay.

Luckily the night stayed dry, although we were treated to the sight of sunlit rain-clouds over Rhum and Eigg. The next morning, we headed for Coruisk, passing over the Bad Step, and onto the longest rock climb in the UK, the Dubhs Ridge. With over 1000m of climbing, it was a while before we got on to the summit of Sgurr Dubh Beag, and even longer before we finished the continuation on to Sgurr Dubh Mor. By the time that we had regained the Main Ridge and dropped into Coire na Ghrunnnda it was getting dark, and we finally returned to our tents in Glenbrittle at gone ten o’clock; we had been on the go constantly for fifteen hours.

by Maj Catherine Eve AGC(SPS)
All Arms Staff Pool
sub unit of NRHQ RA



Ex CYPHER STRIKE



LCMR deployed by 53 Bty in support of the G Bty Gun position

7 Para RHA deployed on Ex CYPHER STRIKE over a 3-week period on 15 Feb - 6 Mar. In a phased deployment and spread over two training areas, the CT DELTA level exercise incorporated and benchmarked against the 16 AA Bde CONEMP, bringing together a plethora of capabilities in a dynamic complex scenario planned against a near peer enemy, and encompassing live & simulated Joint Effects.

In an ambitious exercise, executed in the shadow of tight COVID mitigation measures, 7 Para RHA was supported by ground elements from 2 PARA, 23 Para Engineers, 21 Bty, 53 Bty and 159 Bty, while Aviation Assault was enabled by 18 Squadron RAF. Close Air Support (CAS) was achieved by utilising the Joint Fires Mobile Trainer (JFMT), Contract CAS (CCAS), Attack Aviation from 659 Squadron and fast air from our American partners in the shape of the F15 Eagle from 429 Fighter Squadron United States Air Force (USAF).

The initial phase saw the Regt deploy to a Forward Mounting Base (FMB) where exercising troops conducted trade specific, low level training and lessons on Air Manoeuvre doctrine, insertion techniques and DZ rally drills prior to full mounting procedures reflecting the AMBG's Joint Theatre Entry role.

Within the theoretical construct of AMBG 1, F Para Bty, as the Lead Assault Force (LAF) were the first to deploy, conducting a sim airborne airdrop with concurrent Heavy Drop to occupy a DZ gun position. G Para Bty followed and deployed from the FMB to conduct a sim Rapid Air Landing (RAL) and sequential Fast Air

Landing (FAL) further honing Air Manoeuvre skills.

As the tactical scenario evolved, so did the need for kinetic effect. With the Gun Groups employing Artillery Manoeuvre Areas (AMAs), dispersed positions and quick actions, the FST's in turn requested assets to assist in achieving the Ground Commanders intent. They made use of ISR assets from 21 Bty, including WASP, and sim precision fires afforded by Exactor through 159 Bty whilst live rounds from the Guns landed effectively on numerous target sets, day and night. Each Bty Joint Fires Integration Cell (JFIC) utilised data to reduce their electronic footprint and increase survivability whilst ensuring the Regt's JFIC received detailed Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) and future targets.

When adverse weather and poor visibility threatened to slow the tempo the FSTs made use of the Man-Portable Surveillance Target Acquisition Radar (MSTAR), to assist with adjustment. Despite its age, MSTAR proved its continued value. Added to this FST centric equipment, 53 Bty offered another layer of Gunner capability in employing the Lightweight Counter Battery Radar (LCMR) to support gun positions for counter-battery missions but also tracking friendly artillery rounds. This essential data was rapidly passed to the Regt's JFIC which enhanced their understanding of the tactical scenario and developed best practice SOPs for how different capabilities could be employed in an AMBG construct.

by Sgt T Begley
JTAC-I



Ex SWIFT RESPONSE 21



FST Ack (Bdr Cawley) calling in live Artillery fire for 1/308th, 82nd Airborne Div

Over the months of Apr and May, an FST from G Battery, 7 Para RHA travelled across the pond alongside B Coy, 2 PARA for Ex SWIFT RESPONSE. This audacious exercise was part of the wider activities forming DEFENDER-Europe 21, a large-scale US-led exercise involving 30,000 personnel from 27 countries, designed to build strategic and operational readiness while enhancing interoperability between the US and NATO allies. Our part in this global show of force was to mount up in Fort Bragg alongside elements of 82 Air Div, fly 7500km and conduct a Joint Force Entry (JFE) into Nurmsi, Estonia.

Following rigorous pre-deployment training and COVID-19 testing, B Coy were fit to embark and made the long flight from RAF Brize Norton to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In true American style, the troops were met by flags, fist-pumps and country music before a 'short' bus journey across the 650km² camp. Following a brief period of isolation in the accommodation block, the integration training began with a Basic Airborne Refresher course to familiarise personnel with the American T11 parachute. Over the next week, British and American soldiers conducted two jumps, first from C-17 and later C-27J. Alongside infantry training and airborne manoeuvre rehearsals, the FST were able to conduct numerous training serials with 1-319 Fd Arty Regt, the US counterparts to 7 Para RHA. This began with an introduction to the M119 and the M777, both of which were soon to be parachuted onto Nurmsi DZ to initiate the exercise. Learning the US Call For Fire followed, again to get comfortable with the subtle differences in procedure.

After a busy few weeks in Fort Bragg, B Coy was suitably prepared for the upcoming JFE and were soon flying across the Atlantic. Ten hours after leaving Fort Bragg, following an air refuel, in flight rigging of parachutes and final equipment checks, the 11x C-17's dispatched all 700 British and American parachutists, as well as an M119 and two M777's onto a cold and wet Estonian DZ. Through sequential infantry assaults, a trench system and various C2 nodes were defeated, supported throughout by US 60mm mortars called in by the FST. An Air Assault followed, facilitated by 7x UH-60's and 3x CH47's, where subsequent positions were destroyed, marking the transition from the JFE to the LFX phase. Whilst B Coy conducted live section and platoon attacks, G Bty's FST joined American infantry callsigns for their squad live fire lanes. For three days, British observers fought each battle lane, calling in fire support from 60mm, 81mm and 120mm mortars, 105mm and 155mm Artillery and 2x Apache callsigns in support of the 1/508th Infantry platoons. Even for the US military, the firepower available for this serial was certainly unique, so to be allocated entirely to British observers was a rare opportunity and was maximised to its fullest extent.

Ex SWIFT RESPONSE demonstrated to both our allies and adversaries that NATO has the capability to operate effectively at reach, in challenging environments, with multinational partners and at very-high readiness.

by Capt W Schorah
FST Commander
7 Para RHA



Ex ALMA CANNON 21



8 (Alma) Cdo Bty using the Jackal as a Gun Towing Vehicle (GTV) on Ex ALMA CANNON.

3 Cdo Bde is becoming more persistently deployed, more disaggregated, more lethal, and more sophisticated in the way it conducts its operations. It is vesting the most advanced battle winning capabilities in its most junior commanders to deliver mission success. Inevitably, some of these new Cdo Force concepts need testing, and so it was that on a predictably wet Brecon afternoon in early May, 8 (Alma) Cdo Bty, 29 Cdo Regt RA deployed on Ex ALMA CANNON 21. The purpose of this exercise was threefold. First, we used the opportunity to get back to basics through our currency and competency validation. Second, the Bty was tasked with breathing life into the dedicated Army Operation Order commitment to 3 Cdo Bde with other Bty's from across the Royal Regiment. Thus, the Bty was joined by Weapon Locating RADAR, Precision Fires, and RPAS Dets from 5 Regt RA, 26 Regt RA, and 32 Regt RA respectively. Finally, it served as an opportunity to conduct a variety of experimentation activity utilising current in service capabilities, and future 'fight tomorrow' systems.

Accompanying the three Guns from The Royal Citadel was an additional gun manned by reservists from 104 Regt RA. The Bty spent the first few days successfully carrying out currency and competency training; with very little sign of the extended break from live firing (5 months considered a long time in 29 Cdo Regt RA) due to national imperative MACA tasks earlier in the year. With some influential roles taken up by new occupants, this was an important period to allow the Bty to settle into a battle rhythm and it did so remarkably quickly.

On completion of the currency and competency phase the Bty transitioned to a more experimental phase, aimed at testing the new Cdo Force design whilst operating in a high CBty and RPAS threat. Guns conducting what was effectively 'pairs fire and manoeuvre' (to use infantry parlance) the Bty was able to harass targets whilst minimising exposure to RPAS; and therefore, the risk of CBty. To simulate the threat live RPAS, LCMR and ASP were used as red forces; creating an enjoyable, challenging, yet necessary game of 'cat and mouse' as the Guns tried to avoid detection and the OPFOR tried to find us. Discretion being the better part of valour, we will not disclose who won the packet of chocolate hobnobs for 'winning' this particular serial!

To conduct the fire and manoeuvre, Guns would move from hides to pre-determined firing positions, conduct a rapid engagement and then move further on to their next position, all coordinated by a lean and expeditionary CP. Being more disaggregated, the Gun Dets had to fight for communications as well as operating at very fast tempo on difficult ground – the Sennybridge microclimate kindly delivering. The CP had to devise a system that reduced the time the Guns spent unmasked whilst also achieving an effect on target and making best use of the distributed ammunition. A dry trial day allowed all parties involved to gain an understanding of the challenges posed by this novel strategy and there was a notable improvement the following day once the live firing started.

by Lt Sam DeBelder RA
8 (Alma) Cdo Bty
29 Cdo Regt RA



SENNYBRIDGE SCREENING - GUNNERS EXPERIMENT WITH EMERGING TECHNOLOGY



Gunners test cutting edge kit

Harnessing the power of technology is vital in enabling the Army to punch above its weight and the Royal Artillery has been working hard to find out just how much extra clout it can provide.

At Sennybridge Training Area personnel from 8 (Alma) Bty, 29 Cdo Regt - along with supporting elements - spent three weeks experimenting with a range of established and emerging technologies to see how much added lethality and survivability could be on the table.

The main focus of their effort was a series of joint fires and manoeuvres that were, for the first time, orchestrated through a single digital hub - a prototype system supplied by a commercial manufacturer.

Teams out in the field accessed it through handheld devices while senior decision-makers in the command post and at headquarters used laptops and desktop machines. They were all able to view to a common operating picture - a 3D, multifunctional graphic of the battlespace able to display icons for every single known asset, friend and foe, located in a defined area.

