



· The Gunners ·

Newsletter -April 2026

Welcome to the Royal Artillery Charities Newsletter. This is where you can keep up to date with all the regimental family's news and information, we have over 3,000 subscribers.

If you have any articles for the communications team from your Regiment, Branch, District and Region, we would like to receive them, to share with our subscribers.

Please ensure that you have permission to share information and images.

The Gunners

Message from the

Royal Artillery Sergeant Major

As I come to the end of my tenure as the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I reflect on what has been a truly incredible experience.

Throughout my time in appointment, I have firmly believed that the strength of our Regiment lies not only in those currently serving, but equally in our veterans and our Chelsea Pensioners. The bond between serving soldiers, those who have previously worn the Gunner cap badge, and those residing at the Royal Hospital Chelsea remains strong, and it is a bond we have worked collectively to nurture and reinforce.

We have made a conscious effort to ensure involvement across all key Royal Artillery events, recognising that shared experience sustains regimental spirit across generations. A particular highlight was His Majesty's visit to Larkhill, a proud and memorable occasion for Gunners past and present, and a visible reminder of the enduring relevance and professionalism of our Regiment.

The annual WO1 Convention continues to include a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a moment that never fails to reinforce the continuity of service and sacrifice that defines us. Standing alongside Chelsea Pensioners, sharing stories and experience, brings home the depth of our regimental family.

Our veterans have turned out in great numbers to support and participate in events such as the Remembrance Day at Hyde Park, the Royal Artillery Gold Cup at Sandown Park Racecourse, the Royal Artillery Boxing Finals, commemorations at the National Memorial Arboretum, and the Royal Artillery Assembly at Blackpool, to name but a few. This continued presence is testament to the pride that endures long after active service concludes.

I have also had the privilege of attending many of the Royal Artillery Association Branch events. I have been consistently enthused and often inspired by the dedication and effort shown by branch members to keep their associations vibrant, relevant and supportive; often in addition to a busy and demanding day job. The work done at branch level is the lifeblood of our Association, ensuring comradeship, welfare support, and regimental identity remain strong within local communities. The hard work, dedication, and energy given to the RAA by Brig Pountain, Dickie Davies, Cas Thoburn, and Fay Chapman from the home bank is remarkable, and I'm grateful to be able to see this daily. We are in good hands.

If there is one reflection I would offer, it is that our collective strength lies in unity of purpose. Serving soldiers, veterans, Chelsea Pensioners and families, we are one Gunner family. The deliberate effort to maintain connection across generations is paying dividends, and I am confident the Regiment and the Association will continue to thrive together.

It has been my privilege to serve you all. Thank you for your support, your friendship, and your unwavering commitment to the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Ubique

· Events ·

Please monitor the RA website and facebook page for any further information and event updates.

Forecast of Events



Royal Artillery Assembly

FRIDAY 15TH – SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2026
AT THE NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL



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

3 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner – Saturday 16th May) – **Just £171.50 Per Person**

2 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner – Saturday 16th May) – **Just £141.50 Per Person**

Grand Gala Dinner Only – No Accommodation £30.00 Per Person

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

To book a Gala Inclusive Package – call 0161 923 0300 and quote RANB2026
 Calls charged at local rate plus your chosen phone company access charge.

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

For Gala Dinner Only bookings – please call 01253 500 701

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

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

Norbreck Castle Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool, FY2 9AA. www.britanniahotels.com



Afghan Vet?

Save the date for the inaugural Royal Artillery
Afghanistan Veterans Act of Remembrance service &
social gathering

Join the Facebook page via the QR code below for all
the latest info on this & future events

20 June 2026, 12:00 arrival

Larkhill Garrison Church & Packhorse Pub

Secure your free ticket using the Eventbrite
QR code below

RAAV Facebook Group:



Event Brite Tickets:



Email: raafghanveterans@outlook.com

Royal Artillery

Service of Remembrance

4th July 2026

Scan the QR code for details



www.thegunners.org.uk



Gunner Sunday, Royal Hospital Chelsea

The regimental family joined the In-Pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea for Gunner Sunday on 12th April. The day began with a parade of the In-Pensioners and Standard Bearers followed by Choral Matins at the Sunday Service in the Chapel. After the Service, a curry lunch was held at the In-Pensioners' Club. A splendid day for everyone involved and it was great to catch up with our Chelsea Pensioners.



