



MARCH 2023

EX DARTMOOR EXPLORER
EX NEW YEARS JUMP 23

ROYAL ARTILLERY LADIES
NETBALL TEAM

GUNNER

#oneregiment

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Gunner Publications
RHQ RA,
Royal Artillery Barracks,
Larkhill, Salisbury,
Wiltshire,
SP4 8QT

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GUNNER



MARCH 2023

Registered Charity Number 1122002

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Colonel (Retd) M G J Carter Royal Artillery Regimental Secretary

I was delighted to be asked to write the guest editorial for this edition of Gunner and congratulate the Executive Editor for his successful track record in persuading others to carry out this task!

As you will see from the articles in this edition, the first couple of months of 2023 have certainly been busy and for many regiments have been testing, whether that be related to operational deployments, equipment, training or personnel. As a regiment, our support to Ukraine has been vitally important but has brought particular challenges. Many members of the regiment will be preparing to move location and / or roles as the effects of the Integrated Review and increases in our Air Defence capability come into effect later in the year.

Among this heightened level of activity we continue to plan and deliver a range of events and activities in support of the wider Gunner community – serving personnel, veterans and families. The first of these was the Royal Artillery Gold Cup, which took place at Sandown Park on 16 February. Described by the Master Gunner St James's Park as one of our two 'flagship' events, it proved to be a highly successful and enjoyable day for a wide cross section of the Gunner family. The only grumble was the fact that my modest winnings of £18.25 did not quite stretch to buying three pints at the bar!

We now look ahead to the Royal Artillery Boxing Finals on 9 March and Gunner Sunday at Chelsea Hospital on 16 April. I would certainly encourage members of the serving regimental and veteran community to attend the latter event and meet our Gunner In Pensioners.

One of my roles as Regimental Secretary is to act as Chief Executive for the Royal Artillery Association. Last year we launched an initiative to see how we could make the Association more relevant and attractive to serving Gunners and those who have recently left. While we are absolutely committed to maintaining the traditional, regional based branch structure, we recognise that this model is not able to meet the requirements of a younger and more dispersed community. While the number of regional branches has remained reasonably steady, there are large areas of the country that have no local branch.

To try and address these challenges, we have been evolving a different model of branches that exist online and bring together those who have interests in common or who wish to keep in touch with former comrades from their Battery of Regiment. An example of 'common interest' branches would be the embryonic Riders' Branch which aims to bring together those with an interest in motor-cycling. Another example is a Gunner E-Gamers group, who the RAA was able to support financially to purchase a server for the E-gaming hub at Larkhill. Many 'Old Comrades' groups already exist and we are in the process of reaching out to them to see how the RAA can help and support them, without imposing unwanted administration and some of the more traditional requirements linked to the Association. Our aim is to ensure that the RAA is able to reach out and support comradeship and the Gunner ethos across the serving and veteran community and for the Association to be something that individuals join when they join the Gunners, not some years after they leave.

The RAA Secretary, Maj Dickie Davies has provided more details on this initiative in the RA charities section of this edition.

Finally I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to the many members of the serving regiment and veteran community who have supported the regimental charities over the last year. Whether it is through the Service Pay Giving Scheme, collections or donations, your generosity has enabled us to allocate £714K to support members of the Gunner family who find themselves in need this year. In addition a total of £204K has been allocated to support heritage; £194K to support Gunner sports; £92K in unit welfare grants and £74K in general grants to regiments. The RAA has also set aside £35K to support Battery level comradeship events. The trustees are mindful of the increasing pressure on peoples' finances and are extremely grateful for your generosity in supporting the charities that are there to support you – for life. Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner.



The Royal Artillery Gold Cup is one of the oldest events in the Racing Calendar. The inaugural event was held in 1862, although it was not until twelve months later – 156 years ago – that the now familiar race title came into existence when it was staged at Eltham. Following in the footsteps of the Grand Military Meeting, which was first held in 1841, the meeting immediately proved extremely popular with members of the Regiment. The first winner was a horse by the name of Chickahominy, ridden by Captain John Ruck-Keene.

Sandown Park first hosted the meeting in 1878 which was notable for the success of Swift, who provided Lieutenant Henry Dalbiac with the second of four consecutive winning rides in the race. Dalbiac was another colourful character of the early days of the Gold Cup. He served in several of the Imperial campaigns that took place in the late 1800s and thereafter became the subject of Kipling's famous work "The Jacket". It was not only Sandown Park that hosted the Royal Artillery meeting in its fledgling days. Several tracks in the south London area were used in the 1800s and into the 20th century, including long-forgotten circuits at Croydon, Bromley, Plumstead and Aldershot.

The Great War halted virtually all racing activities across the country and the 1914 Royal Artillery Meeting was the last for six years. Finally the meeting was revived in 1920 and the race was run for the final time at Aldershot, transferring back to its familiar home at Sandown Park the following year. The race was halted during WWII and in 1949 after a period of ten years, the Royal Artillery Gold Cup was run again. Times were still hard, with the majority of the Army serving overseas and rationing, both human and equine, still in force the continuation of the meeting was a major struggle. The popularity of the meeting remained strong, but the availability of suitably qualified jockeys was a problem and in 1960 the decision was made to open the race to former as well as serving Gunner officers. It was to be the first of many changes to the qualifications of the race that nowadays allow former and serving members of all ranks of the Armed Services to compete.

The late 1970s and 1980s was a golden period as far as equine heroes were concerned. In 1978 the race was privileged with the presence of former Cheltenham Gold Cup winner Ten Up. By then enjoying a more sedate life in hunter chases, Ten Up proved that the old class was still there by landing the Royal Artillery Cup that year and going onto land the prize twice more in 1980 and 1982. The rest of that decade was dominated by two horses – Quarrier and the remarkable De Pluvinel. Quarrier, owned by Major Sir Kenneth Butt and ridden by Tim Thomson-Jones, won the race in 1984, 1986 and 1987, but it was the exploits of De Pluvinel that still dominate the record books. De Pluvinel ran in the Gold Cup no less than eight times from 1982 to 1990.

The Royal Artillery Gold Cup went from strength to strength in the 1990s and into the new millennium. One of the loudest cheers heard at the meeting for many a year was in 1996 when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother received the famous trophy as the owner of the successful Norman Conqueror. Her Majesty had been an enthusiastic supporter of the meeting and had presented the Gold Cup for well over thirty years; it was fitting that for once she got to receive rather than present the trophy. The 11 years from 1998-2009 saw a dry spell for Gunner riders, broken in 2010 when Captain Harry Wallace won on Mr Big for owner Maj John Thorneloe who served in the Indian Mountain Artillery. It was a sad reminder that soldiers today are often put in harm's way as John's son Lt Col Rupert Thorneloe WG had been killed in Afghanistan the previous year.

The last ten years have seen no shortage of eventful, important and poignant renewals of the race, with Lance Bombardier Sally Randell becoming the first woman to win the Royal Artillery Gold Cup in 2011 on Surenaga under the ownership of 100 Yeomanry Regiment RA(V). In 2015, it was business as usual for the owner-trainer-rider combination of Maj Mike Shaw, Paul Nicholls and LBdr Jody Sole as they followed up Gwanako's 2013 success with Cowards Close. 12-months later, Jennys Surprise took the 2016 renewal amid emotional scenes in the winners' enclosure. The eight-year-old looked well beaten but rallied under pressure to deliver a 'dream come true' win for Brodie Hampson in her first ride in the race. The feat was made even more special as Hampson was riding for her father, who was given just 30 days to live at the beginning of December. Sgt Mark Hampson, who served in 47 Regiment Royal Artillery for 22 years, was 'chuffed to bits' to see his daughter win for the first time in his colours following many attempts. He sadly passed away just three months later. Brodie continued to do him proud in last year's renewal as she rode a perfect race on Carlos De Fruitier to give her two Royal Artillery Gold Cups to her name.

Capt Guy Disney and the David Pipe-trained Rathlin Rose made history in 2017 and 2018, becoming the first dual winner since De Pluvinel. Disney, who lost his lower right leg when his vehicle was hit by a grenade while serving in Afghanistan in 2009, is the very first amputee jockey to win at a professional racecourse in Britain. A unique event in the Racing Calendar, it is a credit to the Committee that the Royal Artillery Gold Cup is as popular as ever. Without their commitment and fortitude, and the wonderful support of Sandown Park, the annual gathering would surely be but a distant memory. It remains one of the Royal Artillery's flagship days, hugely enjoyed by the Regiment and the racing public alike and long may it continue to be so.



One hundred and fifty six years of the Royal Artillery Gold Cup





Commando Gunners in Oman



In October 2022, 8 (Alma) Cdo Bty deployed to Oman on Exercise MUSANDAM FORT in support of Bravo Coy, 40 Cdo Royal Marines.