Data from acoustic and radar sensors and even video and infrared images from unmanned aerial systems (UAS) could be incorporated into the screen display.

The experiment was to test the effectiveness, user-friendliness and outright potential of the kit - the first of several versions to be assessed before any procurement might take place. And the omens look good.

"This is proving to be a game-changer for us in speeding up our response to threats because everyone here can see the same picture

and information, including the command and control team, which means we can make quicker decisions." Capt Paul Threadgill a regimental training officer with 29 Cdo Regt told Gunner Magazine.

The "everyone" at Sennybridge consisted of a tactical group from 8 Bty - observers, joint fires cell, a gun group and logistics - in addition to personnel from the Royal Artillery's 32 Regt, flying UAS and 5 Regt, who were operating the lightweight counter-mortar radar (LCMR) and advanced sound ranging programme (ASP) sensors that locate enemy positions.

A mortar troop from 40 Cdo RM was also on hand, thanks to 29 Cdo being under the operational control of 3 Cdo Bde, to which it provides artillery support and gunnery observation.

"The challenge has been to route and effectively use all the data, video and comms from these different elements through our joint fires cell using a single digital system," explained Capt Adam Naismith.

"Potentially, it allows us to optimise and speed up the passage of information from sensors, such as drones, ASP, LCMR and our recce teams,, to our crews manning guns, mortars, Exactor, Apaches or even F-35s."

With a single screen able to host multiple streams of information, including video, the picture has the potential to become very cluttered, but it can be made less so by filtering out specific categories of data at the touch of a button.

"It's ground-breaking stuff," added Capt Simon Oliver a Reservist from 211 (Wessex) Bty and a communications technology specialist in his civilian career.



"Normally, the video downlink person in the command post has a computer in his hand to see what the UAS is looking at," he explained. "The observer out in the field, who is trying to distinguish between the good and bad guys, doesn't know where the aircraft is and has to talk to the command post to see what the feed is showing."

"But with this system, everyone can see where the UAS is, the downlink person can send the video footage to the digital hub so it can be shared across the network and personnel can then access that when they need to without any need to refer back."

"Joint fires cell commanders, for example,, can view what the UAS is seeing through the camera, visually identify a target, tap the screen to insert an icon identifying it as such, and then send a digital message to the crew of the weapon system that has been selected to eliminate it."

These capabilities, together with the communications function, mean operators require a degree of dexterity and confidence with the technology to operate it effectively. But SSgt Ray Tement, the joint fires cell for 8 Bty, believes it's set up perfectly for young soldiers.

"The troops coming in now are a lot more IT savvy than they used to be; they are familiar with the concept of local area networks, IP addresses, connecting to Wi-Fi and using tablets with touchscreens. It's all second nature to them," he added.

The senior NCO believes the system also has inherent advantages in addition to improved situational awareness.

"The fact the devices create a network is really interesting," he said. "It only works on line-of-sight but you can plant the handheld devices out in the terrain, say on a hill, to act as a relay point, so our teams can communicate even when they cannot see each other."

"It's all digital and cuts out comms by voice, so enemy forces can't listen in. The information is sent in one quick, coded burst and, while it should be secure, if it's ever compromised you can easily change the crypto within it."

Another important aspect is that using this technology can reduce the physical signature of the battleground headquarters, presenting less of a target to the enemy and making the command chain less vulnerable to a direct strike.

"It allows us to work remotely in dispersed locations," said SSgt Tement. "The CO for instance, isn't anywhere near here but normally he'd be in the tent with us, so it's definitely increasing our survivability."

Force protection was, in fact, an important aspect of the package and something that troops from 21 Air Assault Battery, 32 Regt were actively involved with.

Mandated to use Desert Hawk operationally, they took the opportunity to assess the potential of the Wasp and Puma UAS in this role.

"Using these platforms is good for covering dead ground to increase our situational awareness," said SSgt Rob Nicholson. "So far, we've also managed to get video feed into the joint fires cell and had our UAS's positions loaded on to the system with everybody else's location on it."

"The route reces we've done have improved safety, mitigating risk to personnel as they move around the battlespace."

With so many advantages literally at their fingertips, it's perhaps not surprising the verdicts of those trialling this technology have been largely positive.

Other systems offering similar capabilities have yet to be evaluated so it's not known how long it will take for kit of this type to be delivered into the hands of unit in the field.

But following the Integrated Review and the aspirations laid out so explicitly in the Future Soldier plan, who would bet against technology very much like this being procured in the not-too-distant future?

Drone killer. Service personnel involved in the digital system trials at Sennybridge had a chance to see some anti-UAS kit in action.

They practised neutralising a commercially-manufactured drone using a piece of equipment that is roughly rifle-sized thanks to being powered by a low-energy system that runs off a small battery.

It is currently in service with Italian special forces and can be used against unmanned platforms either in the air, on the sea or on land.

"This kit would give us the ability to 'shoot down' the enemy's remotely piloted air systems, which would be pretty handy for us," said Capt Naismith. "It's also good for out guys to see what sort of technology they might come up against."

Aerial support. Troops from 21 Bty provide air defence capability to 16 Air Assault Bde and support 3 Cdo Bde so it's perhaps not surprising that this busy unit has been supplying feedback for the next generation of UAS for the British Army- tentatively pencilled in for delivery in 2023.

At Sennybridge they took a further opportunity to explore the capabilities of the Wasp and Puma unmanned aerial systems, which have provided some of the benchmarks for their recommendations for the new platform.

"We have been experimenting with these assets since 2018, assessing what could be better, what we need from the soldier's point of view, then drawing up a wishlist of features and capabilities we would have ideally," explained SSgt Rob Nicholson.

"For us something small like the Wasp, that fits into a pack for when we jump in, would be one desirable option."

"Most people would like to see more flexible payloads and aircraft that have greater endurance - one soldier suggested they should come with solar panels on their wings to enhance range."

"We're mandated to use DH3 so it's great to have a chance to test these assets when we can, usually on exercises if they're available, and when we're given permission by the chain of command."



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Major Eric Goldrein RA shares his experience of the D-Day. 76 years after landing on Gold Beach.

Eric Goldrein volunteered immediately on the declaration of war. He was at that time 18 years old and about to take his place at Cambridge University. The Recruitment Board advised him to go off to University for two years and then join up. Life as an undergraduate took on quite a normality, but after what became known as the “phoney war” up to Spring 1940, the realities of war hit home and situation worsened. Eric joined the OCTU Officer Cadet Training Unit where his Commanding officer was Colonel Sebag-Montefiore.

During 1942 and 1943 military training was extensive across the Country, building up strength of armament and manpower in readiness for the coming Second Front. Eric joined the 11th Armoured Division Anti-Tank Regiment and spent months in landing practices and manoeuvres across the Yorkshire moors. As the time for invasion drew nearer, Eric’s Regiment was moved to the south coast close to Southampton, within the strictly controlled wired area.

“We had been training for so long, I certainly had a sense this was a momentous historical event in the making. The main body of my Division went on the first day, although I didn’t get there until D-Day + 4, landing on Gold Beach in King Sector. I walked down the ramp of the LTC. The immediate danger on the beach itself had passed, but all around were the sounds of shellfire and mortars.

As we moved forward there was no respite 24 hours a day there was the continuous loud noise and vibration of shelling. At night the flashes lit up the sky all around. Oddly enough, it didn’t stop me sleeping. We were just so tired; I would just curl up in a slit-trench and be out for the count within minutes.”

Eric was a Lieutenant in command of a troop of four artillery pieces. These were 17 pounder Anti-Tank Guns, each with a 12 ft long barrel.

“These guns were formidable in the field. Each could fire an armour piercing shell with a muzzle velocity of 3,000 feet per second. This could knock out a Tiger Tank at a range of 800 yards.

As Troop Commander it was my job to site these artillery pieces correctly so they had the most favourable field of fire, and of course that they were best concealed. I went every day to the positions in a Jeep and would crawl through to each gun emplacement. This task did have its benefits as I would always get a hot mug of tea on each visit.

We were of course constantly on the front line and were taking casualties from mortar fire all the time as the enemy naturally targeted the guns and supporting infantry. I think we were too busy to be frightened, but we didn’t dwell on the danger and just concentrated on the job we had to do.”

Having been on the ground in France for over seven weeks, Eric and his gunners had experienced tough fighting all the way from the beaches. In the aftermath of D-Day the German High Command recovered from their initial confusion, and resistance became resourced, disciplined and fierce. The Normandy bocage countryside favoured the defenders

who used the hedgerows, earth embankments and woodland to costly effect.

On 1st August Eric and his driver went out in a Jeep across the known lines on a recce to find new gun positions.

“It was early evening when I was caught. We’d just turned down a narrow lane and there was a burst of machine gun fire. I was hit from behind in my right shoulder. The driver had already stopped so we could check our position and a group of enemy soldiers appeared out of nowhere. I could still walk and we were both marched off to a nearby farm building where I was presented to the Commanding Officer of this group. He was a Colonel, probably in his late thirties. He didn’t speak any English at all and I made it clear that I couldn’t speak German. Oddly enough we conversed in French, a language at which we were both quite fluent.

My driver was taken outside but I was seated in a corner of the room whilst a Medical Orderly was brought in to tend my shoulder wound. Of course it hurt but I was lucky to have been hit with just one bullet which I learned was from a Schmeisser machine pistol. They just gave me a field dressing and hooked the wrist up with my own tie!

I could understand German well enough to realise the Colonel and his Adjutant were dealing with a constant flow of grave news all through the night. I didn’t let on to my understanding of German but it was clear that every message coming in to this local centre carried with it another military setback. As an officer myself I was held there awaiting an escort to take me off to their HQ for closer interrogation. By early morning the Colonel was in a quandary and we had by then established something of a relationship I helped him to realise that British & Allied troops were pouring into Normandy and that his situation, already dire, was only going to get worse. He was taking serious casualties and could see his position was steadily weakening. In these strained circumstances I managed to steer talk to his option of surrender. Then of course there was the practicality of who would take the surrender. I heard myself saying: ‘Don’t worry about that; surrender to me.