• RAA Branch News •

[Join Your Association Here](#)

[Branch Forms](#)

Isle of Man

Congratulations cards from VIPs helped mark a special day for Joe and Margaret Cain. Joe and Margaret marked 70 years of marriage with messages from the King and Queen and the Lieutenant Governor, Lt General Sir John Lorimer and Lady Lorimer.

Joe was a member of the local Army Cadets from 1949 – 1951 as the Drum Major before being called up for national service on 5th July 1951, arriving first at Oswestry, before being posted to 49 Field Regiment RA. Joe completed two years' service in Cyprus before transferring to the Territorial Army, where Margaret also served in the Territorial Army, learning to drive 3 ton trucks.

The pair were athletes in their younger years; Margaret played hockey and Joe was a marathon and fell runner, and keen race walker. Joe competed in the Isle of Man parish walk – a gruelling 85 mile trek in under 24 hrs. No mean feat.

On leaving the Army, Joe retrained as a Butcher and then changed career to engineering working for Dowty Engineering and Martin Bakers (ejector seat manufacturers). His military life forged his love of brass music and he is a life member of the Isle of Man Onchan Silver Band, three of his grandchildren have followed in his footsteps.

Joe held RAA committee roles as Vice Chairman 2001-2002 and Chairman of the Branch for 11 years from 2002. Joe and Margaret have 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren and 9 great

grandchildren.

Warmest congratulations to you both on behalf of the regimental family.



Hull Branch

On 7th November 2025 Standard Bearers attended a reception at the Guildhall, Hull to receive the Lord Mayor of Kingston Upon Hull and Admiral of the Humber Award with the courtesy title of Honorary Burgess presented to Mr David Barrowclough by The Lord Mayor, Councillor Cheryl Payne.

The Admiral of the Humber Award is given to existing or former citizens of Hull who bring distinction to the city. They will have delivered significant services in their chosen field or have rendered selfless voluntary public service through charitable or other activities for the benefit of the city and its people.

The Lord Mayor said “The Standard Bearers have an important duty to represent their organisation in an honourable way.”

Congratulations David on your Award and the dedication to your role in the City of Hull.



New Branch - Oswestry & Borders Branch

The Royal Artillery Association Regional Representative, Mr Barry Guest, is delighted to announce the imminent re-activation of the Oswestry & Borders Branch RAA.

The Oswestry and Borders Branch is now up and running and would be honoured to welcome serving and veteran gunners and their families as members.

The original Branch, closed for many years, has been given a new lease of life by a group of motivated veteran gunners who came together and expressed their determination to revive a gunner presence in Oswestry.

The historic link between the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Park Hall Camp travelled the journey of two world wars, into the seventies. The connection was lost when Park Hall finally waved goodbye to the military.

The 25lb gun in Cae Glas Park was gifted to the Town Council from Woolwich, the historic home of the Artillery. The gun stands as a solid and lasting reminder of the Oswestry – Gunner connection.

Each year on Armistice Day, the Royal Artillery Association is proud to parade a standard, providing an ongoing presence in memory of the Oswestry gunners who sacrificed their lives in the service of their country.

Members of the revived Branch will meet at the Coach House Bar and Restaurant, Bailey Head in Oswestry, at 12 noon on the third Sunday of the month. They extend a warm welcome to regular, reservist, veteran gunners and their families. For more information, contact the Branch on info@oswestryraa.co.uk or take a look at their public Facebook site RAA North Wales & Borders Regional Group.

· The Royal Artillery Charitable Fund ·

RACF Welfare Team Quarterly Report

2026 has begun with the Welfare Secretary returning from maternity leave. She would like to express her thanks to the RACF team for their continued support to our Gunner family throughout the year, despite operating with a reduced workforce. The team managed 624 cases for those in need, with an average cost of £856 per case. They went above and beyond, working tirelessly to assist our Gunner family.