The first stage of the exercise saw a combined 29, 24 and 40 Commando group conduct RSOI training in the North of Oman. This included desert survival training provided by Mountain Leaders from 40 Commando, including lessons on desert flora and fauna, navigation, as well as how to humanely despatch and safely cook some local goats. We also used the RSOI package to familiarise ourselves with new forms of equipment being used by Littoral Response Group (South) (LRG(S)), most prominently the MPU5 Radio. Following this RSOI week, the main body of the Battery moved south to Ras Madrasah Joint Training Area to begin Phase 2 which was our Special to Arm

package to achieve Gun and Tactical Group TQCC. We also took the opportunity to conduct crucial Tactical Development of how the Battery will operate in the LRG construct.



Anchor OP in Support of the CALFEX

Our 11 day gunnery exercise involved tactical day and night navigation and gun position occupation, standard mission



practices and also the conduct of direct fire and modified indirect serials and the provision of Air OPs from UK Wildcat's provided by 1 Regt Army Air Corps. Concurrently, the B Company e-FST remained in the North of Oman, conducting joint CQB and amphibious training with Bravo Coy and the Royal Parachute Regiment of Oman, before then joining the gun group in Ras Madrasah.



Firing in Support of the CALFEX

After a 4 day re-cock back at the Joint Logistical Support Base, the Battery redeployed for an 8 day all arms exercise. This began with CQB and heavy weapons training with the 2 SCOTS Battlegroup, the conduct of Live Fire Planning serials for the OPs, the delivery of Arty Target lessons (where an untrained observer is capable of requesting artillery fires onto a target) to members of 2 SCOTS, as well as live quick action missions by the gun group. The culmination of the exercise was a night Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX) in support of a deliberate Raid by Bravo Coy. The guns of the Black Eight fired over 350 live High Explosive and Smoke rounds on objectives supporting the Bravo Company assault, in conjunction with 81mm Mortars from 40 Commando Mortar Troop and with the HMGs, GPMGs and GMGs of the Fire Support Group.



Direct Fire Serials

The final phase of the exercise helped to prove the key relationships between the various Commando elements aligned to LRG(S) and was undoubtedly the high point of the 2 months spent out in Oman. Despite some teething difficulties in utilising the Joint Training Area and the unique challenges posed by the desert environment, many lessons have been captured from the deployment and will be carried forward to our future development of 8 Battery's involvement and deployment within both LRG(S) and the UK Commando Force.

by 2Lt Toby Johnson
8 (Alma) Cdo Bty RA





Exercise DARTMOOR EXPLORER



A posting to the Gunner Corps Engagement Team (CET) is an excellent opportunity for soldiers to have a period of stable but varied routine away from RD. Its core output is Army Recruiting and as a result a typical week could mean staying in any of the UK's 601 Holiday Inn hotels, delivering Command Tasks in schools, standing under a gazebo on Wolverhampton High Street handing out leaflets or briefing candidates who are waiting on a Basic Training start date. But time is also set aside for professional and personal development and the maintenance of military skills. The CoC's aim is to return soldiers to RD better skilled than when they arrived. It was on that basis that I was tasked to plan and deliver Ex DARTMOOR EXPLORER, a NAVEX to refresh, build and test the CET's nav skills.

There were several challenges throughout the planning phase. Trying to pin down a suitable time for a recce between all our engagement taskings being the first. I then had the opportunity to become familiar with BAMs, booking vehicles, writing admin instructions, completing kit checks and acquiring the correct maps (I even roped my wife into helping fablon them on the kitchen table!). These were just a few of the hurdles I had to overcome with the support of my CoC to achieve mission success.

As you would expect, the rain began hammering down right as we drove by the sign for the town of Okehampton. Luckily, day one consisted of theory lessons in the classroom, but not before collecting our trademark itchy blankets and settling into our accommodation – a far cry from the comfort of our usual Holiday Inn Express. The team



then got to work on some navigation theory. We kept it conversational and collaborative and tried to make everyone feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from them. Working through the acronym DDCRAPs refreshed everyone's basic skills before combining those individual elements to move onto the art of route card writing – navigation's answer to Fire Planning. The day culminated in homework; checkpoints for the following day's route were circulated and everyone was required to prep their Route Card to be put to the test, knowing they could be selected at random to brief and then lead a leg.

We began day two 'carb loading' on a typical Battle Camp breakfast. An hour later we stepped off to execute the practical element of the exercise. The weather at this point was a bit windy but, despite what our smartphones had told us, remarkably dry! The first leg was plane sailing and finished at a little bridge not far from Cullever Steps. The weather was still dry, morale was high, and the sun could even be seen on occasion peeking through gaps in the clouds. The second leg was when our weather apps were proven accurate. The heavens opened in dramatic fashion as we moved up Oke Tor. Gore-Tex was deployed and we pushed on to checkpoint three – a bivouac site, though we all agreed it was a bivvy site only for the hardcore. Between checkpoints three and four Dartmoor showed its true colours. The rain turned to ferocious hail whipping across the moor on gale-force winds. We were shielding our eyes just so we could look where we were going to continue moving forwards. The hail eventually subsided as we fought through some rough

marshy ground and made our way towards Thirlstone Cairn, where we were able to get some shelter from the wind and be briefed on the next leg. We moved further south to checkpoint five where we stopped to refuel after the four hours of hiking nipped by that point. We took shelter from the wind in a woodblock and, despite the Gucci civvy waterproofs most of the team were wet. As we replenished our expended calories, some members of the team could be seen dancing from side to side, jumping up and down or even doing press ups to keep warm. Three more checkpoints to go. Grey Withers Stone Circles was our next destination and as we moved south, the weather gradually became more bearable, waterproofs were stowed away, and the occasional smile could be seen. As we passed checkpoint seven the rain had stopped, the wind had calmed and the sun was teasing us again. We were on the home stretch; the weather was actually quite nice! We finished up in the small village of Postbridge where the troops were able to regain the feeling in their hands and change into some dry clothes.

Having successfully navigated across Dartmoor for six hours in fairly testing conditions, the team felt a great sense of accomplishment. Mission accomplished... the finish point was conveniently adjacent to the East Dart Inn which welcomed us with a log fire and a well-earned pint.

2023 looks equally fun and challenging for the CET, with a BCS Exercise, a ski trip to Austria and a Battlefield Study all in the FoE to complement our engagement commitments.

by Bdr Chris Archer
5 Regt RA



Introduction to the Royal Artillery and Fire Discipline



Despite having Gunner Capbadged detachments, the Army's youth organisation, the Army Cadet Force's training syllabus is heavily biased to Infantry skills. As a result, these potential soldiers of the future have a clear understanding of the infantry but less for other Regts or Corps. Some Corps such as REME or Royal Engineers have clear advantages for a later civilian career. Yet the Gunners have many varied platforms, roles and tasks and a key part in winning war on land. So how do we demonstrate to a young cadet that there is more to the Royal Artillery than big guns, loud bangs and industrial deafness.

101RA, 4RA and 5RA cooperated to run a Royal Artillery Cadet Insight Camp over the 24-27 Oct 22. This is the second time the event has been run, but the first since COVID-19. 36 Cadets from Northumbria ACF and their adult volunteers were accommodated at Stainton Camp near Barnard Castle, an ACF designated camp. On day 1 they assembled at Stainton, had an introduction to the Royal Artillery and an

introduction to Fire Discipline in readiness for the following two days.



The training by 5RA and 4RA was excellent, going beyond what we had asked for. At 5RA the Cadets crawled over a MAMBA from K Bty, assembled and disassembled LCMRs with 53 Bty and learnt of their role in 16 AA Bde and conducted fire missions as observers on VBS with 4/73 Bty. The following day, it was all things Light Gun with 3/29 Bty, with equipment stands of L118, a Landrover CP, FST complete with Foxhound and EPLS. Further training on observing fire missions on the VBS was conducted with an FST. However the bit most of the Cadets enjoyed the most (except for one who



preferred the MAMBA) was loading, firing and unloading drills on the Light Gun.



What really made the camp successful was the interaction of the young soldiers and detachment commanders with the Cadets. It was noted that our young soldiers, despite being tasked during a leave period, did not condescend to the cadets but were enthusiastic about their trade and role. This made an impression as two non-RA capbadged cadets approached us as they now wish to join the RA, having seen the wide range of roles and tasks of the Royal Artillery.