When I think back, it’s such a surreal scene. I had my right arm in a sling so couldn’t salute. I had no experience of taking a surrender.....at the ripe old age of twenty-three!

So, the Colonel came to attention, saluted me and I returned his salute with my left arm. Then he presented me with his handgun, a 9mm Luger, and made a short formal announcement of surrendering his command to me.

Then the Colonel started talking terms. This wasn’t so much a negotiation; more like haggling. He suggested we could take 6 of his men forward under a white flag and try to find an authority to discuss terms of surrender. I really couldn’t see this as a sensible way to proceed and eventually managed to persuade him the only course of action was a complete surrender. The Colonel eventually agreed as his position was quite hopeless, I told him to get the weapons piled up in the ground.

We set out at first light with me at the front, the Colonel and his Adjutant alongside, followed by 35 other ranks. In proper military order we marched along the narrow road, heading North towards the coast. Quite soon I heard tracked vehicles and we came upon a forward carrier patrol of the 1st Worcester Regiment.

The patrol consisted of three bren carriers and I put one at the front and one bringing up the rear of our small column. I travelled in the third vehicle along with my two captive officers. Before long we reached a main HQ assembly area where I was able to leave my group and report to the MO in a tented area. Once there, and in good hands, I promptly passed out.

I later awakened in the British Military Hospital which was well established in a group of large tents pitched not far from the landing grounds. Treatment there was first class; with all those pretty nurses around our spirits were uplifted. I was operated on and the bullet was removed. I still have it to this day as a memento. That brought to an end my own modest contribution to the Normandy Campaign!”



Eric was subsequently shipped back to Blighty to recover. He was then offered a variety of staff positions in England. However, Eric explains that he was still young and stupid, keen for more action, travel & adventure. Still with the Royal Artillery, he was shipped out at the end of 1944 and eventually landed in Salerno in Southern Italy. The war was still raging of course, but hostilities had moved away from Italy by that time and Eric celebrated VE Day just north of Florence. From there the troop, 300 men & 80 vehicles, travelled through the Brenner Pass and up to Hamburg where Eric was finally based as part of the Army of Occupation.

“We’d been at war for so long I don’t think we really thought much about what we would do once it was all over. There was a general superstitious attitude which would not allow us to have thoughts of post war plans. We just didn’t talk about it.”

But, with hindsight, how does he look back on those days now? Was he just doing his job along with all the others or was he perhaps aware at the time of being a part of something very special?

“We were so proud to be involved. It was exciting; deadly dangerous of course but we didn’t dwell on that. We were young and believed in our own immortality as all youngsters do. More than anything else, I would say the greatest pleasure in looking back is not being dead. To have survived is the real triumph, especially when so many sadly didn’t.”

Eric still has the bullet which was shot into him on that evening in France, in the Summer of 1944.

“I often think... if that soldier had just moved the muzzle of his machine pistol ever so slightly, I would be under one of those Portland Stone monuments. As it happens the bullet missed anything important, I survived and have enjoyed 65 bonus years. We’ve had two children and they’re enjoying their own life. We’ve lived so much and I can honestly say the experience of those days has always helped me to put the rest of my life in perspective”.

In June 2009 D-Day Revisited returned to Normandy with Eric, as well as his wife Inge and son Timothy. Eric was able to return to many of the places he remembers from his time in service, and after so many years have passed he described it as “a very sentimental journey”.

Eric’s wife, Inge, came to England with the Kinder transport group. She was one of the 10,000 children who escaped Nazi Germany in 1939. Herself from Austria, Inge discovered in the post war world that she’d lost almost all her family in the Holocaust parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles. It seemed a natural question to ask Eric about his views on the Jewish aspect of the War...

“I think it’s just too horrible to contemplate. To some extent the Allies had an awareness of what was going on in Germany and further East, but there was a reluctance to publicise it in case it became caught up in the propaganda exchange. That was probably correct. In my period of service all that I did notice was that I was usually made Orderly Officer at Christmas time!”

Eric demobilised with the rank of Major and contacted his Cambridge Tutor who invited him back to continue his studies. So, after a return to the family home in Liverpool, Eric returned to University and subsequently graduated in Law. He returned to Liverpool, became a respected Barrister, married and raised a family. On retirement Eric was elected as Lord Mayor of Hale where he still lives with his wife Inge.



Eric (centre) standing alongside fellow Normandy veteran Len Buckley and several serving members of the Parachute Regiment at Pegasus Bridge in June 2009



Gunners duo deliver in perfectly paced chase

An expertly judged 138 run partnership between Lt Oliver Cross and LBdr Craig Ross guided the Royal Artillery to victory in the final of the Inter-Corps Twenty20 Cricket Championships in Aldershot.

Set a target of 138 to beat the Adjutant General’s Corps, the Gunners made the worst possible start as they slipped to 2/3 in the third over as the opposition attack wreaked havoc early on.

But after steadying the ship the fourth-wicket pairing eased through the gears to keep the run rate in check, before reaching the total with two deliveries to spare.

However, the challenge could have been greater had the AGC fully capitalised on their initial momentum with the bat.

Openers Cpl Varun Bali and Pte Shoiab Alam raced to 25 inside three overs as they made the most of the early fielding restrictions but paceman LBdr Nick Schofield held his nerve to remove both batsmen.

Cpl MD Latafat and Cpl Liam Farrell posted a 30-run stand as the AGC looked to regain control but when three wickets fell for just seven runs - one to a stunning catch by Ross - they again found themselves with work to do.

Some big hitting by Cpl Sumith Surendran and SSgt Reagan McLean provided some late-innings impetus and a total of 137-7 looked competitive in challenging conditions.

It was a score that assumed even greater significance when the AGC made a dramatic start in the field.

Gunners’ opener LBdr Harrison Clark was bowled by Surendran from the fourth ball of the innings and the pressure continued to build as skipper Capt Alex Park suffered the same fate in a wicket maiden from SSgt Sean Solomon.

And when Army ace Bdr Graham Wiseman became Surendran’s second scalp the champions-elect were in trouble.

But they found calm heads in the shape of Cross and Ross and the duo set about repairing the damage with a steady accumulation of runs.

With a partnership formed, the boundaries started to follow and Cross assumed the role of aggressor as he finished with an unbeaten 78 from 61 deliveries that included nine fours and a six. Ross was 47 not out.

“With new players coming into the squad this is a great result and sets us up for the season to come.

“I was confident at the halfway point and 138 felt like an achievable target on this pitch. I was rattled when we slipped to 2/3 but had confidence in the guys and the depth of our team.”

“The partnership between Cross and Ross showed that you can have a slight tumble and still be okay in this format.”



AGC

137/7

RA

140/3





Photo credit: Allan McKenzie/SWpix.com

Crossing the Rugby divide Gnr Mitieli Vulikijapani

Rugby league convert Gnr Mitieli Vulikijapani (RA) is looking to make a name for himself at the domestic game's highest level after signing with Hull FC.

The outside back impressed during a trial period with the Super League outfit earlier this year - an effort that was rewarded with a one-year deal that has seen him step back from his Army commitments to become a full-time athlete.

Vulikijapani caught the eye with a string of impressive performances in rugby union's sevens code - winning the Premiership title with Saracens in 2018 before lining up for Harlequins last season - and it was this form that brought him to Hull's attention.

The move mirrors the one made by Pte Ratu Naulago (Yorks) in 2019, who enjoyed a successful two-year spell before moving to Bristol Bears, and the soldier is relishing the opportunity of performing on the elite stage.

"I was a little nervous at first," the 26 year old told

Gunner Magazine. "I had only ever played rugby league for my regiment, never at the top level."

"But I was happy to get the chance. In many ways it is like sevens and we have a lot of experienced boys who have played in the National Rugby League in Australia, so it is a good place to learn."

"I've made a lot of improvements since day one and I want to thank the Army for releasing me."

With Vulikijapani quickly adapting to his new surroundings he is now looking to strengthen his case for a place in the squad and minutes on the pitch.

He added. "I'm working very hard and am just waiting for that game time to come."

"I'd like to think I'm getting close to the squad."

The soldier was handed the opportunity to gain further experience when he completed a loan move to Bradford Bulls as this issue went to press.





Gowin looks long term as Euro Test looms

Pistol shooter Sgt Sam Gowin has told Gunner magazine that Olympic qualification will be a “big ask” when he takes aim at this month’s European Championships in Croatia.

The Team GB athlete, a relative newcomer to the sport, will cement his participation in the Games if he finishes as the highest ranked entrant yet to receive a quota place - a feat he admits will be a tall order.

“The other competitors have been shooting for much longer than I have,” he explained. “So I cannot really expect anything, or get my hopes up.”

“I have to be rational about where I am now. I was painfully close at the last European Championships; I was in fourth place going into the final round but finished 15th after some low shots - that sucked.

“The Paris Olympics in 2024 is a more realistic goal - I don’t know of any other shooter who became an Olympian within three years of starting out.”

The 31-year old made his long-awaited return to action at the World Cup showdown in India in March - his first event in more than 12 months - and will face a further test in the series when he travels to Baku after the European Championships.

When Covid-19 took hold the soldier was reduced to dry training at home, with access to live-firing ranges limited to just two two-week windows.

“It was a chance to focus on the basics,” Gowin said. “I was concentrating on how I come onto the target, without the distractions of scores and what other competitors were doing.”

“I was also using spreadsheets to highlight the deviations in my shots, which gave me a better picture of how well I’ve been doing.”

“When I got back on the ranges I was feeling stronger and was more consistent than ever before. I was very happy with the outcomes and could really notice the difference after that training.”

Returning to the international stage proved to be a welcome next step and Gowin secured an eighth-place finish in India - an effort that saw him rise to 18th in the world rankings.

“I was fuelled by excitement,” he explained. “Just taking off on the plane made me smile.”

“I was nervous for a few days before the competition, but I like to have that feeling.”

“We were using ammunition which in the UK feels brilliant, but out there it felt like I had a mini shotgun in my hand - it was that powerful.”

“I’m assuming that was due to the temperature. I had never shot in conditions like that before, which makes international events and training camps so important.”

“That is exactly the kind of information and experience I need if I’m going to continue to improve as an athlete.”