'The RACF are here to support those in need — can we help you or a fellow Gunner? We can provide essential household items, mobility equipment such as a riser recliner, and other practical support. If you are a carer, we may also be able to assist with respite breaks. There are many things we can help with so please get in touch.'

We cannot however help with private medical or legal fees.

Please contact us for signposting or call SSAFA on **0800 731 4880**, the Royal British Legion on **0808 802 8080** to get a case referred to the RACF or contact the team on either **+44 303 379 4560** or **+44 303 378 7035**

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

Some messages of 'Thank You'

'As ever, thank you! I know it will make a big difference to the XX and their [partner].' CO

'I would like to thank you very much for your help in my dark times. It has helped me and my little family a lot I could not see through the dark times last year...you have shown me there is still good people out there. Thank you so much you're all doing a great job, and I wish I could do something to show how much you are all appreciated' Veteran

'Thank you so much for the extra support you have given XX, by funding a Mattress. They are aware you funded it and have asked me to express their deep gratitude in enabling XX to be as comfortable as he can be at this testing time. I would also like to thank you for your quick response, especially as time is at a premium for him.' Veteran

'Thank you so much for supporting my client. The money came into the bank the same day. XX is now settled in his new home and is aware of your support and thanks you very much, he is looking forwards to his new life, Many Thanks' Veteran

· Regimental News ·

Thank you very much for your continued support and fundraising for the Gunner Charities.

Royal Artillery Association Battery Grants

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

Find out more information from Carla.brawn100@mod.gov.uk or through your chain of command.

14 (Cole's Kop) Battery

16 Regiment Royal Artillery

On 24 January 2026, 14 (Cole's Kop) Battery hosted a Heritage Day and Reunion. The event was designed to strengthen Battery and Gunner identity by bringing together serving personnel, veterans, and their families, thereby reinforcing the enduring bonds within the Battery.

The Royal Artillery Association (RAA) provided £620 in support of the event. The RAA distributes over £150,000 annually in support of Community Welfare, with a focus on assisting the veteran community through the RAA Branch network—of which all active Batteries are Branches—and through activities that unite serving and retired members of the Gunner family, such as the Royal Artillery Assembly, Remembrance events, Sandown, and commemorations at the National Memorial Arboretum. Of this funding, more than £40,000 is allocated each year directly to Batteries and Regiments to support events that enhance unit cohesion and strengthen relationships between serving soldiers and the veteran community.

King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery

An all-ranks dinner was held in the Officers' Mess currently serving in the King's Troop RHA. The evening was a chance to bring the Regiment together, fostering spirit de corps ahead of the ceremonial season. It was also an opportunity to introduce new members of the Troop to Mess traditions and heritage.

The evening was made possible through generous support from the RA Association and the King's Troop Foundation.



F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery

7 Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

Officers' and SNCOs' from F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery, Royal Horse Artillery recently gathered to formally bid farewell to WO2 (BSM) Murphy at a dinner held aboard HMS VICTORY.

The evening began with a guided tour of the ship, allowing attendees to explore the legacy of Admiral Lord Nelson and reflect on the historic battles in which HMS VICTORY played a decisive role. This provided a fitting backdrop for an occasion firmly rooted in tradition, service, and leadership.

Following the tour, Officers' and SNCOs' moved into the Mess onboard HMS VICTORY, where a formal dinner was held. During the evening, SSgt Jackson888 delivered a fitting farewell speech, recognising WO2 Murphy's service and contribution to the Battery. The address was well received and added real meaning to the occasion.

The successful delivery of the evening was supported by a £500 contribution from the Royal Artillery Association, for which the organisers are sincerely grateful. The Association's support directly enabled a memorable and dignified event, reinforcing its continued commitment to the Gunner community.



22 (Gibraltar 1779–1783) Battery Sortie Day

32 Regiment Royal Artillery

Due to a particularly busy operational period, our personnel have been deployed across multiple locations, including Estonia, Kenya, and the United States. This event provided a rare and valuable opportunity for the entire Battery to come together in one location.

Throughout the day, we held a series of inter-sport competitions, followed in the evening by the presentation of several awards—including recognition for the Best Gunner—accompanied by speeches celebrating our Battery's long and distinguished history. A sit-down meal offered our troops the chance to relax, and the evening concluded with a small raffle aimed at boosting morale and camaraderie prior to the commencement of our well-earned Christmas leave.

