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THE JOURNAL OF THE

# ROYAL ARTILLERY

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Spring 2024

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His Majesty The King  
Captain General

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# The Journal of the Royal Artillery

Editor:  
Lt Col N D Cooke

Controlling Managers:  
Regimental Council of the Royal Artillery

Editorial Office:  
RA Journal, RHQ RA, RA Barracks, Larkhill,  
Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8QT

Telephone: 01980 845241.  
Email: RARHQ-Publications@mod.gov.uk

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1 Parachute Battery (Bull's Troop) RHA conducting Air Manoeuvre in Otterburn on Ex BULLS STRIKE 24

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The French Caesar 155mm © KNDS

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this edition of the Journal of the Royal Artillery, now in its 166th year. We live in very uncertain times with war being fought in a number of places around the world and the threat of war in others. There is famine, drought, flooding and the concern over the effects of climate change. This is not new but the intensity and extent seem greater, and one wonders how it is happening on such scale in the 21st century.

The armed forces justly advocate strong defence, along with many of the population but funding everywhere is tight. Without security within our shores, though, it is difficult for key areas of society, such as the economy, to function in the most efficient manner. There are difficult choices for the Government but now is not the time to weaken our resolve and the recent announcement by the Prime Minister to increase UK defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2030 is most welcome. It will ensure the UK remains the second largest contributor to NATO and possibly encourage other European members to chip in a little more. It will not be a spending dividend but if it leads to the country manufacturing more defence equipment and ammunition, it will be of great benefit to the economy and our self reliance. The irony will not be lost on many that much of this is due to President Putin’s invasion of his neighbour.

Ukraine is fighting for its survival but is reliant on Western finance, equipment, ammunition and advice, and the recent approval of much needed help from the USA will give it a real boost, and some time. It needs support against its bigger oppressor, but war evolves, as do tactics, techniques and procedures. The BBC produced a chilling, graphic and harrowing documentary in “Enemy in the Woods,” which was filmed by Ukrainian soldiers. A small company was (and still will be) defending a section of the railway line which the Russians wanted in order to be able to resupply their troops more easily, and potentially push on to Kharkiv. One could not be but impressed by resilient, innovative and courageous young soldiers keeping the enemy at bay. They

are, of course, fighting for their lives and existence.

Drones are a major weapon for both sides and seeing the Ukrainians drop ordnance, which had been made up, very cheaply in comparison to manufactured ammunition, in to trenches to take out targets with pinpoint accuracy was instructive. They won’t take over from the guns but will work, more and more, in harmony with them. The guns become more vulnerable to counter battery fire once they have opened up, and may be observed from overhead drones. The gun positions therefore move frequently. The destructive element of artillery fire remains undiminished as seen particularly in Gaza over the past few months. Uncrewed or unmanned aircraft systems feature in the pages ahead and make for interesting reading.

The State of the Union feature is as ever, a must read if you wish to be brought up to date with the Royal Regiment. There are many issues being dealt with including manning and equipment, and the serving regiment is working extremely hard. Our motto is Ubique (everywhere) and there are Gunners in many parts of the World striving to make it a more peaceful place, despite our reduced size. In boxing terms we continue to punch above our weight. At the same time all eyes are on Eastern Europe and the Middle East. It was good to read that the UK’s military forces helped to destroy a large number of the hundreds of hostile drones targeted at Israel recently.

As a former Gunner rugby player and Chairman of the Royal Artillery Rugby Football Club, I was delighted to receive Gerry von Tonder’s article on Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Herbert MacIlwaine. He played prop for United Services Portsmouth RFC, Yorkshire and England, and gave his name to the inter unit cup which our regiments contest each season. It is a fascinating tale, even if I am biased.

It is always useful to have feed back and although I do not receive a great deal of correspondence it was pleasing to have some positive comments from a senior Gunner and one of my former Gunner rugby stars.

## REGIMENTAL EVENTS 2024/25

19 April	RA Conference	Larkhill
19 April	Spring Dinner	Larkhill
26 April	YOs Dining In	Larkhill
28 April	Gunner Sunday	Royal Hospital Chelsea
17-19 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
20 June	Hail & Farewell	Larkhill
13 July	RA Service of Remembrance	National Memorial Arboretum
September	Sunset Ceremony	Larkhill
3 October	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
25 October	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
7 November	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
10 November	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park Corner
28 November (tbc)	RA Sports Award Dinner	Larkhill
1 December	St Barbara’s Day	Larkhill Garrison Church
February (tbc)	RA Gold Cup	Sandown
6 March	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
9 March	RA Boxing Finals	Larkhill

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# STATE OF THE UNION

## Introduction by The Regimental Colonel

Whilst it only feels like a few weeks since the last ‘state of the union’ was provided by me to this publication’s readership, I am reminded daily, both by my children and the mirror, that time marches fast. Much that was forecast last year has come to pass, Regular and Reserve we remain deployed across multiple theatres, but the urgency attached to the situation in Ukraine and in multiple other theatres makes our position in the Army’s modernisation plans more central than it has been in at least a generation. These are indeed exciting times for the Royal Regiment.