Gunner Olympians

As we emerge from the Covid 19 Pandemic, it is hoped that the Olympics will be held in Tokyo later this summer. It is therefore an appropriate time to look back at the long connection the Gunners have with the Olympic Games. Our first representative, that we know of took part in the 1908 Games in London where Maj Reggie Pridmore competed in the hockey and helped the team to gold.

At the following Olympics, we were represented by two Gunners at Stockholm in 1912: Lt A Patterson (athletics) and a man named Frost, whose rank and initials are not known, who took part in what became the strongest event for the Gunners three-day eventing. Neither won a medal and one cannot help but wonder what happened to them in the Great War.

In 1920, at Antwerp, the regiment was represented by a sole competitor, Lt EG Gedge, who took part in modern pentathlon, again without success.

A silver was won by one of six Gunner officers who took part in the Paris Olympics of 1924 when Lt Lancelot Royle was part of a successful 4 x 100 m relay team. Royle, the son of a famous Test cricketer, Vernon Royle, was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery in 1918, being sent to France to fight in the closing stages of the War. He was a highly talented sprinter, competing regularly with the likes of Harold Abraham and Eric Liddell, becoming the Army sprint champion in 1920 and 1921. At Paris he was part of the Chariots of Fire team, famously giving up his place in the 200m race to allow Eric Liddell to run and win a bronze. After serving through the Second World War, Royle left the Gunners in 1948 and died in 1978 aged 80.

It was eight years later that Lt Godfrey Rampling, won a silver medal as a member of the 4 x 400m relay team at Los Angeles in 1932. Four years later Rampling was back at Hitler's Berlin Games, where he and his teammates won gold in the same event. The Gunner sextet picked up two bronze medals in three-day eventing and another silver, this time won by Maj Bryan Fowler who played for the polo team.

Although a total of seven Gunners took part in the next two Olympic Games (1948 at London and 1952 at Helsinki) it was not until 1956 at Melbourne another medal was secured, not once, but twice. Lt Col Frank Weldon won a gold in the three-day team event, to go with the bronze medal won as an individual in the same event.

Eight years later two more Gunners were selected for the Tokyo Olympics three-day event team, Capt (later Maj Gen) James Templer and Sgt Ben Jones the equitation instructor at The King's Troop, unfortunately without success. It was four years later in Mexico in 1968, that Sgt Ben Jones returned and won the coveted gold in the same event. This time, he was accompanied by Gnr McConigle who boxed for Great Britain.

Reuben 'Ben' Jones who was the first non-commissioned officer to compete for Great Britain in the equestrian discipline of the Olympic Games, also won gold medals in the 1967 and 1969 European Championships. As a young man his ambition was to be a jockey, but he was too tall and too heavy, so he chose a career in the Royal artillery as a way of working with horses. After serving with The King's Troop he transferred to the RAVC on commissioning and was posted to their Depot at Melton Mowbray. Sadly, he died at a comparatively young age while training a young horse at his home.

In more recent times, we were represented at London 2012 by Capt Heather Stanning, who competed with Helen Glover in the women's coxless pairs. In the run up to the Games, they were runners up in the 2011 World Rowing championships, but 2012 saw them complete a clean sweep of all three in the World

Rowing Cup. On 1 August 2012, they won the gold medal at the London Games. This was Team GB's first gold of the games, and a first ever Olympic gold for British women's rowing. Following the Games, Capt Stanning returned to Regimental Duty and completed a tour of Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2013.

Following Afghanistan, Capt Stanning returned to rowing and she and Helen Glover won the 2014 World Rowing Championship, setting a new world record time in the final. This title they retained in 2015. On 12 August 2016, the pair won the final of the 2016 Olympic games held in Rio de Janeiro, following which Capt Stanning retired from rowing to focus on her Army career. In recognition of her successes, she was awarded the MBE in 2013 and OBE in 2017.

In the current uncertain times, we look forward to the delayed 2020 Olympic Games that are due to start in Tokyo later this summer, where hopefully we will be able to support yet another Gunner. Gnr Karriss Artingstall won the featherweight title at the 2018 England Boxing Elite Championships and in September 2019 she a silver medal at the European Championships in Madrid. A month later she won bronze at the World Championships. Due to Covid, the European qualifiers for the Olympics were delayed and took place 4 – 8 Jun in Paris. Following a box off, Gnr Artingstall qualified for Toyko and will be our next Gunner Olympian. We wish her all the best competing in the Games.

Gunner Olympians and Medal Winners				
Year	Venue	Name	Event	Medal
1908	London	Maj R Pridmore	Hockey	Gold
1912	Stockholm	Lt A Patterson	400m 800m Three-day Event (Team)	
1920	Antwerp	Lt ECGW Harrison Lt LC Royle Capt CHM Brunker Capt EB de Fonblanque Lt K Hervey Lt AF Tod	100m Hurdles 100m 4x100m Relay Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team)	
1932	Los Angeles	Lt GL Rampling	400m 4x400m Relay	Silver
1936	Berlin	Lt GL Rampling Lt J Sheffield Maj FR Webster Capt CHM Brunker Lt ED Howard-Vyse Maj BJ Fowler	400m 4x400m Relay 400m Hurdles Pole Vault Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team) Polo	Gold Bronze Bronze Silver
1948	London	Maj FR Webster Brig L Bolton Lt Col HMV Nicholl	Pole Vault Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team)	
1952	Helsinki	Lt Col FWC Weldon Lt JC Barrington-Ward Maj E Dyson Lt Col TV Somers	Three-day Event (Team) Sailing (Dragon Class) Sailing (Dragon Class) Sailing (Dragon Class)	
1956	Melbourne	Lt Col FWC Weldon	Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Ind)	Gold Bronze
1960	Rome	Lt Col FWC Weldon	Three-day Event (Team)	
1964	Tokyo	Capt JR Templer Sgt RS Jones	Three-day Event (Team) Three-day Event (Team)	
1968	Mexico City	Sgt RS Jones Gnr J McConigle	Three-day Event (Team) Boxing	Gold
2012	London	Capt HM Stanning	Rowing	Gold
2018	Rio de Janeiro	Capt HM Stanning	Rowing	Gold

Gunner Sailors get underway



On 22 May the RAYC’s flagship, St Barbara V, slipped from Gosport to begin the Club’s Round Britain Challenge: an adventurous training expedition to circumnavigate the UK in an anti-clockwise direction. The Challenge is split into 12 legs of between 7 to 14 days, each to be crewed by a Gunner Regular or Reserve unit.

At the time of writing Leg 1 has been completed by 47 Regt RA, who sailed from Gosport to Harwich with a trip up the Thames on the way as well as participation in a Coastguard search and rescue exercise. Leg 2 was crewed by 4 Regt RA from Harwich to Newcastle, and Leg 3 is underway with 26 Regt RA sailing from Newcastle to Peterhead.

The yacht will ‘dwell’ for four legs around the Scottish Isles over Summer and is expected to be back in Gosport in September. Overall between 75 to 95 Gunner officers and soldiers will participate. The exercise has been organised by members of the RAYC Committee, and particular credit is due to our Project Team worker bees Captain Josh Bate (105 Regt RA), Capt Alex Bird (SPO), and WO2 (BSM) Nothard (3 RHA).

Pictures/progress reports, and many other sailing opportunities, are at www.gunnersailing.com

by Col Chris Gent



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NHS

mental health care for veterans

Mental illness is common and can affect anyone (including serving and ex-members of the Armed Forces and their families). Whilst some people cope by getting support from their family and friends, or by getting help with other issues in their lives, others need clinical care and treatment, which could be from the NHS, support groups or charities.

Accessing NHS mental health care for veterans
Access to both of these services is through the TILS. You can contact the service direct (see below) or ask your GP or a military charity to refer you.

North of England services: call 0303 123 1145 or email vwals@nhs.net
Midlands or East of England services: call 0300 323 0137 or email mevs.mhm@nhs.net
London or South East of England services: call 020 3317 6818 or email cim-tr.veteranstilservice-lse@nhs.net
South West of England services: call 0300 365 0300 or email sc.veterans@nhs.net

It is important to register with an NHS GP and tell them that you have served in the Armed Forces so, where appropriate, you can access these and other dedicated services for veterans.

Subscription Price List

To addresses in the UK and BFPO:
The Gunner - £24
The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £10
The Gunner and The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £34

To addresses in Europe:
The Gunner - £39
The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £14
The Gunner and The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £53

To addresses in the rest of the world:
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The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £17
The Gunner and The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £66

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INFORMATION

GUNNER 'ZIG ZAG' SPORTS

BLAZERS AND BOATING JACKETS
Many of you would have seen the success of the first run of 30 of the new Gunner Sports Blazers. There is still sufficient cloth for a further 12-15 blazers to be made. They are made to measure by Club Colours Ltd in Suffolk, with cloth from an English mill. Cost is approximately £220 each and they take about 4 weeks to make. If you are interested, please contact Mr Alan Middle 01473 231378 or 07801798508 or visit the website at www.clubcolours.co.uk

BESPOKE WALKING STICKS

Mr David Roberts – King's Troop RHA Veteran who suffers with PTSD and has done for many years has been making bespoke walking sticks to assist with his symptoms. David has made them for fellow service Veterans and also many celebrities including Philip Schofield, Sir Michael Palin, Martin Clunes and Bear Grylls. If you would be interested in owning your own personalised stick – please contact David on Tel 01646 279716, or email droberts8641@gmail.com

REUNIONS

SCOTTISH GUNNERS REUNION DINNER

19 Regt RA will host the biennial Scottish Gunners' Reunion Dinner for serving and retired officers of both 19 Regt RA and 40 Regt RA in its new combined Officers' Mess in Purvis Lines, Larkhill on Fri 3 Sep 2021. Just as in previous years, this reunion will be for all members and generations of the Scottish Gunner officer family. Invitations have been sent and updates will be posted on our Facebook page at "Scottish Gunners Reunion". If you wish to express your interest (and please do) double-check you are already on our mailing list or provide us with your details for the first time, please contact the reunion Dinner Secretary (preferably by email) Maj Jason Jump or Capt Abbie Lawrence on scottishgunnerreunion@gmail.com.

53 (LOUISBURG) BTY RA REUNION 2021

The next Reunion will take place over the weekend Fri 29/Sat 30 Oct 2021. It will be held at The Charnwood Arms Hotel, Coalville, Leicester LE67 1TB, 01530 813644. Please book direct with the Hotel and tell them you are coming to the Reunion, if you

require anymore information please contact me on barrygunner@outlook.com or 01427 668860.