Overall the camp offered to the cadets the challenging and varied roles of the Royal Artillery. We are looking forward to running

the course again with some very minor changes here and there. The camp was a success and the cadets have been awarded a badge which they are now authorised to wear on their backing plates.

by Maj Simon Jackson RA and WO2 Jacon Cartwright
101st (Northumbrian) Regiment Royal Artillery





From the Dead Sea to Mount Troodos



On a rainy afternoon of Sunday the 23rd of October 2022, members of 159 (Colenso) Battery of 26 Regiment Royal Artillery marked the start of Ex STEEL LIGHTNING 22. They set off from Larkhill camp and travelled to Heathrow Airport to begin their journey to Israel. A country steeped in the history of the sands of time, with vast deserts including the Negev desert, an area where 159 Battery were to carry out live fire training of the Exactor 2 precision fires launcher.

The Battery stayed in the small town of Mitzpe Ramon, located to the Southwest of Israel and in the heart of a sandy landscape. Personnel were broken down into two groups, firing a series of live missiles throughout Monday and Tuesday night on the Shdema Weapons Test range area. On the Wednesday morning, after a busy few nights, personnel were taken to the impact zone along a precarious road and in a somewhat fragile makeshift bus, to see the impact on the targets and to gain an understanding of the effect of our ordnance. Following the range inspection, the Battery were debriefed on all the missions

and in a forum, openly discussed analysis and key take aways.



Following the hard work put into the training and live firing serials, members of 159 Battery could begin to let their hair down. They took in the sights of the desert, the cultures and cuisines of Mitzpe Ramon, but more so of Israel.

On the Thursday, the Battery travelled across the barren desert to visit the hilltop fortress known as Masada. A rickety cable car ride to the top of the fortress (1,300ft above sea level) allowed us to explore the last bastion of the



Kingdom of Judea. The fortress was lost to the hands of the Romans in 74AD, where all the defenders were either destroyed by the attacking Romans or fell upon their own swords. The fortress itself provided amazing views from the high walls, which kept a watchful eye over the clear blue waters of the Dead Sea, the next stop on the tour. After a quick lunch we all took in the bizarre experience of floating in a sea with a 34 percent salt content. The high salt levels made our skin become soft and slimy and some of us were unfortunate enough to get it into our eyes. That evening we would return to the hotel to prepare for our flight to Cyprus the following morning.



159 Battery arrived in Cyprus on Friday afternoon, and travelled to Troodos Station (6,400ft above sea level) where we would be staying during Ex COLENZO ESCAPE, our week of adventurous training (AT). The Battery split into three groups and conducted a round robin of AT consisting of hiking, mountain biking and rock climbing. All activities were designed to push us out of our comfort zone and strengthen the bonds holding together the inner workings of the fabric of our battery.

Everyone threw themselves into the various AT activities, some even conquering fears at the top of a 30m abseil or whilst riding down a mountain at high altitudes, they certainly pushed themselves out of their comfort zones and beyond. Following an intense three days

of action-packed activities, the Battery ventured from the mountains down to a sunny beach where a series of extreme water sports and events were waiting for them. There were 'Top Gun' moments involving volleyball and some impressive moustaches, as well as paddle boarding and being dragged behind a speed boat on an inflatable buoy... and for those who just simply wanted to relax and swim in the sea, they could do just that. The following day, the Battery returned home to the UK, recuperated and ready to return to regimental duties.



Once 159 Battery had returned to the UK, they were straight into their ongoing commitments including infantry style exercises, operational readiness training, overseas activities, and involvement in the Hyde Park Memorial Sunday Service. It is safe to say that 159 (Colenso) Battery have worked hard delivering a successful live firing exercise in Israel, followed by a well-deserved week of AT in Cyprus. Two weeks spent sharpening their skills and building everlasting bonds. Onto the next challenge.

by Gnr Jago-Simonsen
159 (Colenso) Battery
26th Regiment Royal Artillery

Annual Royal Artillery Personal Development Awards



The annual Royal Artillery Personal Development Awards (sponsored by RACPD) celebrate soldiers' and units' personal development (PD) achievements and acknowledge and reward their commitment and aspiration to continually progress. They also recognise the important contribution that PD makes to improving an individual's competencies, thereby supporting an increase in overall effectiveness of the Regiment.

The awards are open to all those serving in a regular or reserve RA unit who have achieved a PD qualification or supported others to gain qualifications. Learners can self-nominate or are nominated by their regiment and all submissions are reviewed by the awarding panel. This year the panel included Lt Col Andrew Swannell (SO1 Personnel

RHQRA), Steve Ellison (RACPD Trustee), Claire Foxley (Chief Executive RACPD), John Le Feuvre (Operations Director RACPD) and WO2 Lee Porter (RABSM RHQRA).

Finalists were invited to attend the dinner night on Thursday 27 October in the Henry VC Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess, Royal Artillery Barracks, Larkhill with results announced on the night for the first time with Master Gunner St James's Park Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB making the presentations. Congratulations to all recipients, it has been an extremely busy year since COVID restrictions have been lifted, so to have completed personal development during the regiment's busy schedule and to have achieved in the timeframe is an incredible achievement!

AWARD	AWARD INFORMATION	RECIPIENT
Learner of the Year	Awarded to an individual who has exceeded and gone above and beyond normal duties, excelling personally and professionally.	Bdr Greig Knight, 29 Cdo Regt RA
Outstanding Achiever of the Year	Recognises an individual's outstanding contribution to completing any learning. The individual may have achieved more than usual or may have struggled, thus making an enormous effort to learn and achieve.	LBdr Thomas Blythe, 29 Cdo Regt RA Highly Commended - Gnr Ellie Mitchell, The King's Troop RHA
PD Unit of the Year	Celebrates the success of a Unit as a whole.	32 Regt RA Highly Commended - 5 Regt RA and 7 Para RHA
Apprentice of the Year	Open to any learner who has completed an apprenticeship or learning at level 2 during the academic year 2021/22.	LBdr Karl Martin, 32 Regt RA Highly Commended - LBdr Stephen Pearson, 29 Cdo Regt RA and Gnr Vilitati Vuadomo Nawula, 5 Regt RA
Advanced Course Learner of the Year	Open to any learner who has completed qualifications at level 3 or above during the academic year 2020/21.	LBdr Urala Rabuka, 47 Regt RA Highly Commended - Sgt Adam Marriss, 29 Cdo Regt RA
Assessor of the Year	Awarded to any assessor or SME who is currently supporting apprenticeship programmes for RACPD.	Bdr Laura Robertson, The King's Troop RHA Highly Commended - Bdr Amber Corcutt, 4 Regt RA
PD Supporter of the Year	Awarded to a member of the regiment who has gone over and above their normal duties to support personal development learning in the regiments.	Bdr Kendal Wiltshire, 26 Regt RA Highly Commended - Sgt Ratu Uluibau Cavalevu 5 Regt RA



Exercise NEW YEARS JUMP 23



Fresh from welcoming in the 2023 New Year, ten members of 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (7 Para RHA) joined a contingent from 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team (16 AA BCT) and deployed to Japan in support of Ex NEW YEARS JUMP. Airborne Troops from two NATO countries: United Kingdom (16 AA BCT), United States (82nd & 11th Airborne Divisions), plus those from Australia (Australian Defence Parachuting School), were hosted by their Japanese Self-Defence Force (JSDF) counterparts. The multi-national parachuting display was a first for UK forces in Japan. Unique in its opportunity to build cross partner relationships, the exercise was also a clear demonstration of a renewed Indo-Pacific focus that is developing to face emerging regional threats.

Across eight days in Tokyo, personnel conducted static line parachute descents

from JSDF Chinooks & C130-Hs, completed an integrated Air Assault demonstration and took part in numerous cultural facing activities. The week culminated in an exhibition day (Sunday 8 January) attended by the Japanese Defence Minister, senior Officers from all partner nations and near 10,000 members of the Japanese public. Live streamed across YouTube and several other online platforms, the day was heavily resourced with both air and ground units demonstrating the full range of JSDF capabilities before progressing into the integrated air manoeuvre aspects.

For the members of 7 Para RHA the additional opportunity to both experience and understand Japanese culture was invaluable. From attending the impressive Shinshoji Buddhist Temple through to singing Karaoke in one of the many bars in the Shibuya district, no chance was missed.



The hosting of the JDSF soldiers throughout these cultural and exploration periods was second to none; they are truly passionate about developing both professional and personable relationships. All members of the exercise were taken aback by the extent of their truly accommodating nature.