Now 20 months into its existence, 1st Deep Reconnaissance and Strike Brigade Combat Team (1 DRS BCT) is established, proven in a Coalition context and now foremost in the development of the Army’s new concept of Recce-strike at every level, leading experimentation most recently on Project CONVERGENCE CAPSTONE 4 (PCC4) in California. 32 and 47 Regiments are now together under the Uncrewed Air Systems (UAS) Group, focused on ‘giving birth’ to UAS in multiple roles across the Army while honing UAS for STA as a key element of the artillery Find and Strike system. Our GBAD units are being augmented as a stepping-stone to true growth, as we develop the Army’s offensive counter air and counter UAS battle capability. Gunners at the heart of the ARRC are now validated and ready in the NRF role, a key part of the Army’s renewed focus on NATO.

Across the board, we are at the vanguard of Army modernisation. Exemplified in recent months both by the arrival of ARCHER and the impending fielding of the Taipan Weapon Locating RADAR, the recent announcement regarding the Mobile Fires Platform is exciting and must be celebrated. This UK-GE collaboration promises a world class 155mm 52 calibre self-propelled artillery

gun system for the Royal Artillery, an excellent strategic fit with the British Army of the future. From a fighting power perspective, it doesn’t only strengthen us across the moral, physical and conceptual elements of the Regiment, but reinforces our position at the heart of the wider land and integrated force. Covering a year which began with the Coronation of His Majesty the King, our Captain General, where our Regiment again played a central role in the Nation’s commemoration, I commend this ‘state of the union’ to you. Find and Strike.

## Headquarters 1st Deep Recce Strike BCT (Brigade Contact Team)

The first quarter of 2024 saw much of the HQ 1st Deep Recce Strike BCT (Brigade Combat Team) staff training alongside US allies in California. A small team from the HQ embedded with the HQ of US 1st Armored Division on their exercise at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin – they returned to the UK with lots of lessons and initiatives to incorporate in the design and TTPs for the UK’s own JAGIC (Joint Air Ground Integration Center), Counterfires Coordination Center (CFCC), DRS Control (including its DIVARTY function) and divisional targets cell. Soon after their return, another tranche of the HQ deployed back to California to lead and coordinate UK’s ‘Futures’ experimentation workstrand deployment on Project CONVERGENCE CAPSTONE 4. In addition to being key experimentation stakeholders for Recce-Strike and Kill Chain C2, the brigade HQ also coordinated all other British components on the activity including 2 YORKS battlegroup from ETG (Experimentation & Trials Group), Rangers from the ASOB (Army Special Ops Bde) and UK Commando Force elements.

**1RHA.** The Regiment is in amongst a series of four rotations to Op CABRIT (E) in support of 20 ABCT battlegroups. This unit has the privilege to be the last remaining users of AS90; they are currently acting as the custodians of tracked armoured self-propelled capability in the Royal Artillery. B Battery RHA will retain its gun group out in Estonia until June before being relieved in place by A Battery (The Chestnut Troop) RHA for the final AS90 deployment to Op CABRIT. Back in the UK, the Regiment has been active on the Plains manoeuvring and firing the guns – in particular practising Special Burst Safety Distance danger close practices in their Warrior Observation Post Vehicles, and developing artillery raid TTPs on behalf of the brigade. Concurrently, the Regiment’s gun groups have been cross-training onto L118 Light Gun and have been leading initial planning and coordination for the fielding of MIV (BOXER) in their tac groups in the future.