13 MARTINIQUE BTY RA REUNION 2022

The reunion dinner will take place on Sat 23 Apr 22, at the Copthorne Hotel, the Waterfront, Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1UR. Bookings are to be made with the hotel direct on +44 (0)1384 482882 - Quote 13 MARTINIQUE REUNION. All other enquiries - K Brooks-Usher 07834287426 (text only).

20 REGT RA REUNION

20 Regt RA will be holding its reunion on Fri 20 and Sat 21 Aug 2021 at the Holiday Inn, Coventry M6 J2. Details and booking information will be sent out in due course but you should register your interest by contacting the organiser David McDaid at reunion.20regt@gmail.com on 07747 478179. And supplying contact details plus if attending as single or a couple.

SAVE THE DATE

14 RA OFFICERS' MESS REUNION DINNER 2021

Fri 24 Sep 21 - RA Officers' Mess, Larkhill Invitations are being posted at the end of January 2021, but for more information or to request an invitation please email the Reunion Dinner Secretary at william.povey100@mod.gov.uk We look forward to catching up with many past members of the Regiment.

50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

There is not a Mons alumni system as such, but it is the intention to hold a 50th Anniversary Dinner in the Army & Navy Club on Thu 12 May 22. Thus far, we have contacted nearly half of the sixty-one who were on parade, and there is overwhelming support for the event. We are making great use of digital media and those who have maintained contacts over the years. However, the time has come to increase the search pattern and make wider enquiries. Email nigel.noble@btinternet.com

30TH REUNION THE ROYAL ARTILLERY BOYS AND JUNIOR LEADERS' ASSOCIATION

Changes to 30th Reunion of the RA Boys & Junior Leaders' Association. We have been notified that the hotel we have booked for our reunion has been "commandeered" by the government therefore we have effectively been kicked out. This means that we have had to make immediate plans to change our reunion venue. In Gunner terms "Move to alternate position".

Our reunion organiser has done an amazing job of looking at the available alternatives and the best we as a committee can come up with is to return to the Holiday Inn Walsgrave, Coventry CV2 2HP. This hotel we have used successfully for many years in the past. In order to get in there we had to change the date to the weekend of 1-3 Oct. All those booked have been sent an email with details. Anyone else wishing to take advantage of booking for these dates must do so before 16 Sep using the booking form in the June edition of "Trumpeter", or getting in touch with the Secretary on exboysra.tn@gmail.com 07900 806235.

NORTH WEST REGION MINI ASSEMBLY 27-29 AUG 21

The NW Mini Assembly will take place on 27-29 Aug 21 at The Palace Hotel, Buxton, prices are as follows: 2 nights Bed, Breakfast and Gala Dinner £140 per person (Fri to Sun), 1 night Bed, Breakfast and Gala Dinner £75 per person (Sat only) and for non residents the Gala Dinner is £35 per person. POC is Jim Baker NW Regional Secretary on james.baker240@virginmedia.com Tel 0161 494 9590 or 07591 872 427

RA CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE - HYDE PARK

The annual Ceremony of Remembrance will take place at the Royal Artillery Memorial, Hyde Park, on Sun 14 Nov 21, with 5 Regt RA on parade. All are welcome to attend, anyone wishing to attend is requested to contact SO2 Regt Pol andy.astbury202@mod.gov.uk or 01980 845929 to book seats. If attending, you are requested to be seated by 1030 hrs, it is anticipated that the event will conclude at 1145 hrs. It is an open air event and in the event of inclement weather, you are advised to dress accordingly.

7 (SPHINX) COMMANDO BATTERY ROYAL ARTILLERY

The next reunion of 7 (Sphinx) Cdo Bty RA will be held over the weekend of 3/4 Sep 21. In Plymouth. Further details will be released in due course but to express interest in attending please email pauldavidhorne@yahoo.co.uk

1 RHA REUNION DINNER LXVIII

The 68th 1 RHA Officers' Mess Reunion Dinner will be held at the RA Mess, Larkhill on Fri 12 Nov 21. Any former officer of the Regiment who wishes to attend, and who has not received details of the dinner by 1 Aug 21, should please contact the Dinner Secretary, Maj Claire Blakiston on 01980 845246 or email Claire.Blakiston677@mod.gov.uk

ALAMEIN DINNER

The Alamein Dinner 2021 will be held on Fri 22 Oct in the RA Mess, Larkhill. The dinner will take the form of a ladies guest night 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. The Alamein Dinners is a formal event and ladies are requested to wear long evening dresses. The cost will be £55 per head. Applications for accommodation and the hire of stiff shirts should be made to the Mess Secretary. Maj Van Poeteren: ramessesec@btinternet.com. For places apply to Jenny McGrath by email: jennifer.mcgrath924@mod.gov.uk 01980 845788 and payment can be either BACS: RAL, 30-11-75, 00957269 (please prefix payment reference with AD21) Cheque: made payable to the Royal Artillery Institution. Please note a first come first served basis applies.

ROYAL ARTILLERY OFFICERS' ALANBROOKE LUNCH THU 7 OCT 21

The next Royal Artillery Alanbrooke Lunch is on Thu 7 Oct 21 at The Army & Navy Club, St James's Square,

The Alanbrooke Lunch Club is open to all Gunners officers, regular and reserve, whether serving or retired. The lunches



cost £59 and the price includes pre-lunch drink, wine and port. A cash bar is available after the 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 £59 to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund (Sort

code 30-11-75. Acc number 00568858) annotating your transfer with your initial and surname or send a cheque made out to 'Royal Artillery Charitable Fund' to the Regimental Secretariat Assistant. Mrs Emma Pagan-Skelley. If you make a bank transfer please email the Regimental Secretariat Assistant 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. If you wish to join us please contact the Regimental Secretariat Assistant Emm.Pagan-Skelley100@mod.gov.uk

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LAST POST

Notification of Death:

John McGregor 07 May 2021

Ray Jones 23 April 2021

Edward Wallace May 2021

Martin Hedges May 2021

Dale Mackrill 06 May 2021

Jack Nicholas 17 May 2021

Ken Hennessy 7 June 2021

BOND - Major (Retd) Henry Bond of Holme, Cumbria passed away peacefully on 3 March 2021, aged 71 at Lancaster Royal Infirmary. Henry was born in the beautiful village of Holme Westmorland/Cumbria in 1949. He joined the Army Junior Leaders aged 15, before going on to serve with the Royal Artillery in Hong Kong, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Hebrides and Germany. He joined the British Airborne Forces in 1984 and was commissioned to Captain in 1988. Henry retired from the Royal Artillery after 40 years service. Always a proud Gunner! Henry has made a wonderful impression on so many friends and colleagues in his long army career and is so very sadly missed by all his family and great friends.

COE - Dennis Coe passed away early afternoon on 6 May 2021. One of Bury St Edmunds RAA Branch's longest serving members. Dennis had been a member of the Bury St Edmunds Royal Artillery Association for many years, a number of which he was the Branch Standard Bearer, an appointment which he was very proud to carry out. He was a great supporter of anything military including being a paid up member of the Bury St Edmunds Branch of the Royal British Legion. His wife Heather is bearing her grief well and members of the family are supporting her at this sad time. Remember, "Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner."

HARDY - Mr Anthony Hardy sadly passed away after a short illness on Monday 25 January 2021. Tony will be sadly missed by all his comrades at the branch. Hull branch RAA.

KELLY - Major Rodger Kelly TD. 2 March 1942 - 5 March 2021. Rodger had a long service in the Territorial Army and Reserves stretching from September 1959 when he enlisted as a gunner in Sheffield until 1997 when he concluded his service as a watchkeeper with the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. Rodger was commissioned into 323 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA TA in April 1960, and was later transferred to 271 (Sheffield Artillery Volunteers) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA TA. Upon disbandment of this regiment in 1967 he transferred into the Central Volunteer Headquarters, Woolwich and until 1974 he was posted for training to 11 Battery of 22 Air Defence Regiment RA. He then transferred, briefly, into the Yorkshire Volunteers until the formation in 1975 of the independent 269 (West Riding) Observation Post Battery TA where he served as a Forward Observation Officer until assuming command of the Battery in 1977 until 1980. Following the end of his tenure he was posted to 103 Regiment RA(V) as Second in Command until 1985, and at that point he returned to CVHQ Woolwich working as a watchkeeper for 1st

and 2nd Divisions until 1990. Following that posting he served for a further seven years as a watchkeeper with the ARRC. During this time Rodger was also a trustee in both the Sheffield Artillery Volunteers Trust, of which he was the secretary, and of the West Riding Artillery Trust. Rodger was a proud family man who loved the company of his sons and grandchildren. He was a keen sailor in his ocean-loving yacht and in retirement he renovated another vessel. He was also a keen gardener. He leaves a widow Christine and three grown up sons.

MEACOCK - SSgt Alan Meacock, 103 AD Regt, 208 Bty RA(V), B Troop. It is with great sadness that the Battery has lost another much-cherished past member. SSgt Alan Meacock died suddenly on 22 April 2021 after a heart attack. Our condolences go out to his Wife Eileen his two daughter's Michelle & Rachel and three Grandchildren. Alan joined the Regiment in the late 70's working predominantly in 208 Bty BHQ as a signaller in the Battery CP. The Bty at the time provided Light Air Defence for 3 Division in support of BAOR deploying its Blowpipe and later Javelin Missile systems. Alan increased his signals credentials and eventually became the CPO Ack. His endeavours were rewarded when on 4 October 1984 he was promoted to the rank of SSgt he left the unit in March 1991. Like most Territorials he worked in Civvy Street with fellow Gunners in the Battery. He was a what we term in Liverpool a Jobber (General Builder) and could carry out a wide range of building tasks as diverse as landscaping to shopfitting. His handywork is still being enjoyed today by the Liverpool Gunners at the Brigadier Toosey ARC (Formally Aigburth Barracks TA Centre) Sgts' Mess where he constructed the bar. His passing has come as a shock to all his past fellow Gunners and all have had nothing but praise and respect for him. Our Association will give him a fitting send-off and will endeavour to support his Wife and family during their grief. Rest In Peace Alan. Once a gunner always a gunner. Aigburth-Merseyside Branch RAA



TIPLING - Kevin Tipling passed away on the 19 January 2021 due to Covid. Kevin was a member of 22 Battery. If you would like anymore information please do not hesitate to contact Ann Astbury on rossendalemcs@gmail.com. Donations have been made in his name to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund.