Looking forward, both UK and JDSF personnel are equally excited by the opportunities that future exercises and

integration activities will bring. Creating stronger bonds between 7 Para RHA and 1st Airborne Brigade (JDSF) counterparts, alongside our current NATO and other partners, will undoubtedly bring its rewards. Already seen from Ex VIGILANT ISLES in November 2022, the benefit from developing interoperability and therefore increasing efficiency on multi-national military activity is crucial. Moreover, the social benefits brought from free-flowing sake also bring their own reward! エアボーン (Airborne).



by Capt Park RA
F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery
7th Regiment Royal Horse Artillery





The end of 2022 saw the completion of Young Officer's Course 228



The course builds on the management and leadership skills that officers learnt during their time at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, whilst also teaching them the tactical and technical knowledge each of them require to succeed in their first posting within their Regiment.

The first week of the course saw the YOs travel to London for a heritage visit. The course visited monuments around the capital which hold great importance to the Regiment, including the Royal Artillery Memorial, St George's Garrison Church, the Cenotaph and Woolwich Garrison. The YOs gave presentations on the sites and memorials which built on their historical and cultural awareness of our Royal Regiment, but also put into perspective some of the achievements and sacrifices others had

made whilst wearing the same cap badge. At the very end of the heritage week, the course attended the 96-gun salute at Stonehenge to commemorate the loss of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A special opportunity to recollect such an incredible service to the nation and the commonwealth but also the Royal Regiment as Captain-General.

The next phase of the course was dedicated to giving the YOs a greater understanding of the capabilities and regiments within the Artillery. Each regiment sent a representative to Larkhill to inform the YOs on both the equipment they use and the life and culture at their respective units. At the end of these briefs the YOs submitted their preferences for their first posting.

The following few weeks saw the course spend time in the classrooms and LBTA,



brushing up on their communications knowledge, gaining an insight into the world of artillery recce and being assessed on their ability to set up complex radio systems and use COMBAT software. Just some of the technical requirements each YO will need to utilise on exercises and operations in their first roles.

The course conducted a battlefield study to Normandy. The trip began with a visit to Fort Nelson, before making the crossing to France. The YOs were each given an essay style question related to both modern artillery employment and a given area of Normandy. In pairs they researched and analysed their questions and presented them back to their peers and the instructing staff. The course was also fortunate enough to experience the 'tropical' temperatures of the Channel whilst remembering the heroic actions of Stanley Hollis VC. The trip concluded with visits to the British Normandy Memorial, the Bayeux War Cemetery, and the Normandy American Cemetery; a humbling way to summarise the experience.

The YOs spent the remainder of the Troop Commander's module refining their report writing and re-evaluating their soldier career management skills. The course sat on mock promotion boards and learnt how best to support the soldiers in their regiments with career courses, disciplinary issues, appraisals, and welfare concerns.

With the first module finished the YOs separated into their various disciplines: Close Support, ISTAR, Ground Based Air Defence and Divisional Fires. For the second half of the course each group learnt and exercised the direct operational skills they will need dependant on where they will

be undertaking their first role. Each group gained currency and competency for their given field and utilised the skills learnt in a summative exercise for each of the disciplines.

This phase ended with a marathon distance march around SPTA with each participant carrying 15kg. Over £1,200 was raised for both Mind and The Royal Artillery Charitable Fund.

After their formal Dine-In into the Regiment, this YOs' course was fortunate to end their time with some adventure training in the form of alpine skiing in Tignes. The trip was incredibly valuable to the YOs and gave them the insight and experience to deliver similar opportunities to their soldiers. This could not have happened without the assistance from the RACPD and the RAI.

This was the first course post the pandemic to return to completing a normal syllabus. Having spent over 15 months on some of the best leader development courses in the world, they are all fit, enthusiastic, driven and now have the great privilege of leading the young men and women of the Royal Artillery.

by 2Lt Jack Dorsett RA
29th Commando Royal Artillery





The origins of the Special Observer



The most reliable, flexible and effective form of target indication was, and still is, provided by the trained OP soldier operating deep in enemy territory.” Major General ACP Stone CB.

The cold war period and the possibility of conflict with the USSR was the greatest threat to the West. This lasted from the end of World War II to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent breakup of the USSR.

One of the units raised for this theatre was the Special OP Troop of the British Army. Devised in 1982 and responsible for engaging Soviet forces behind enemy lines. The stay behind concept wasn’t new, and several units were raised during World War II in all theatres to provide this essential capability.

At the start of the 1980s stay behind operations were being conducted by the reservist units of the Corps Patrol

Unit, consisting of 21 and 23 SAS (R) and the Honourable Artillery Company. The requirement for a regular component to conduct similar type operations was obvious.

In 1962 the Royal Armoured Corps raised the Special Reconnaissance Squadron who would provide a regular Army component until such time reservists could be mobilised and reach the continent and deploy. The Squadron was established for 20 patrols and in all a unit strength of 100 ranks. This squadron had a very short existence with their role ceasing in 1964 and their responsibilities handed over to the Corps Patrol Unit. The similarities between the selection, training and concept of operations of SRS and their Special OP counter parts 20 years later were significant.

The Gunners also needed this capability to be able to effectively prosecute high payoff targets



in the depth battle and deliver accurate and destructive fires on these key enemy components.

The concept of a Special OP Troop was developed in 1982 by the then Commanding Officer of 5 Regiment Royal Artillery Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) ACP Stone RA. After constructing a coherent argument on paper, he presented it to the Corps Commander General Sir Nigel Bagnall GCB CVO MC who approved and gave permission for the unit to be raised and by February 1983 the first troop was established.

The selection for personnel with attributes that made them capable of working on their own or as part of a small team, behind enemy lines under arduous conditions commenced. The stay behind role required soldiers to remain concealed allowing the advancing enemy army to pass over them so that they were able to engage the command elements, artillery, and other vital components such as signals and logistic elements. This initially would have been with artillery but as British units manoeuvred to pre-planned locations the guns would soon be out of range and fixed wing and guided missiles would be used.

The British Army has a long history of determined men forming specialist units against the odds. And General Stone was about to add another to the Army’s order of battle.

General Stone had passed P Company and so was familiar with their selection procedure. However, he knew the qualities for a Special Observer would be different. The qualities these experienced volunteers would need were first and foremost absolute dedication, a commitment to the task, determination and self-belief. The ability to work in a small and close-knit team and in essence volunteers needed to have the

often-elusive combination of fitness and intelligence underpinned by common sense.

There were other specialist units running courses for the British Army. These included the Airborne and Commando Brigades and, in Special Forces, 14 Intelligence Company and 22 SAS. All ran well known if vastly different selections. It was to these units he turned to devise a selection for choosing Special Observers and the initial cadre of instructors from the SAS, the Parachute Regiment, 14 Intelligence Company, and 148 Commando (Meiktila) Forward Observation Battery.

The challenge was to select personnel with attributes that made them capable of working behind enemy lines under arduous conditions. Survivability was obviously a major issue including the detailed escape and evasion planning for the recovery of soldiers once their tasks were completed. In the late 80’s both 5 and 32 Regiments Special OP Troops merged to form 4/73 (Sphinx) Special OP Battery Royal Artillery.

The full historical story of this role and the continuing story of 4/73 Special OP Battery can be found on The Unconventional Soldier Podcast. 4/73 Bty seeks volunteers from All Arms from all three services.





Exercise REFLECTIVE FOURTH



This January, upon returning from a well-deserved Christmas leave, a group of Soldiers and Officers of 4th Regiment Royal Artillery deployed to the Netherlands to undertake Ex REFLECTIVE FOURTH 23, the 4RA annual Battlefield Study. This was to build upon a week-long series of lectures, excursions and historical equipment displays that the regiment provided in November 22 that set the scene of 1944 Europe and the build-up to the final months of WW2 to provide all personnel with a layer of historical context and knowledge prior to the overseas trip.

Having deployed by ferry from Alanbrooke Barracks personnel began a week-long study of Operation MARKET GARDEN. Troops followed the footsteps of the First British Airborne Division, supported by men from the Glider Pilot Regiment and the Polish Parachute Brigade as well as various overarching strategic formations and partner forces that

all took part in the Battle for Arnhem. From the Division's first landings on the drop zones to the Northeast on the 17th of September, 11Km from the Bridges, all the way to the John Frost Bridge over the River Rhine and back to the Hartenstein Hotel defensive perimeter, exercising troops stopped at key locations to learn and understand the happenings of the operation. All of this was combined with syndicate level discussions and reviews led by both junior and senior ranks all the while being guided and fed detailed information by our subject matter expert, Mr Andy Robertshaw.