**3RHA.** Albemarle has been left with only a sparse population as most of 3RHA is committed to operations. The Regiment is looking forward to welcoming D Battery RHA home just from an Op CABRIT deployment, and has said farewell to C Battery RHA who have deployed as their relief. That latter battery had an enjoyable experience certifying themselves as ‘Mission Ready’ through a combination of MLRS live firing in White Sands Missile Range in USA late last year, plus a field training exercise on the Plains early in 2024. In Estonia, the D Battery RHA team had the honour of firing the last of the British Army’s Reduced Range Practice Rockets (RRPR), and in mentoring the newly formed 1st Estonian Division HQ through the conduct of deep fires. J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery RHA has been active around the globe in its new HQ Battery role, with the Commanding Officer standing in for Commander DRS on Ex AUSTERE CHALLENGE in Grafenwohr, and the BC leading a number of experimental kill chain ‘use cases’ on Project CONVERGENCE CAPSTONE 4 in California. Concurrently, FSTs from the Regiment continue to deploy with Light Cavalry Squadron Groups to Op CABRIT (P) in Poland.

**5 Regt RA.** 2024 is ramping up to be an exciting year for the Yorkshire Gunners. It is currently deeply engaged with partners from Army Headquarters, industry and DE&S to field the new ‘Taipan’ weapon locating radar this year. This truck-mounted divisional counter-fires radar will replace MAMBA and will significantly extend the range-sensing capability of the Regiment. As the unit fields this new capability, it also farewells a NATO (KFOR) ISR Task Unit deployment to Kosovo on Op ELGIN for six months, to be led by K (Hondeghem) Battery RA. The Task Unit will continue to utilise Unattended Ground Surveillance System (UGSS) and covert OPs from its 4/73 Battery patrol plus Human Engagement Teams and small UAS to monitor the disputed boundary lines in that Theatre at a time of heightened tensions. The rest of 5th Regiment RA will spend the spring and summer training for a unit deployment to Op TOSCA on UN service in Cyprus.

**19 Regt RA.** UK Standby Battalion duties, L118 Light Gun live firing, support to ARCHER (interim 155mm) fielding, and an HQ Battery deployment to Estonia in support of 12 ABCT for Ex AUSTERE CHALLENGE has dominated the Regiment’s start to 2024. After a break over Easter most of the Regimental Tac Group will deploy to different parts of Europe as part of Op LINOTPYER; concurrently the Regimental Gun Group will commence their conversion training for ARCHER. Most of the unit should come together for a Regimental Exercise, SCORPION LONGBOW, to commence collective dry field training on ARCHER.

**26 Regt RA.** Much of 26th Regiment RA’s targeting expertise has been committed to Project CONVERGENCE CAPSTONE 4 in California for the first quarter of 2024. In cooperation with other futures stakeholders and with US allies, and in close coordination with the EC2SPHD programme, the team has played in central role in working out how the Joint Targeting Platform (JTP) future targeting toolset can be integrated with FC-BISA and with other C2 processes to streamline deep fires sensor-decider-shooter kill chains. Meanwhile the rest of the Regiment has been active in converting their M270 Launcher fire control systems to the new Version 8 software. This will enable the launchers to fire a much broader family of MLRS munitions, including the new composite steel motor M31A unitary model. Over the coming months, the Regiment will train its Regimental Main HQ and its lead MLRS battery on a field training exercise on the Plain, and then deploy a battery to White Sands Missile Range in USA for live firing. Significantly, 26th Regiment RA farewells the Exactor 2 (E2) capability at Easter – allowing it to focus on fielding the lead AJAX Tac Group alongside Household Cavalry Regiment, and also freeing up capacity to work with Army HQ to experiment with One Way Effects/Attack munitions.

**ARes units.** 100 Regiment Royal Artillery continue to support outputs across Field Army from their various batteries. Of particular note, they continue to work closely with the ARRC JFIB to develop the Multi-National Field Artillery Brigade (MN FAB) – both 100 and 101 Regiment RA enable that ARRC Corps Fires Brigade HQ to deploy by resourcing them with a significant quantity of key staff. That HQ will deploy with ARRC on Ex DYNAMIC FRONT in Finland later this year. 101 and 104 Regiment RA are now busy preparing a platoon to deploy with 5th Regiment RA on Op TOSCA later this year. Meanwhile, 101 Regiment RA has delivered its NORTHERN DRIVE driver training concentration for its MLRS detachments, and 104 Regiment RA has been preparing for its live firing exercising on BORDERER’S STRIKE, scheduled to take place shortly after Easter.

## Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Group (UAS Gp)

The conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have dominated the thinking around UAS over the last year and has driven changes in the Army’s UAS enterprises. The UAS Gp was formed this summer following a series of structural changes, which were announced at DSEI (Defence & Security Equipment International) in September under the Future Soldier Adjustments initiative. This change reflects the prominence and importance of uncrewed systems and is largely as a result of the proliferation of UAS, the transition from crewed to uncrewed systems and lessons from ongoing conflicts. The UAS Gp sits under the Joint Aviation Command (JAC) and the HQ was created by merging the previous Watchkeeper Force HQ and the Field Army Surveillance Group’s. It is designed to capitalise on the JAC’s proven Generate/Operate model and Field Army Surveillance Group innate tactical understanding and STA experience. The UAS Gp commands 47 Regt RA which operates Watchkeeper (WK), and 32 Regt RA that operates a range of mini-UAS (mUAS). The UAS Gp also provides assurance (but not a Duty Holding function) over Field Army’s S1 and Open systems.

32 Regt RA, now re-subordinated under the UAS Gp, continues to support numerous readiness, exercise and operational commitments. Support to the 3rd Division, including the DRS and the armoured BCTs and the VJTF(L) (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (Land)) is central to 32 Regt’s outputs, but the relationship with 16AABCT and UK SF also offers an opportunity



to drive innovation and experimentation. 32 Regt was at the vanguard of support to Op POLARBEAR (Sudan) and has also provided a surge capability into Kosovo in 2023 and remains at readiness for Op VENTUS (Airborne Medics ready for Caribbean hurricane relief). 2024 will also see 32 Regt support a significant range of NATO facing exercises across the Baltics and Poland, with the potential to return to Kosovo later in the year.



Ops CABRIT (L) and ELGIN (R)

Looking to the future, the UAS Gp and 32 Regt will look to field the Pj TIQUILA suite of platforms in late 2024, eventually replacing the current Puma and Wasp capability. Pj TIQUILA is a joint Army/UK STRATCOM project and will deliver the more capable Stalker and Indago UAS platforms. Stalker is a highly capable UAS, with a range of up to 100 miles (161 km) and endurance of up to 8 hours. This will be a significant capability enhancement as part of the Land ISTAR programme and will contribute to the provision of ISTAR at the Bde and Div level.



STALKER VXE

47 Regt RA continues to go from strength to strength. Last year saw the cessation of flying in Cyprus and the recovery of that point of presence back to the UK and successful flying from Keevil Airfield in support of Field Army Collective Training on SPTA. The WK Flying School is now fully established in Ft Bliss, Texas alongside the US 1 AD. Personnel from the RSA, Thales and 47 Regt continue to rotate through Ft Bliss, and train at a dedicate UAS airfield, where WK operates alongside US uncrewed platforms to conduct a range of flying activities. The flying school has delivered hugely successful force generation of aircrew, groundcrew, technicians and support staff. With funding set aside for another two years and the potential for 32 Regt RA to also operate at Fort Bliss, the short-term delivery of training and force generation looks bright. In the autumn, 57 Bty deployed to Oman on Ex DESERT KHANJAR in support of Field Army units alongside JHC's Aviation Task Force 1 for a testing 6 week exercise in desert

conditions. As well as being the first deployment of WK to Oman, this exercise saw WK provide ISTAR support to ground troops and the development of teaming TTPs with Apache. This culminated in a successful laser designation of a target by WK which was destroyed by an Apache Hellfire missile. In addition, 47 Regt RA continues to support Op LAZURITE and an array of other tasks.



The Watchkeeper Flying School, Ft Bliss

The WK platform is also currently undergoing hardware, software and simulation upgrades which started in Nov 23, but will conclude in 2024. Equipment Standard 2.3 (ES 2.3) will enable flight in rain and cloud, with further work planned to demonstrate performance in icing conditions. ES2.3 enables WK to fly throughout a wider range of weather conditions, significantly improving WK's operational utility – especially when combined with the introduction of extended range Synthetic Aperture Radar and Maritime Moving Target Indication.



Ex DESERT KHANJAR 23

It has therefore been an extremely busy and productive period for the UAS Gp, with Initial Operating Capability (IOC) achieved on the 1 Dec 23. Although the HQ continues to be established, conditions are already in place to meet Full Operating Capability (FOC) no later than 30 Sep 24. 32 and 47 Regts continue to deliver across a range of sporting, exercise and operational endeavours, and each have major equipment enhancements to look forward to in 2024 as part of the wider Army modernisation programme.