WILKINSON - Brigadier Clive Wilkinson CBE 1935 - 2021 Many in the Spirits industry will remember Clive Wilkinson who died on 29th March aged 86. After 37 years in the Army during which time he commanded a Battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, he left as a Brigadier with a CBE to become first Director of the Gin and Vodka Association (GVA) on the amalgamation of the Vodka Trade Association and the Gin Rectifiers & Distillers Association based in Andover. He saw the sector through the period of rapid expansion of vodka sales and masterminded the creation of the first ever EU definition of Gin and London Gin. He became President of the Confederation of European Spirits Producers (CEPS) in 1998 and was appointed by the Prime Minister to be a UK representative in the European Economic & Social Committee. He leaves behind his wife Nadine and daughter Caroline. His other daughter Juliette pre-deceased him.

Lieutenant Colonel David Freeth 1941 - 2021



Lieutenant Colonel David Freeth, known by many as Zach, sadly passed away on the 3rd March 2021 aged 79, after a long illness. He is widely recognised as the outstanding Services Alpine Skier of his generation.

Zach was born on the 12th September 1941 at Fulmer, Bucks. For the next 5 years he saw little of his father Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Freeth late RA who was away on active service including command in the Middle East and at Monte Cassino in Italy. A mountaineer and pioneer skier he took Zach aged 7 and the family on holiday to Ehrwald in Austria and so set Zach on his love for skiing and adventure.

Zach was educated at Felsted Prep School and Wellington College, where he enjoyed many sports and being very small for his year compensated by learning extreme determination.

Prior to joining the Army he worked as a labourer in a concrete gang on the roads to save up enough money to go to Austria. He also helped with the youth club, mostly consisting of teddy boy and girl gangs on behalf of his local church in Kent. Once he'd earned enough money he went to Saalbach in Austria and lived in a small attic room, cooking his own food and skiing all day. He couldn't afford the ski lifts so would walk up the mountain and ski down. He cut his own poles from the forest to create a Slalom

and soon got together with the young locals, so learnt to race.

He was commissioned in August 1961. After attending Mons he was posted to 40th Field Regiment in Munster where an early report stated "He is a leader....who is admired by his men and is prepared to challenge authorityFreeth is a young gladiator." This was followed by a posting to Junior Leaders at Bramcote where he introduced leaders to skiing and other sports. His next tour in 1967 was as an FOO with D Battery, 3rd Regiment RHA, in Detmold under the strong leadership of Major John Learmont (later Gen). This was an exhilarating time to be a young officer and he thrived. During this time he received the Napier Medal awarded to a junior officer for noteworthy service to the Regiment.

A posting to Sandhurst followed for which Zach was ideally suited being a natural trainer of young men - always encouraging them to seek and reach their potential. Next he joined 39 Medium Regiment in Sennelager and was their PR officer on their Londonderry tour in Northern Ireland in late 1973. He was in his element and as a morale booster he managed to get Harry Secombe (ex Bdr) to visit. Flushed with success he followed this up by persuading Miss World to travel to Northern Ireland - a real PR coup and the envy of many regiments in Northern Ireland at the time.

After attending Staff College he was posted to JHQ Rheindahlen on the PR staff. Battery Commander of 156 Inkerman Battery, 94 Locating Regiment followed and he enjoyed being back with the soldiers and being stationed in Celle, where he is remembered for organising an outstanding Tattoo.

He returned to the PR world in 1981 at HQNI in Lisburn. He was meeting with the press every day as these were

very testing times with hunger strikes in the Maze and the death of Bobby Sands. Zach was in his element. He also had a real heart for reconciliation and whilst there worked with the Corrymeela Reconciliation Centre.

In 1982 Africa called and he joined the team setting up the Army Staff College in Zimbabwe. The Freeth's loved Zimbabwe, its challenges and its people, and indeed this tour changed their lives especially after leaving the Army. His last appointments were for 6 years working at SHAPE in Belgium in the Nuclear Planning Team and for a short time in RARDE near the family home close by Sittingbourne.

He was a very keen sportsman and throughout his Army career he competed in much sport including rugby, hockey, tennis, squash and sailing - some at Gunner level.

Always keeping fit, Zach even completed 2 sub 3 hour Marathons when he was over 40! It was, however, with Services skiing on which Zach left his indelible mark and he will be remembered by many skiers with great fondness, not least by the junior soldiers and NCOs he nurtured and who took the sport forward into future decades.

In 1962 Zach burst onto the Army skiing scene at his first Army Championships winning the Slalom and runner-up in the Downhill. This was a very exciting year for him as he had no idea, prior to this, how good he was competitively. He was in the highly successful team of 40th Field Regiment which went on to win the coveted Princess Marina Trophy under Major Jimmie Spencer (later Col), with wins in also following years.

He shone in all 3 disciplines and he won the Army Slalom 7 times. Over a 12 year period, when he was at the top of his game, out of a total of 35 competitive

races at Army and Combined Services level, he was in the top 3 in 29 of them. He won the Individual Army Championships 4 times and was also Inter Services Champion 4 times - the latter being a record which has not been surpassed in the history of the cup being presented.

For 6 seasons he also raced in many World Cup races across the Alps. In 1966 Zach won the Gold Medal in the Commonwealth Games Downhill and was made Captain of the British Ski Team. Sadly in 1968 he injured his Achilles tendon in the run up for the Grenoble Winter Olympics which prevented him from competing. He was Chairman of the Men’s Alpine Ski team in the 1972 Olympics and became a trustee and Director of the Skiers Trust of Great Britain and latterly a Patron,

On February 6th 1967 Zach and Claire met in St Moritz, where Claire was running a Chalet. They were married on August 18th 1967, 6 months later!.

Over 10 years Zach trained and managed the Army Ski Team and the standard of Army ski racing was raised which resulted in the Army winning the Inter Services Championship for many years. Training took place in St Moritz for many seasons and was physically very testing. With Zach there was no slacking! Everyone had to be up on the first lift and down once all the lifts had closed! In the evening there was the preparation of skis for the next day. There was, however time to relax and many particularly remember staying with Zach and Claire at ‘Chesa Chastelettes’ where Claire and Penny Copeland provided welcome support, particularly with the catering.

Zach was instrumental in developing the Gunner Training scheme in 1968 with a small group of 8 skiers training, in the inaugural year, in Klosters. This was such

a success that he moved it the following years to Andermatt where it grew to over 100 Cross country and Downhill skiers from different Gunner Regiments. This was the catalyst which raised the Gunner skiing level and made the Gunners so dominant for many years.

Zach had a secret ambition of winning the Army Championships as a veteran. This he was very proud to achieve as a Lieutenant Colonel. He won the Army Championships 18 years after his first championship win - a record unlikely to be surpassed.

On retirement from the Army he worked for two years for the Kent Association of the Blind.

He also did much to promote Paralympic Skiing. He was Head of Delegation of the British Team at the Winter Olympics at Tignes in 1992 and Lillehammer in 1994 where the teams won several medals. He and Claire went on several skiing holidays leading the blind with the Charity, Skiing for the Disabled. Zach enjoyed cross country skiing and completed 8 Engadine Marathons.

Over the period of 1999 – 2003 he was the Vice President on the British Winter Sports Commission and was nominated a Churchill Fellow to study skiing for the disabled in America, Canada and Norway to try to implement some of his findings to enable the standard of skiing for the disabled in Europe to be raised.

For 9 years he was the main carer for his mother after her very bad stroke. During this time he worked part time for Africa and Asia Venture giving talks and interviewing young people who wanted to volunteer to help in poor rural communities in Africa and Asia. He also visited the prisoners in Kent prisons as part of the Prison Fellowship Team.

In 2011, following the complete

breakdown of the rule of law, justice and human rights in Zimbabwe, Zach’s zeal for Justice gave him the motivation to become a Founding Trustee of the Mike Campbell Foundation. He had a real heart for the people of Zimbabwe and this has led to many speaking engagements and events at the Royal Geographical Society in London with excellent speakers. The charity works tirelessly with Ben Freeth MBE, Zach’s son, as Executive Director to ‘Restore Justice and Restore People’. It is very demanding and challenging work – which needs perseverance, courage and great determination!

Overarching Zach’s life was his firm Christian faith which included taking services in Verbier, Livigno, Zermatt, St Moritz, Andermatt the UK, Belgium and Germany. Zach and Claire also hosted many Officers Christian Union weekends in Germany.

Zach bore ill health with bravery and fortitude which epitomised his compassion as a Christian. He was very proud of his family and especially his marriage of 53 years to his beloved Claire who provided constant support throughout their life together.

To Claire, Ben and Sarah and his 5 grandchildren we offer our love and every sympathy for their loss.

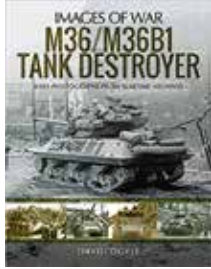
The closing date for all competitions in this month’s edition is Monday 2 August 2021. The winners will be drawn at random and notified as soon as possible. Don’t forget to fill out the form at the bottom of the page.

Easy Sudoku

	7	8			4			
1			6					
	9				7			3
		3	9	4				5
		7				1		
2				3	6	8		
5			8				7	
					3			4
			4			6	1	

The objective is to fill a 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 sub-grids that compose the grid contains all of the digits from 1 to 9. The puzzle setter provides a partially completed grid, which for a well-posed puzzle has a unique solution.

To win the Gunfire British Artillery in World War II book - all you have to do is fill out all your details and send it to us at Gunner Publications, RHQ RA, Artillery Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8QT.



Wordsearch - missing word?

.....