We are grateful to have been awarded £500 from the Royal Artillery Association (RAA) in support of our celebrations. The RAA disburses over £150,000 annually in support of Community Welfare, with a focus on assisting our veteran community through the RAA Branch network—of which all active Batteries are a part—and through activities that bring together the serving and retired members of the Gunner family (such as RA Assembly, Remembrance events, Sandown, and activities at the National Memorial Arboretum). Of this funding, over £40,000 is distributed each year directly to Batteries and Regiments to support events that build unit cohesion and strengthen the bond between serving soldiers and the veteran community. In addition, a further £500 from Battery funds was allocated to support our Battery Birthday and Christmas celebrations.



57 (Bhurtpore) Battery

47 Regiment Royal Artillery

On Friday 16 January 2026, members of 57 (Bhurtpore) Battery Royal Artillery gathered in

the 47 Regiment RA Sergeants' and Warrant Officers' Mess to mark a significant moment in Battery history: the 200th anniversary of the end of the Siege of Bhurtpore (1826).

The evening brought together all ranks to honour the Battery's heritage and reflect on the legacy forged during the historic campaign from which the Battery takes its distinguished title.

A highlight of the evening was the participation of representatives from each Troop, who delivered short but poignant accounts of key moments in the Battery's history. These reflections connected past to present, helping today's soldiers better understand the deep traditions and sense of purpose that continue to shape 57 (Bhurtpore) Battery.

Guests enjoyed a formal three course dinner, during which camaraderie, professional pride, and shared identity were evident throughout the Mess. The atmosphere fostered team cohesion and strengthened bonds across ranks—an important component of the Battery's continued success as Unit of Action for Watchkeeper through to 2027.

The Battery is especially grateful to the Royal Artillery Association, whose generous financial support significantly enhanced the event. Their contribution allowed the evening to be marked with the dignity and sense of occasion befitting such an important anniversary, ensuring that all who attended benefited from a memorable and meaningful celebration.



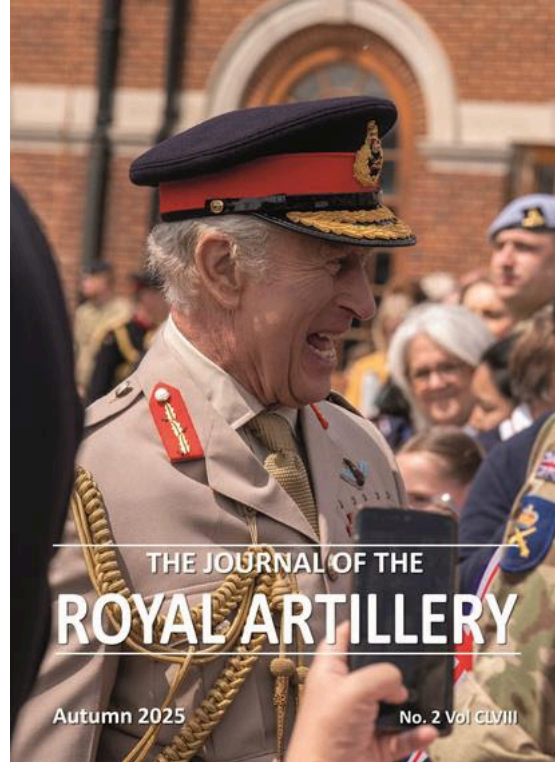
· Communications ·

[Gunner & Journal of the Royal Regiment of Artillery](#)

The Gunner magazine and Journal of the Royal Artillery are now available to read via the website, please click on the button below to view the recent issue.

[Gunner](#)

[RA Journal](#)



•Notices•

Applying for Deferred or Preserved Pension.....

When you discharge from the Armed Forces, you may leave with deferred or preserved pension entitlement. This is a pension which is due to you at a later date.

It is important to note that your pension will not be paid automatically, and you must claim this by completing and submitting an AFPS Form 8 which is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

You do not have to apply in advance, but it is helpful if you submit your application up to 6 months in advance of your pension due date, if you are able. This helps the AFPS to prevent delays in making your payments.