The first day of the study started with a brief at Drop Zone Y and S, just outside of Ede. Here, our study guide Andy Robertson reiterated the strategic level situation faced by the Allies in 1944 and talked through the planning process that led up to the landings at Arnhem and the wider intent of the Allied forces at the time. Of note was the description of the DZ



from the parachutists' perspective the night of the drop. In addition, the challenges faced by an expeditionary force when not properly resourced and facing a requirement to rapidly deploy forward to an unknown theatre. These lessons have specific pertinence as in its role within VJTF(L) 4RA may be required to deploy on an expeditionary footing and the challenges of sustainment with strained LOCs are a challenge the Regiment is currently developing SOPs for. Andy's in-depth description set the scene for the following week's learning, highlighting the severity of what the men of the First British Airborne Division faced and the sheer tenacity that they all displayed the evening of the 17th. On this first day personnel also took the opportunity to visit the Commonwealth War Graves site at Oosterbeek and pay homage to the fallen as well as learn about the human cost of combat operations and reflect on the importance of Battlefield Studies in learning how to conduct such operations in future to minimise such loss.

Moving to Arnhem, the study learnt of the difficulties faced by the Division on their advance. Everything from being unable to establish effective communication between the individual sub-units due to the consistency of the soil, to the Dutch's rabbit problem and the resulting fencing spread across the terrain was standing in the 1st Airborne Division's way. Despite this, a single battalion made their way to the John Frost Bridge (Rhine Bridge as it was named then) and established defensive positions on the home bank. While here the exercising troops of Ex REFLECTIVE FOURTH visited the 'Airborne at the Bridge' Museum to gain further understanding of the situation, not only from the division's perspective, but also from the civilian

population left at Arnhem, something which the museum staff had first hand accounts of and historical connections to.

On the third day, the exercising troops visited Oosterbeek, a nearby suburb of Arnhem, and studied the defensive positions around the town as well as an in depth visit to the old Battery site at the southern Church. The troops followed the trace of the defensive perimeter, manned as the Axis forces slowly ground the 1st Airborne Division back towards the River Rhine, stopping at key locations where Mr Robertshaw spoke through how the men would have defended the mix of urban and rural environments. The educational aspect of the study finished at the Hartenstein Hotel, which is now the Airborne Museum and site of the annual festival of remembrance. Here personnel were given free reign to look around and take in the information they had on display as well as take part in the interactive exhibits.

Throughout Ex REFLECTIVE FOURTH personnel from 4RA were hosted and accommodated by our colleagues in the Royal Dutch Army at their Barracks in Amersfoort a short distance away. This provided excellent opportunity for personnel to get an insight into the workings of another NATO military as well as to explore the culture and sites of a historic Dutch town, only 10 minutes walk from the camp. The trip was certainly a welcome return for overseas educational and cultural opportunities following the loss of such during COVID and has certainly set the scene for additional studies in future. 4RA now has its sights firmly set on getting personnel to visit Corunna, the site of the 3/29 Bty battle honour in late 2023.

by Capt Laurence Pilkington RA
4th Regiment Royal Artillery



Master Gunner St James's Park plants the first tree



In between the St Barbara's Day service on Sunday 4th December in the Garrison Church of St Alban with St Barbara at Larkhill, and an all-ranks lunch in the RA Mess attended by 120 serving and retired members of the Regiment including many RAA standard bearers, a small tree-planting ceremony was held.

Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory, in his dual roles of Master Gunner St James's Park and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire planted the first of 70 native trees funded by the Royal Regiment. These will grow to form a sizeable copse as

part of The Queen's Green Canopy project to mark Her Platinum Jubilee this year. The death of our Captain General in September added a note of poignancy to the occasion, following on from prayers offered in church for the six members of the Royal Artillery who had died in service over the past 12 months. The plaque commemorating the event reads:



This Queen's Platinum Jubilee Copse
was inaugurated by the Master Gunner St James's Park
Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL
on behalf of His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire
on St Barbara's Day, 4th December 2022
to commemorate our late and much lamented Captain General
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



by Lt Col Peter Thompson RA
SO2 Reserves



Inter-Corps Championships held in Aldershot



The Royal Artillery 1st team came fourth in Division One (the highest EVER placement), and the Royal Artillery 2nd team were fifth in Division Two. Fantastic achievement.

The new kit/strip is making us look and feel the part of an ever growing team. Of note - the silverware was presented to the following individuals:

- Coaches player - Gnr Antoine from 19 Regt RA
- Player's player - Gnr Bainimoli from 3 RHA

by Maj Jackie Fidler RA
Military Assistant to Director Resources & Policy
Strategic Command



Taekwondo Championships held at the Metrodome Leisure Centre in Barnsley on 22nd January 2023



Sgt Yamie Guba of 3 RHA won the Gold Medal at the Ultimate Taekwondo Championships, held at the Metrodome Leisure Centre in Barnsley on 22 Jan 23.
First Competition of the Year - starts with Gold.
Sgt Guba is now looking forward to a busy 2023 WTF Taekwondo Forecast of Events.





Retired Bombardier Scott Robertson



2022 Wheelchair Rugby World Championship

Retired Bombardier Scott Robertson formerly of the 5th and 19th represented his home of Ireland and The Royal Artillery in the recent Wheelchair Rugby World Cup. Bdr Scott Robertson joined the army in 1995 and was medically discharged in 2016.

Starting out playing casual games in the army and later joining a local wheelchair team, Scott considers it an honour to play for Ireland and to represent wounded veterans, he is a proud Gunner and hopes to encourage other disabled veterans to take up sports. Located in the North East of England, Scott currently runs a wheelchair fitness class at his local veterans centre East Durham Veterans and hopes to begin setting up a rugby team with the support of East Durham Veterans.

Scott has been supported in his world cup journey by Team Ireland, Rugby Ireland, East Durham Veterans and the Royal Artillery as without them he wouldn't have picked up rugby. He would like to thank them all.



The Royal Regiment wishes to congratulate the following:

Appointment to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath

Major General Ludwig Karl Ford CBE

Appointments to and promotions in the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

as Commanders

Major General Mark Pullan MBE

as Officers

Lieutenant Colonel Patrick James Farrell RA

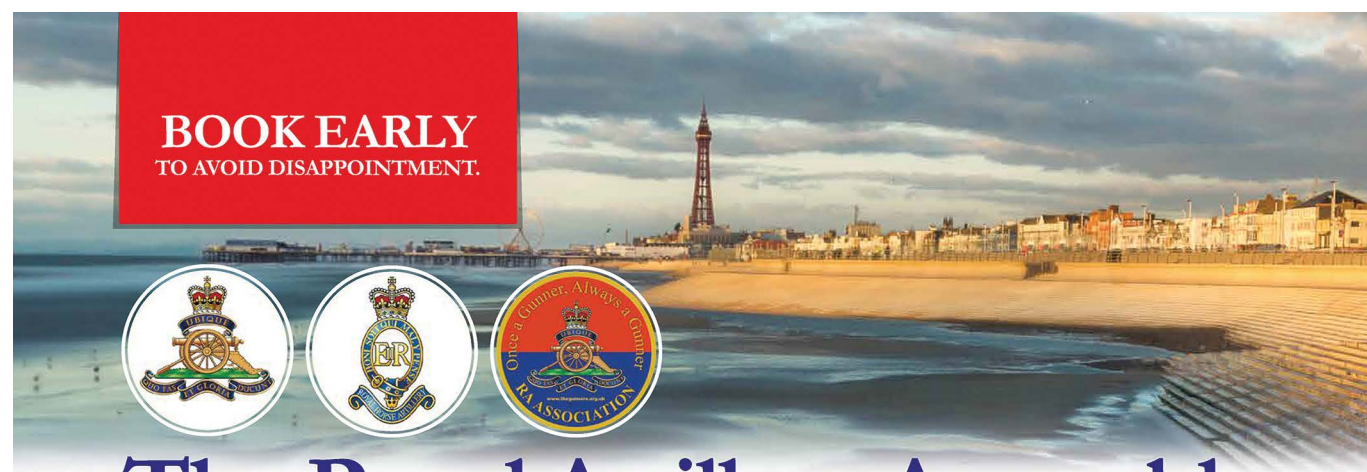
as Members

Lieutenant Colonel Michael James Sharp RA

Major Philip Nicholas Mooney RA, Army Reserve

Major David Robert Thatcher RA

Warrant Officer Class 2 Godfrey Boyd Morris



The Royal Artillery Assembly

FRIDAY 12TH - SUNDAY 14TH MAY 2023
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 13th May) - Just **£152 Per Person**

2 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner - Saturday 13th May) - Just **£126 Per Person**

Grand Gala Dinner Only - No Accommodation £25 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 **0871 222 0031** and quote **RAANB0523**

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

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

For Gala Dinner Only bookings - please call **01253 352 341**

Accommodation reservations cannot be made on this line (01253 352 341)

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



Gunner Sunday

Gunner Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea will take place on Sunday 16th April 2023. Branches and Regiments are encouraged to send representatives, families and friends are welcome to attend.

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

1000 hrs: Assemble and meet in the Octagon Colonnade by the chapel.