Name:

Tel:

Email:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

The Gunner wordsearch

P	U	L	P	E	E	T	E	G	A	I	P	Y
E	G	O	T	I	S	I	O	S	M	M	X	E
A	R	S	E	H	P	F	E	T	O	O	W	R
N	A	T	L	F	O	F	M	A	C	T	O	P
S	F	I	H	A	N	A	W	B	H	T	N	S
R	F	A	P	B	E	N	U	L	A	C	I	A
S	G	U	M	E	E	Y	E	D	I	P	G	T
E	N	A	A	R	L	A	D	A	D	A	D	E
I	I	O	P	G	E	N	Y	P	R	R	R	L
R	P	S	E	E	T	T	E	E	A	O	A	F
A	P	N	I	N	T	D	R	T	P	D	R	A
G	O	S	H	A	E	S	W	O	P	N	R	E
L	H	V	A	R	R	C	I	N	O	A	A	L
U	S	N	O	I	T	A	X	E	H	P	G	M
B	S	T	R	E	I	T	R	A	C	V	N	E

This month you are looking for words that are associated with jewellers, please find which word is not hidden in the grid. They can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards. Good luck!

ASPREY	FABERGE	PANDORA
BULGARI	GARRARD	SWAROVSKI
CARTIER	GRAFF	TIFFANY
CHOPARD	PIAGET	



The shocking massacre of 379 unarmed Indians in the enclosed Jallianwala Bagh park on the command of a British army officer on April 13th, 1919 is considered a brutal example of colonial abuse. Immediately afterwards martial law was established with harsh penalties and punishments. Often considered as the darkest period of the Raj, the massacre helped galvanise the Indian Nationalist movement, making full independence inevitable.

Rome: Republic into Empire looks at the political and social reasons why Rome repeatedly descended into civil war in the early 1st century BCE and why these conflicts continued for most of the century; it describes and examines the protagonists, their military skills, their political aims and the battles they fought and lost; it discusses the consequences of each battle and how the final conflict led to a seismic change in the Roman political system with the establishment of an autocratic empire.



REGIMENTAL SECRETARY CHARITIES UPDATE

The regimental secretariat very much welcomes the return of a dedicated section in Gunner, which will enable us to provide readers with an update and news from across the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, the Royal Artillery Association and the Royal Artillery Institution. The aim is to inform you, as members of the Gunner family, what your charities have been doing, and can do in the future, to support the Regiment and individuals.

In this edition I thought it would be helpful to remind you of the primary purpose of each of the charities. Each of them has the promotion of efficiency within the Royal Artillery as their key objective but they achieve this in different ways.



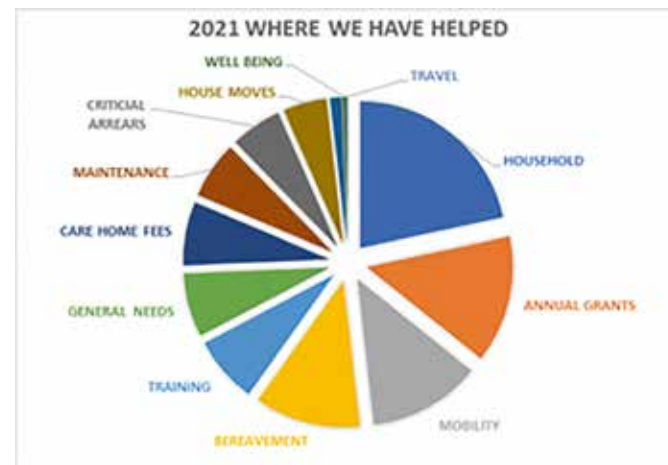
Royal Artillery Charitable Fund (RACF)

The RACF achieves its objective by providing financial support to individual serving and retired members of the Regiment, and their families, who are in need, as well as supporting the serving Regiment with grants to support welfare, sports and comradeship. This year it has allocated the following funds in its budget:

Individual grants (serving, retired and families) - £661,000
Regimental welfare grants - £87,500
Regimental sports - £65,000

Anyone who has served as a Gunner, if only for a day, is, together with their family and dependants, eligible for support from the RACF.

The following chart shows how RACF individual grants have been used so far this year



The trustees of the RACF are very grateful for efforts of all of those who have raised funds for the charity. Each year the Cornwall Cup is awarded to the Regiment or unit which raises the most for the RACF and the Artillery House Cup is awarded to the Royal Artillery Association branch which raises the most.

The Cornwall Cup 2020 Winners - 12 Regiment Royal Artillery

Many congratulations to 12 Regiment Royal Artillery, the winners of the Cornwall Cup 2020.



Regiment	Total Raised	Place
12 Regt	£ 9,032.73	1
104 Regt	£ 5,196.93	2
47 Regt	£ 4,516.35	3
101 Regt	£ 3,288.73	4
14 Regt	£ 2,544.60	5
105 Regt	£ 1,665.66	6
106 Regt	£ 1,268.78	7
19 Regt	£ 422.80	8
5 Regt	£ 310.58	9
1 RHA	£ 160.00	10
Capt Harry Grantham	£ 6,851.66	
Total Raised	£ 35,258.82	

The Cup is awarded to the Regiment or establishment that raises the most funds for the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund (RACF). The total amount of money raised in 2020 for the RACF was £35,258.82 and to raise these funds during a year where activity has been significantly reduced is most commendable. Thank you very much for supporting your Charity.

The Regimental Secretary, Colonel Matthew Carter said "Please pass on my thanks, and those of the trustees and beneficiaries, to all those who organised, participated in and contributed to this great effort. Every pound raised enables the RACF to continue to support serving and veteran Gunners, and their families, in times of need and to make significant grants to support Gunner sport and welfare within the Regiment".

We are also very grateful to all RAA branches who have raised funds for the RACF and congratulations to the Norwich Branch for winning the Artillery House Cup – again!

Thank you also to the many anonymous donors who contribute via online giving.

Recent Fundraising

We are happy to report that fundraising for the RACF has continued this year and we recently received two donations from units in Larkhill.



Great team work 34 (Seringapatam) Battery, 14 Regiment! Members of the Battery took part in a 24 hour cycle challenge to raise funds for the RACF in March. WO2 (BSM) Begley and SSgt McAndrew visited the Regt HQ to handover a cheque to the Regimental Secretary. Thank you for thinking of the Gunner Charity and supporting those in need.



A magnificent team effort! Congratulations to 47 Regiment who covered 100,000km by running and cycling in a range of different locations; Larkhill, Ex WARFIGHTER in Texas and RAF Akrotiri in 10 weeks. Family, partners, friends and a professional footballer got involved and raised £2,277 for the RACF and nhs.uk. We have enjoyed your updates and 'Champions of the Week', many thanks to all those who took part and donated. WO2 (BSM) Davies and Capt Meheran from 57 (Bhurlpore) Battery visited the Headquarters Royal Artillery today to handover the cheque to the Regt Sec, Col Carter.

The RACF supports all members of the Royal Artillery and their dependants, whether serving or retired, divorced or widowed. If you need assistance, please get in touch.



Royal Artillery Association (RAA)

The RAA, whose Patron is Her Majesty The Queen, our Captain-General, celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, sadly not in the style it had hoped but we hope to address that at the RA Assembly in Blackpool 20-22 May 22 – to which all are welcome.

The Association achieves its objective by maintaining contact between past and present members; fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and welfare within the Regiment; and preserving its traditions. It also supports the relief of need among past and present members of the regimental family. It has around 3000 active branch members and around 10000 online members – although in reality every Gunner is automatically a member and each Battery is in effect an RAA branch. On that basis the RAA sets aside £35,000 each year to support comradeship and the Gunner ethos at Battery level. Further details about branch locations and activities can be found at www.thegunners.org.uk website. All Gunners, serving and retired, are welcome to attend the events organised and attended by the RAA during the year. Details are in the Forecast of Events contained in this section.

RAA Awards

In March 2021 members of the National Executive Meeting met to discuss the Royal Artillery Association Awards. The Awards will be presented at the National Arboretum Service to be held on Saturday 3rd July 2021. Warmest congratulations to all the winners.

RAA Awards			
Award	Criteria	Winner 2019	Winner 2020
Certificate of Merit	Outstanding services to the RAA by a member.	David Hadjicostas, Shoeburyness & South Essex Branch	Harry Headley, Algburth-Merseyside Branch
Joan Wanklyn Cup	The Ladies' Section which has made the greatest contribution in terms of effort and overall activities during the previous year	Birmingham Ladies Section	No award due to Covid
Eire Cup	The Branch which shows the most effort in support of its members.	Edinburgh Branch	No award due to Covid
RA Association Kerr Cup	Recognition of action(s) or achievement(s) of particular merit by a RA Minor Unit in support of the RAA.	176 (Abu Klea) Battery Royal Artillery	No award due to Covid
Artillery House Cup	The Branch or Section that raises the largest amount of money for the RAA and / or RACF during the preceding calendar year.	Nonwich Branch	Nonwich Branch
Caterham Cup	The runners up to the Artillery House Cup.	Plymouth Branch & Carlisle Branch (Joint winners)	Colchester Branch & North Essex Branch
Burton Cup	The Branch or Section that raises the largest amount of money for heritage during the preceding calendar year.	Nonwich Branch	Nonwich Branch
Mansergh Memorial Award	outstanding acts of bravery, which have not been recognised by another award or commendation; in the absence of any such act, other special achievements by individuals of the Regiment will be considered.	SSgt Kurt Harkness - 19 Regt RA. SSgt Harkness was selected for this award based on his	To be selected

The following gives a flavour of what the Association has been up to recently, despite the restrictions imposed by Covid.



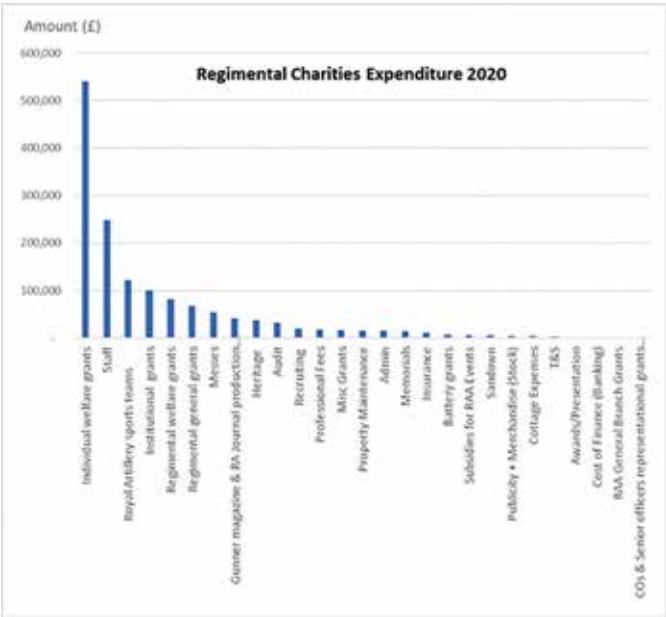
REGIMENTAL ARTILLERY INSTITUTION (RAI)

The Institution achieves its objective by: promoting professional development and achievement; making awards in recognition of outstanding and noteworthy service within the Regiment; funding regimental sports teams; subsidising regimental events and activities and; supporting our heritage.