Once your application has been completed, Equiniti Paymaster will arrange to pay your pension to you. This will be paid monthly and in arrears.

If you are unsure about when your Deferred or Preserved pension can be claimed, more information is available [A_Guide_to_Deferred_and_Preserved_Pension_Entitlement.pdf](#)

RAA Annual Return & Summary of Accounts

Thank you to all Branch Treasurer's who submitted their Summary of Accounts for 2025, very much appreciated.

Branches who have not submitted their Branch Annual Return and an up-to-date nominal roll, please forward to Fay Chapman soonest - fay.chapman107@mod.gov.uk

Military History Webinars

The RA Historical Society arranges Zoom On-Line Webinars for its members on Gunner military history subjects. If you would like a copy of the Back Catalogue with links to the You Tube recordings of webinars held in the last 12 Months, please contact the RAHS Secretary.

If you wish to attend the webinars below please contact the RAHS Secretary, Lt Col Richard Clayton: richard.clayton312@gmail.com:

RA Historical Society 2026 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/ Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
Wednesday 15 April 1045 to 1600 hrs	Congreve Lecture Day, Newcome Hall, Larkhill	Fishguard 1797: The last invasion of Britain. The Royal Garrison Artillery 1899-1924	Mr Phil Carradice, Author Mr Philip Magrath, Curator of Artillery, RA Museum	Wednesday 01 April	To be notified
Wednesday 24 June 1930 hrs	Webinar	Ready for the wrong war: the fate of Hannover and the German States 1866	Col Michael Phillips	Sunday 21 June	Nil

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

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

Royal Artillery Museum Update

The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports the RA Museum - read the full details [here](#)



• The Gunner Lottery •

Gunner Lottery is for the benefit of the Gunner charities and the Lottery can raise much needed funds and raise awareness of the good work done by the Royal Artillery charities. Thank you to everyone who supports the Lottery and congratulations to the winners each week. Good luck in the weekly Draws.

3 Digits: You'll win 5 Entries into the next Draw

4 Digits: £25 Cash Prize

5 Digits: £1,000 Cash Prize

6 Digits: £25,000 Cash Prize

You can take part as an individual or syndicate; Battery, Regiment or RAA Branch. You could be in with a chance of winning the top prize of £25,000 each week.

The Draw takes place every Friday.

JOIN TODAY [Gunner Lottery](#)



GUNNER LOTTERY

ROYAL ARTILLERY CHARITIES

JOIN TODAY

CASH PRIZES UP TO

£25,000

Supporting those who serve
Supporting those who served

For every £1 entry, at least 50p goes directly to Royal Artillery charities.

The poster features a QR code, a circular portrait of a woman in a military beret, and a group of soldiers in uniform standing in front of a building.

REJOINERS: YOUR NATION NEEDS YOU

ARE YOU AN EX-REGULAR OFFICER OR SOLDIER?
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT REJOINING THE ARMY?

DID YOU KNOW?

Depending on your personal circumstances, if you've left within the last 36 months, you could be fast-tracked back in within a month or sooner.

READY
RESILIENT
RESPONSIVE



REJOINERS: YOUR NATION NEEDS YOU

THERE ARE TWO ROUTES AVAILABLE TO REJOINERS:

Fast Track Pathway. Is A Veteran Who:

- Left the Regular Army within the last 36 months.
- Is returning to the same Main Trade and capbadge.
- Had no less than 24 months remaining engagement or commission.
- On leaving had a medical grade of Medically Fully Deployable or Limited Deployable and can self-declare they have had no significant injury or illness.
- Have no unspent convictions.

Regular Rejoinder Pathway. This is for veterans who left the Regular Army but who are not eligible for the Fast Track. Your pathway is approximately 8 weeks, but can vary based on medicals, security vetting and interviews.

Fast Track Pathway - 4 weeks



Regular Rejoinder Pathway - Approximately 8 weeks

Age limit. The upper age limit for all rejoinders is 57.

How to apply?

<https://apply.army.mod.uk/how-to-join/entryoptions/regular-army-rejoinder>
or call the rejoinder team on 0345 600 8080

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