1015 hrs: Pensioners and RAA Standard Bearers form up.

1130 hrs: Parade finishes and chapel service begins.

Lunch: After the service, a curry lunch will be served at the Royal Hospital Chelsea to meet and chat to the In-Pensioners. Tickets for the lunch cost £12pp and will be issued by the RAA office, on a first come basis as numbers are limited.

Dress: Suits or blazer with Gunner/Regimental tie.



Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance

The Royal Artillery Association will conduct the Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas on Saturday 22nd July 2023 commencing at 1100 hrs. All members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and their families are welcome to attend. Please find further details of the event www.thegunners.org.uk/events



Wrexham Branch

Members of the Wrexham Branch are extraordinarily proud to congratulate the Association's youngest serving Branch member, Elizabeth Ward, on her recent promotion to Bombardier. Bdr Ward is currently serving with 32 Regiment RA. She has worked extremely hard and has shown dedication and commitment to service life. We wish her continued success as she follows in the 'gunner footsteps' of the Ward family.

On behalf of the RAA, congratulations Elizabeth on your well-deserved promotion as a young ambassador for the Association.



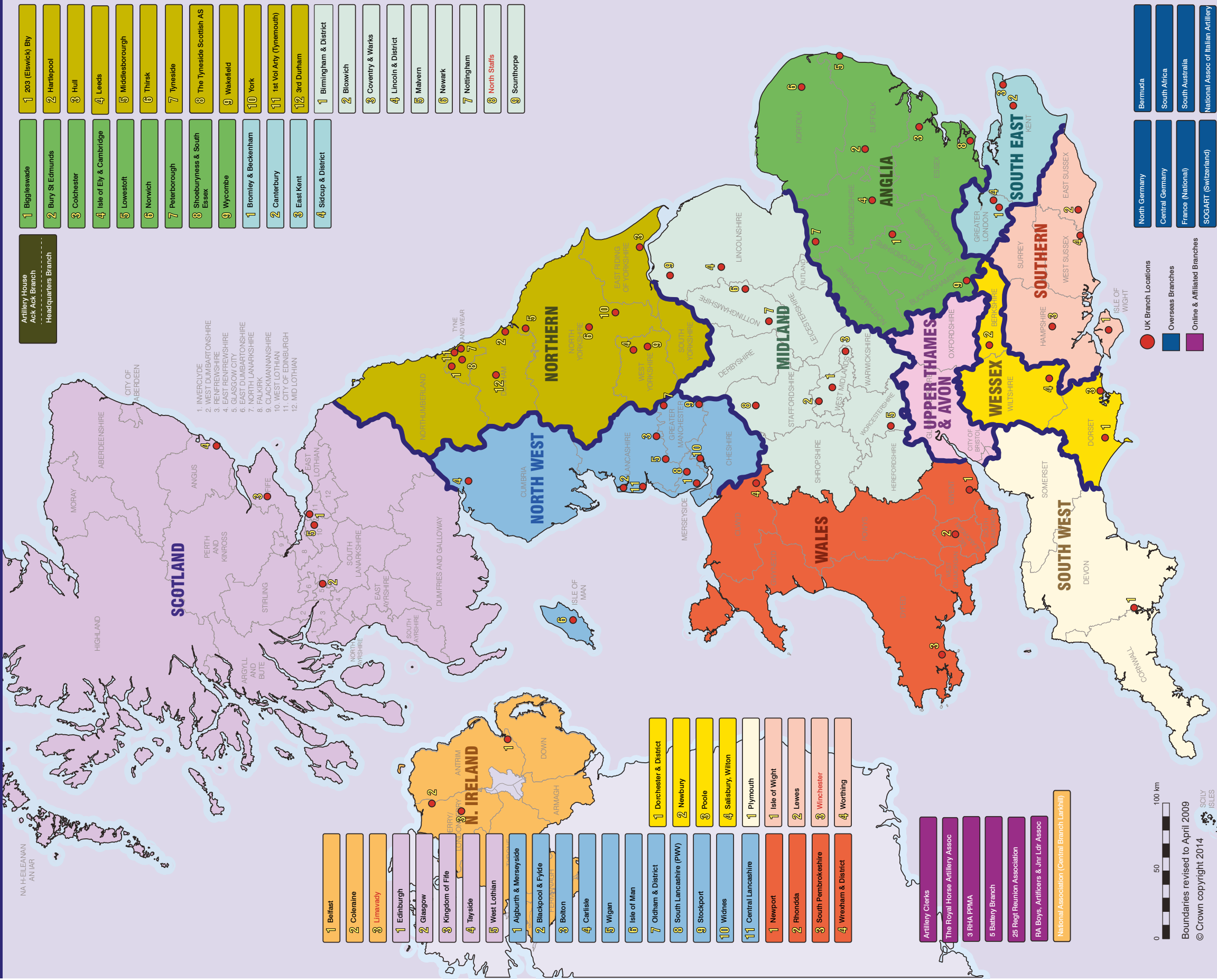


2023

ROYAL ARTILLERY

Royal Artillery Association

Branch Locations





Online & National Branch Ideas	Remarks/Thoughts
Regimental Reunion Groups:	
50 Regt RA 25 Regt RA 45 Regt RA 22 Reg RA 5 Regt RA	Just some of the groups we have recently spoken to, the fact is many find their comradeship not from a specific branch but at a Regiment personal to them – bringing such groups under the RAA umbrella simply for light touch support, will be key in adapting the branch model in the future.
Battery Reunion Groups:	
53 (Louisburg) Bty 46 (Talavera) Bty	As above but with many Batteries moving around between Regiments over the last 40 years or so, some find their comradeship at the Battery level, the very strong affiliation and growth within those that have already become Associations (5 Bty for example) demonstrates what can be achieved in this space.
Interest Groups:	
Riders Branch E-Sports Carp Fishing Ornithology Camper Van	One of the most exciting areas has been the interest within the Gunner E-Sports community, which not only reaches a large group of our serving community but also demonstrates that however you find comradeship we will do all we can to support, likewise any hobby or pastime that brings people together we are keen to understand how we can support. The interest and membership of the Riders Branch (Motorbike Club) again demonstrating how we are diversifying the Association Branch model.
Sports:	
Insert sport here!!	Our intention is to align ourselves to any and all our recognised sports, exactly how we engage, and support is yet to be defined but if you are the lead or actively involved within any Gunner sport; from Road Cycling to Football, Rugby to Badminton - then we look forward to having a conversation on how we can work with you in the future.
Interested? or perhaps you have any thoughts and ideas of possible areas for development.	Contact: RAA Sec – Maj (Retd) Richard Davies (Dickie) Richard.davies557@mod.gov.uk RAASecDavies@outlook.com Tel: 01980 845362 Skype: 0300 1555277



As the dust settles on what was a wonderful Royal Artillery Gold Cup I would very much like to thank all, for your enthusiasm and attendance, what a great day and thank you for all your contributions that resulted in £1172.14 being raised which given the move towards a cashless event is remarkable. Thank you for your support and to the team from Wycombe and District RAA for their efforts on the collecting front.

I hope you find the branch map I have included in this month's addition interesting and informative; I do want to assure all, that those geographical branches remain important and are essential as the backbone to the Association. However, as we try to develop and evolve as an organisation, these branches will need to run alongside future on-line and national footprint branches. You will see in the table some of the areas we are focusing to broaden the membership and increase the link between the past and present. This direction will be important as we move forward, the opportunities I believe are endless and I look forward to hearing from anyone who has any thoughts and ideas for possible associations in the future.

I will continue my visit program as we start the year, a program which should see me having been in every RAA Region by the time we get to the Assembly (Blackpool) in May. I also want to thank the Regiments that have also welcomed me, as I continue to visit as many of our serving family as I can. Remember every Battery is an association branch in its own right, so do engage with me when planning any activity that promotes our charitable objects namely fostering that Esprit De Corps that burns at the heart of the Regiment and the all-important promotion of Comradeship. I look forward to receiving any thoughts and ideas, particularly those that bring the past and present members of the Regiment together that was so perfectly demonstrated at Sandown Racecourse.



RACF SUPPORT TO THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

Closing out 2022 we helped our Gunner family by providing 1,234 grants.

56 KHAT Annual grants continued, 747 grants provided to our veteran & Gunner dependants, out of those grants 84 pledges helped our serving soldiers and their families and finally we finished the year with a further 431 grants to those who needed that extra help over the Christmas period.

Over £669,000 was pledged to help those in need in 2022.

If you have a concern about finding the money for something you need, please contact us. We cannot however help with private medical or legal fees.