For 2021, the RAI has made the following allocations:

- Heritage - £117,000
- Sports - £88,000
- Regimental grants - £68,500
- Publications - £83,000K
- Regimental events - £50,500
- Recruiting - £38,600
- Messes - £25,000

In summary, the following chart shows how RACF, RAA and RAI funds were spent in 2020:



2020 was clearly a somewhat unusual year and many of the events that would normally be supported by grants from the charities did not take place. You will be pleased to note though that although our investments dropped in value by around 20% at one point in the year, they have now made a full recovery and the amount available to spend on welfare was not affected.

Gunner Sunday at Royal Hospital Chelsea



Gunner Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea will take place on Sun 24 Oct 21. Branches and Regiments are strongly encouraged to send representatives and bring along their friends and relatives.

In order to provide an idea of numbers attending please inform the RAA Assistant Secretary email cas.thoburn603@mod.gov.uk

- 1000hrs: Assemble and meet in the Octagon Colonnade by the chapel.
- 1015hrs: Pensioners and RAA Standard Bearers form up.
- 1130hrs: Parade finishes and chapel service begins.

After the service the club will be open to meet and chat to the pensioners over a drink.
Dress: Suits or blazer with Gunner/Regimental tie.
Lunch: Details to follow.



Poole RAA Branch
We're back! On Wed 19 May, Poole Branch hosted a garden tea party with sandwiches, cake, cream scones and held a raffle for Branch Members.

RACF



RACF Grants Report May 2021

In May we awarded £20,225 to 36 Gunner veterans, serving Gunners and dependants that needed our financial support. The area that needed most support was household goods and we awarded £7,000 to help with this. This is always an area where we see many calls for help. Finding money for essential household goods is so difficult for many with high costs involved. We support many that are taking over new accommodation. Some need to move to new accommodation because sadly they have found themselves homeless and living on the streets. Others move to new accommodation and need new furniture and white goods because they have needed to leave an established family home and they have little furniture to take with them. Others have needed to move from furnished accommodation. Whatever the reason we want our Gunner family members to know that we are here to support them so their new accommodation will at least be comfortable. We awarded £3,220 in training. Some Gunner family members have lost jobs because of the current economic situation and to help them achieve employment again they needed specific training. £2,129 was awarded for critical household arrears, £1,800 awarded for bereavement, and the other areas where we helped included mobility, general needs, house moves and home maintenance costs. We really can help in many ways to support those struggling to finance the things they need. If you are struggling please reach out by contacting SSAFA on 0800 731 4880 or the RBL on 0808 802 8080. We are here for advice either by calling us or send us an email at rarrhq-racf-welfare-mailbox@mod.gov.uk Tel number 0300 167 3998 or 0300 158 7035.

In order to help support our regimental family we appreciate all the donations we receive and in May we received £4,949 for which we send our heartfelt thanks.

Sometimes we receive heart warming appreciation letters from our beneficiaries. Please read the letter of thanks below.

"now that my mother has moved to a nursing home and NHS Continuing Healthcare has been awarded, my family and I would like to express our eternal thanks to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund for contributing to her care home fees for the past seven years. Without your help goodness knows how we could have managed. She was superbly looked after...."

Family of 98 year old widow of WWII RA veteran

ROYAL ARTILLERY FORECAST OF EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
2021		
03 Jul	RA Service of Remembrance tbc	NMA
30 Jul	YO's Dining In	Larkhill
14 Sep	Sunset Ceremony	Larkhill
16 Sep	Central Sgts' Mess E2 Dinner	Larkhill
30 Sep	Hail & Farewell	Larkhill
06 Oct	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
07 Oct	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
14 Oct	Awards Dinner	Larkhill
21 Oct	Central Sgts' Mess Dinner Night	Larkhill
22 Oct	Alamein Dinner Night	Larkhill
24 Oct	Gunner Sunday	Royal Hospital Chelsea
11 Nov	Field of Remembrance	Westminster
14 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park
30 Nov	Officers' Mess E2 Dinner Night	Larkhill
05 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill
10 Dec	YO's Dining In	Larkhill
2022		
5/6 Feb	Reserve Conference	Larkhill
17 Feb	Royal Artillery Gold Cup	Sandown
9-11 Mar	WO1's Convention	Larkhill
16 Mar	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
17 Apr	Gunner Sunday	Royal Hospital Chelsea
22 Apr	Spring Dinner	Larkhill
20-22 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
21 May	RAA NEC Meeting	Blackpool
16 Jun	Hail & Farewell	Larkhill
02 Jul	RA Service of Remembrance	NMA
17-18 Jul	Festival of Sport	Larkhill
13 Oct	Sports Dinner	Larkhill
21 Oct	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
21 Oct	Central Sgts' Mess Dinner	Larkhill
10 Nov	Field of Remembrance	Westminster
13 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park
04 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill

THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST

Commander of the British Empire

- Colonel Graham Taylor (Comd 7 AD Group)

Member of the British Empire

- Major Gerald Martin HEDGER, TD VR - Royal Regiment of Artillery, Army Reserve (SO2 Training Operations Reserves, Headquarters Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command)

Meritorious Service Medal

- Warrant Officer Class 1 Hazel SAVAGE (former RSM 19 Regt RA)
- Warrant Officer Class 2 Andrew Keith WRIGHT (CAST (N))
- Sergeant Apisai Dakunivosa SERAU (29 Cdo Regt RA)

CGS's Commendation

- Warrant Officer Class 2 L A Biggs (RQMS Services Cotswold Centre)
- Major Ollie Burwell – SO2 Org Plans A, Hd Strat

3* Commendations

- Major A E Lowes – SO2 G4 Arty Log
- Warrant Officer Class 2 C E McInnes – SPSI 105 Regt RA
- Colonel (Retd) Matthew Carter – Regimental Secretary
- Sgt C A Chapman – G4 SHEF NCO, 32 Regt RA

DUNCAN ESSAY 21

Thank you to everyone that submitted entries into this year's competition. RHQ RA received twenty entries for final adjudication and authors ranged from Bdr – Col rank. The margins between the top 4 essays were extremely slim. Please see below the results for the Duncan Essay:

- 1st Place – Col Jon Cresswell (Defence Academy); Essay Title – “General Support Reinforcing – how does the UK artillery conduct deep, close and rear fires battles with current capabilities?”
- 2nd Place – Sgt Cobbinah (16 Regt RA); Essay Title – “What are the biggest challenges for young people joining the Royal Regiment and how can we best overcome them?”
- 3rd Place - Maj Aaron Hollyoak (Air Command); Essay Title – “General Support Reinforcing – how does the UK artillery conduct deep, close and rear fires battles with current capabilities?”
- 4th Place – Maj Ross Towes (Defence Academy) – “Cyber; what role should the Royal Regiment play?”

Prizes are as follows:

1st Place – Duncan Essay Medal and £1500

2nd Place – £1000

3rd Place – £750

4th Place – £500

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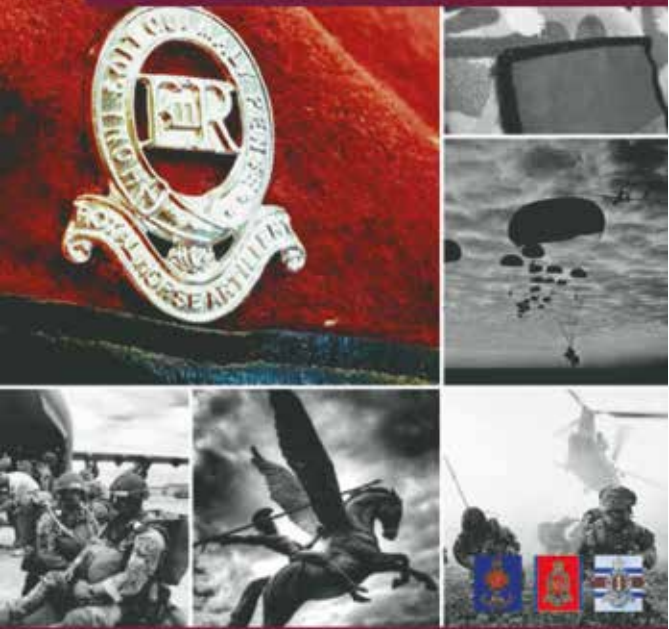
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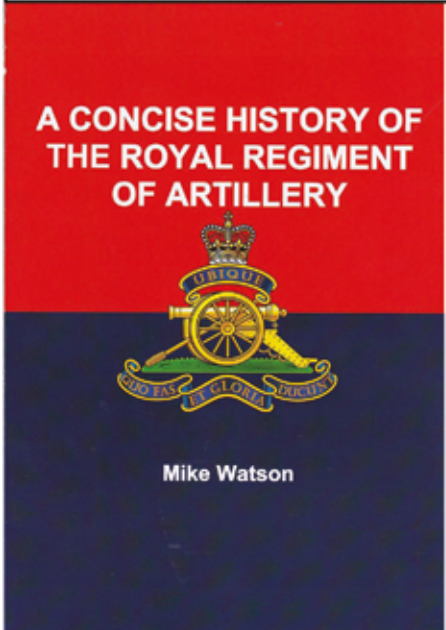
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Summaries:

- Battery honour title actions.
- Acts of Gunner gallantry.

Annexes:

- Battery and Regimental WW1 and 2 titles
- Gunners - who achieved fame as Gunners.
- Gunners - who achieved in other fields.
- Links - with the Honourable Artillery Company, former Infantry and Yeomanry Regiments.
- Woolwich and Larkhill heritage.

Mike Watson

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King's Troop Trumpet Major Sgt Adam Desborough