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

We can be contacted by email: RARHQ-RACF-WELFARE-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk, RA Charitable Fund Application - RA Association (thegunners.org.uk)

Thank You's

"That extra amount makes so much difference"

"Without your help goodness knows how we could have managed"

"We would never have been able to do this without your help and kindness"

"Thank you so much in helping me during this difficult period of my life"

"My family and I would like to send huge thanks.... it is hugely appreciated and most definitely needed"



Date	Event	Location
2023		
09 Mar	RA Boxing Finals	Larkhill
30 Mar	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
31 Mar	YOs' Dining In	Larkhill
16 Apr	Gunner Sunday	RHC
21 Apr	RA Conference	Larkhill
21 Apr	Spring Dinner	Larkhill
12-14 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
13 May	RAA NEC Meeting	Blackpool
15 Jun	Hail & Farewell Dinner	Larkhill
22 Jul	NMA Service	Staffordshire
28 Jul	Yos' Dining In	Larkhill
14 Sep	Sunset Ceremony	Larkhill
09 Mar	RA Boxing Finals	Larkhill
04 Oct	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
05 Oct	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
20 Oct	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
09 Nov	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
12 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park Corner
03 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill Garrison Church
08 Dec	YOs Dining In	Larkhill
1 Jul (tbc)	RA Service of Remembrance	National Memorial Arboretum
13 Sep	Sunset Ceremony	Larkhill



REUNIONS

30 BATTERY REUNION

30 Bty intend to hold a Bty reunion on Sat 29 Jul 23. The format for the reunion will be an equipment & heritage display on Thorney Island, followed by a formal dinner in the evening held at a local hotel. This reunion is open to all serving and retired members of the Bty. Please contact the reunion lead, WO2 Wheeler at: 30batteryrcoy@gmail.com

INTAKE 51 AT THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST

To mark 50 years since our commissioning there is to be a reunion of intake 51 at Sandhurst on Thursday 9 March 2023, exactly 50 years to the day! The day will start at 10.30 with coffee in the Indian Army Room followed by a short service in the Academy chapel and then a lunch. Please make contact with Richard Anderson at richardanderson@alsgroup.co.uk and I will send you all the details.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARTILLERY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION AND REUNION DINNER

The 25th Anniversary of the Artillery Clerks' Association will be held in the Royal Artillery Sergeants' Mess, Larkhill over the weekend of Fri 23 to Sun 25 Jun 23. A full programme of events is being planned. This uniquely special Reunion weekend is open to all members of the Artillery Clerks' Association and partners. A new silver Centrepiece especially commissioned to mark this significant milestone will be unveiled prior to the Reunion Dinner on Sat 24 Jun 23. The Association web page will be updated regularly with a list of those who have confirmed their attendance. Notification of attendance must be completed and sent, either by post, email or using the link within the Association Web site to the Reunion Secretary no later than Thu 1 Jun 23.

ARMY APPRENTICES NATIONAL ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF ARMY APPRENTICES
13th-14th May 2023, Mickleover Court Hotel, Derby DE3 0XX, and the National Memorial Arboretum. Contact: info.armyana@gmail.com

ATTENTION ALL EX-25 ERS

2024 will see the 40th anniversary of the demise of the best gun Regiment of its day. We have just celebrated the 38th disbandment reunion in

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

SPRING DINNER

The Spring Dinner 2023 will be held in the RA Mess Larkhill on Friday, 21st April at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. The dinner will take the form of a Regimental Guest Night and is open to officers of the Royal Regiment, serving and retired, and their guests. There will also be some regimental guests. The Master Gunner St James's Park, Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL, will preside. Dress for serving officers is Mess Dress - ceremonial evening (soft shirt) and dinner jacket (black tie) with decorations for retired officers/civilians. The subsidised cost is £60 per head. For places, please apply to Jennifer McGrath either by email: Jennifer.mcgrath924@mod.gov.uk or for further information please telephone 01980 845788. Places are confirmed upon receipt of payment as follows: BACS: RAI, 30-11-75, 00957269 (please prefix payment reference with SD23) Cheque: Made payable to the Royal Artillery Institution. Please note a first come first served basis applies.

ROYAL ARTILLERY OFFICERS' ALANBROOKE LUNCH THU 2 MAR 22



The next Royal Artillery Alanbrooke Lunch is on Thu 2 Mar 23 at The Army & Navy Club, St James's Square, London. Drinks 1200. Lunch 1245. Our guest speaker will be Lt Col Karen Peek, who recently completed her tour as Commanding Officer 19th Regiment and who will give a candid insight into the issues facing our serving regiment over two challenging years. The Alanbrooke Lunch Club is open to all Gunners officers, regular and reserve whether serving or retired. The lunches cost £65 and the price includes pre-lunch drink, wine and port. A cash bar is available after lunch. To attend the lunches you must be a member of the Alanbrooke Club. There is an annual membership fee of £10 but this is waived for serving officers. Members wishing to attend this lunch should make a bank transfer for £65 to the Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund (Sort code 30-11-75, Acc number 00568858) annotating your transfer with your initial and surname or send a cheque made to 'Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund' to the Regimental Secretariat Officer, Mrs Emma Pagan-Skelley. If you make a bank transfer please email the Regimental Secretariat Officer 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



HAIL & FAREWELL

The next Hail and Farewell will be held at the RA Mess on 15 Jun 23. In addition to those new LE officers being dined in, all those officers retiring, but not serving at Regimental Duty, after a pensionable engagement, are welcome to attend, with partner, as guests of the Regiment. Please note that this includes those that are leaving up until Dec 23. The dress for the event is Black Tie. Timing 1900 for 1930. Subject to numbers you are welcome to invite additional guests at your expense. Please contact Mrs Emma Pagan-Skelley - emm.pagan-skelley100@mod.gov.uk or Tel 0300 155 6172

SEEKING

SEEKING FORMER STUDENTS OF WELBECK DEFENCE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



The Defence Academy is trying to reach students who attended Welbeck DSFC between 2005 and 2019 but who left without joining Defence. Their parents or guardians who incurred the Default Event Recovery charge may have been overcharged and due a refund. Email enquiries to the Defence Academy on DEFAC-DTOEES-HQ@mod.gov.uk

PRI GOING ONLINE ONLY

Jason (aka Dusty) and Dawn Miller have been running the Larkhill PRI shop since 2010. The family have lived in the area since 2001 when Jason came to the Royal School of Artillery to attend the GCC 18 course. The couple's two grown up children have since moved away from Wiltshire so the couple will also be relocating before the end of 2023. They have been looking for someone to take over the running of the shop for the last year but unfortunately no one has been found to step in. It is with a heavy heart that they have announced that the physical shop will be closing on 27 Jul 23. Although the physical shop will go, most of the services will still be available online via the website,

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via email and of course telephone. The shop will still supply embossed and printed notebooks, stickers & mugs along with the very popular engraved port. The smaller framed badges will also be available online. They will continue to provide PT tops for the sub units and are able to add new units when required. After the shop has closed they will endeavour to ensure free carriage for sub unit PT tops. There will unfortunately be a disruption in service when the workshop is moved so please plan ahead. If you would like any further details or are interested in taking on the running the Garrison PRI shop then please do contact the shop directly. Contact details can be found on the website www.garrisonpri.co.uk Tel 01980 653749. Jason and Dawn would like to wish all members of the regimental family both past and present all the very best for the future.

FOR SALE



A beautiful diamond, gold and enamelled RHA 'sweetheart' brooch c.1938 made by Mappin & Webb Ltd, London. The diamond monogram is that of George VI. Purchased in 1938 by the then BC of M Bty of 3 RHA it would suit anyone with a family link to the RHA between 1936 - 1952 or, a collector. The sale price is £350 (as valued by Almazvaluations, 100 Hatton Garden, London). Proceeds are for a military charity. Interested parties should contact the Assistant Regimental Secretary on bob.begbie808@mod.gov.uk

APPEAL FOR INFO

59TH (NEWFOUNDLAND) HVY REGT RA



I'm writing from Ashford, Kent, which was a front-line Garrison town in World War II with orders to 'fight to the end' in event of Hitler's planned invasion 'Operation Sea Lion' from the French coast opposite Kent. In 2018 I discovered that men from Newfoundland and Labrador were stationed here from 1941 to 1943 on Coastal Defence manning heavy guns along our coastline, and were billeted in Ashford School that was evacuated ready for their occupation. I approached the school which resulted in much interest and since then, several commemorations and Acts of Remembrance for the regiment have been held including a special Armistice service. In August 2022 I was asked to speak to members of Ashford Borough Council with a view to having a permanent memorial for the men here in Ashford in 2024 in the town's Memorial Gardens. The Council have since moved forward on this and I have now been asked on behalf of the Council and Ashford School to liaise with relevant organisations to gather more information, due to it being so scant for this period. It is intended that there should be a photographic display alongside the Memorial event. An appeal for any information from Ashford residents will be going out to each household this summer, which will be an appeal for photographs or letters from families of veterans who had relatives in the 59th (Newfoundland) Hvy Regt RA from 1941 to 1943 and who would be happy to share them with us for this exhibition. If so, the contact email address for this is: connect59th@aol.com A similar appeal has also been sent to several Museums and Veteran organisations in Newfoundland and Labrador. An Act of Remembrance service held in Ashford in November 2022 has also been published in the Canadian Gunner magazine there. The men gave invaluable service to us here in Ashford at a time when the town was suffering from the Battle of Britain. We are therefore hoping for a good response. The regiment was recruited in Newfoundland in 1940 and also comprised of British officers, NCOs and other ranks. The CO was Lt Col J W Nelson who also oversaw their occupation of Ashford School. It was disbanded in 1945. Any information that your readers can give will be greatly appreciated.



LAST POST

Notification of Death:

Lt Col Peter J Wiseman 10 December 2022
Dave Aspery 21 December 2022
Maj Peter A'Hearn 29 December 2022
Gail Fearn December 2022
Barry Woodhouse 1 January 2023
Maj A Ives (Tony) 28 January 2023
Gnr Bill Chew January 2023
Mick Suttley January 2023
Colin Beckett January 2023
Arthur Fred Meyer January 2023

NORTHEY - Maj (Retd) Anthony Northey died peacefully on 17th January aged 93. He attended Sandhurst then joined the Royal Artillery, serving with the 4th Regiment and the Junior Leaders Regiment. Tony had postings in Malaya, Malta, Germany and Northern Ireland, where he was responsible for media liaison during the height of the troubles. He was shot at by the IRA (fortunately they missed) and his last posting was in Germany where he was promoted to temporary Lieutenant Colonel. There he was in charge of the ranges, and attached to the 7th Armoured Brigade. After leaving the army, Tony worked in PR and then worked for the Corps of Commissionaires, a security firm specialising in sourcing jobs for ex-service personnel. He enjoyed playing polo in Malta but his great passion was sailing, which he did throughout his army career and into retirement, and he regularly skippered RA yachts from Gosport. He will be greatly missed.



STEWART - Lt Col George Stewart MC died on 13th February aged 103. He served in 78 Fd Regt RA in North Africa and Italy in World War II, then in the reformed 278 Fd Regt from the reformation until retiring as CO in 1960. He was also a member of the City of Edinburgh Artillery Officers Association and of the Scottish Artillery Historical Society. He was an accomplished sportsman and competed at international level in skiing and tennis. Husband of the late Jean, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A service of thanksgiving for his life will be held at Scone Old Parish Church.



left to right Bdr Dowe (47 Regt RA), Sgt Leggard (1 RHA), Bdr Enoe (19 Regt RA), The Regimental Colonel Col Harmer RA, LBdr Lewis (32 Regt RA), SSgt Belfon (1 RHA, GCC) and Cpl Joseph (4 MI Bn)

The photo in detail was taken in front of the 14 RA Officers' Mess, Larkhill

On Wed 7 Feb, the Commonwealth country, Grenada celebrated its 49th Independence.

Although independent, Grenada has a representative from the Crown in the form of a Governor General, who inputs advice on state and cultural matters.

Grenada and the United Kingdom therefore foster strong cultural and historical ties.

WITNESS APPEAL

Defence Serious Crime Command

DEFENCE SERIOUS CRIME UNIT APPEAL FOR WITNESSES

The Defence Serious Crime Unit are currently investigating a Serious incident which occurred in Germany in 1984.

If you were a member of 6 Battery, 27 Field Regiment Royal Artillery and were part of an exercise to Germany between 1 April and 20 April 1984 please contact the DSCU Bulford Office by: 31 March 2023

Calling: **01980673640** or
Emailing: **SIBRMP-3InvCoy-32Sect-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk**

Quoting Investigation Reference Number: **03524/22**.



For emergencies always dial **999**



Major Brian Anthony Edwards Derry RA



After school at Malvern College, Brian Derry enlisted on 3rd March 1949 aged 18. After National Service training he was posted as a Gunner to 5th RHA. He had been offered a place at Clare College Cambridge to read Modern Languages but decided to defer this until after his National service and when a scholarship would be forthcoming. A change of heart saw him instead attend RMAS Intake 6 on 19th August 1949 and was commissioned 9th February 1951. Noted as being "somewhat quiet and conscientious" rather than 'sporty' he nevertheless came 65 in the RMAS Order of Merit out of 249 passing out.

His first posting was to 94 (New Zealand) Battery, then an AA Battery on Gibraltar with his friend, fellow Gunner and former editor of The Gunner, John Braisby. In those days Officers were given 2 weeks embarkation leave to drive from the UK to 'Gib'. The trip there apparently wasn't that 'direct' and

took in such sights as the Alhambra and also a 'quaint little fishing village called Torremolinos'. Stories have been told of run-ins with both Guardia Civil and 'bandits' - usually whilst on a 'shopping trip' for sherry for the Officers' Mess!

Next posting was as a Troop Commander 172 Battery 64th Regiment in Oswestry. Whilst there between 1955-57 Brian met Georgina Ethelston, a local nurse whose sister was 'walking out' with another Gunner - Peter Steer. Despite postings in field regiments in BAOR and UK training regiments over the following years they kept in touch and were eventually married in Oswestry some years later.

Out of all the UK and BAOR postings it seemed that his most enjoyable time was that at BRIXMIS in Berlin (1965-67) at the height of the Cold War. In BRIXMIS in the 1960s it seemed to be compulsory to combine demanding Tech/Int work with the ability to mix a decent pink gin, and attend frequent diplomatic and military parties, where despite being plied with many drinks not just by Soviets, but by French and Americans too, one was always 'on duty'!

Following Berlin Brian became BC commanding 22 (Gibraltar 1779-1783) Independent Locating Battery, then based at Larkhill 1968-70. He always talked about the quality of the soldiers under his command

and the respect he had for them. He loved this posting and tried to attend as many reunions of "22 Loc" as possible with Georgina.

His metier was definitely on the Technical and Weapons Intelligence side of gunnery and was guided towards postings at Fort Halstead, P&EE Inchterf, Shoeburyness, DP&EE West Byfleet and other bases fortunately unknown to most Gunners. Having attended Technical Staff Course at Shrivenham it was clear that he would soon end up in the MOD Whitehall. He was most proud of his part in the development of the SP80 - now known as AS90 as well as the FH70 howitzer - which his son ended commanding a troop of in 45 Field Regiment when based in Colchester 1988/9. He was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal in 1977.

On leaving the Active List in 1986 Brian was asked to stay on as a Retired Officer for another year to help with a gap in technically trained officers. On retirement he found himself, on and off, in the MOD as a contractor in the development of equipment. Whilst in Whitehall Brian and Georgina lived in Camberley whilst Georgina worked as the civilian matron at RMAS. He often said that he seemed to have come 'full circle' - back where he started!

In retirement Brian kept up contacts with The Gunners through his son, Simon, who



joined the Regiment in 1988 and kept tabs on what he was doing through his network of contacts. His younger son, John, became an engineer and worked for Jaguar thus providing him with lots of technical information and rides in fast cars! In later life Brian and Georgina moved to Marlow in Buckinghamshire where he drove his boat on the Thames and saw their grandchildren.

Brian Anthony Edwards Derry died on 20th December 2022 aged 92. He will be buried with Georgina and his parents in Aldershot Military Cemetery. He was a true Gunner. He will be sadly missed.

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:

The Gunner - £49

The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £17

The Gunner and The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £66

RA Historical Society 2023 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
2023					
Tuesday 25 April 0900 hrs	Visit	Guided Tour of RA Museum in Wood Road, Larkhill	Mr Martin Harvey	Tuesday 11 April	
Tuesday 25 April 1100 hrs	Spring lectures, Newcome Hall, Larkhill, RA Mess lunch and pm RAHS AGM	The Failure of Blitzkrieg in Russia 1941-2	Col Bob Kershaw	Tuesday 11 April	To be notified
First week of July	Battlefield Tour	Sedan, France: 1870, 1940 & 1944	Brig Jon Cresswell & Col Tim Ventham		


These events are open to all Gunners

To register please email the RAHS Secretary by the dates shown

Email Lt Col Clayton, RAHS Secretary: richard.clayton312@gmail.com

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

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Photo credit: Bdr Darren Musto, 58 Bty, 12 Regt RA

Army Enduro Final, Sgt Paynter, 12 Regt RA, Mens Masters Group, Place 29/43