### Headquarters 7th Air Defence Group (HQ 7 AD Gp)

**Operationally Relevant:** 7 AD Gp is on the ascendancy, gaining more and more relevance as seen through the dramatic increase in funding and its exceptionally busy operational footprint. Deployed on Op STIFFTAIL, Op SHADER, Op CABRIT, Op CROSSWAYS and British Forces South Atlantic Island (BFSAI),

7AD Gp is the only RA organisation attaining regular operational medals. Furthermore, the Group maintains a considerable readiness footprint (2-30 days' notice to move) in support of the Air Assault Task Force (AATF), NATO Reaction Forces (NRF) / Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (Land) (VJTF(L)), Lead Armoured Task Force (LATF), VANGUARD Armoured Infantry Brigade (VAIB), and the Warfighting Divisional Headquarters.

7 AD Gp is responsible for delivering a coherent and effective GBAD and Air Situational Awareness to the Land Environment capabilities to the Army. Since the last Journal the Group has brought Sky Sabre (SkS) into service, wielded by 16 Regt RA. SkS is a Medium Range AD (MRAD) capability deployed both in the Falkland Islands and in Poland on Op STIFFTAIL. 16 Regt RA has a regular Air Situation Battery operating the Land Environment Air Picture Provision (LEAPP) capability. The Group maintains a Regular regiment (12 Regt RA) of High Velocity Missile providing Short Range AD (SHORAD) on Op CABRIT, Op CROSSWAYS and Op SHADER. Augmentees are drawn from our Reserve regiment, 106 Regt RA. 7 AD Gp is OPCOM to 3(UK) Division, and has command relationships with other organisations such as PJHQ and Air Command.

The requirement for GBAD support has been redefined and we have had proven success. In Iraq, a successful engagement of a Shaheed 136 UAS proved to be the first successful British Army engagement of an air threat since the Falklands War. New threat sets such as Tactical Cruise Missiles (CM), weaponised UAS, Airborne IEDs (ABIEds), loitering munitions and advanced sensors have changed the dynamics that non-state actors and terrorist groups now field significant air power. The traditional fixed and rotary wing threats remain extant, but the weapons and sensors they carry are more capable than ever and have proliferated widely.

**Growth, Growth, Growth:** The personnel of 7 AD Gp have been fantastic over the last few years in maintaining output, during such a frenetic period, with limited resources. This outstanding work has been noticed by the top echelons of Defence and 7 AD Gp will be receiving further investment. As part of CGS' 'Immediate Investment Priorities:4+1' Air Defence sits at number 1. So what? 7 AD Gp will be seeing a doubling of MRAD capability and tripling of SHORAD capability. This investment will likely bring another regiment into the group and could potentially enrich it back into a one star brigade headquarters, last seen in 2005.

The Group is growing. 12 Regt RA witnessed growth of circa 100 personnel to bring 137 (JAVA) Battery from suspended animation which is now operational with STORMER. The Regiment has continued to deliver SHORAD, permanently deployed on Op CABRIT, Op CROSSWAYS and Op SHADER and at readiness for AATF, VJTF(L), LATF and VAIB, whilst providing the Divisional AD Cell. As expected, following the invasion of Ukraine the focus on Europe has grown and the Regiment has been required to stack multiple commitments in order to complete all its tasks. The last 12 months has seen significant effort on the Force Preparation of 170 (HQ) Battery to grow as an equipment battery, in addition to a HQ Bty, to support 7 LMBCT and its commitment as the VJTF(L) Lead Bde for 2023-25. This Bde, as part of NATO Reaction Forces and then Allied Reaction Forces (from Summer 24), is prepared to deploy at short notice anywhere, but primarily Europe as required for SACEUR.

16 Regt RA has continued to deliver persistent MRAD capability as part of the integrated approach to deterrence and defence of the Falkland Islands. This period saw transition of RAPIER FSC to Sky Sabre offering a step change in MRAD capability, which can be fully networked with our key NATO allies. Since Summer 22 the



SL HVM - 170 Bty

unit has maintained a persistent MRAD capability deployed on Op STIFFTAIL in Poland. An already stretched unit, it has been granted a workforce growth of 34 personnel per quarter to enhance the batteries to enable the multiple operational deployments. 30 (Rogers's Company) Battery was the first to receive this much needed workforce and successfully deploy enhanced batteries on Op STIFFTAIL and BFSAI concurrently. Additionally, the unit has remained at readiness to the AATF, LATF, VJTF(L) and ARRC where it provides the Corps AD Cell.



30 Bty following PDT and about to deploy on multiple ops

106 (Y) Regt RA has supported the Formation throughout the year. It has contributed Army Reserve troops on all 7 AD Gp exercises, and deployed individual augmentees on Op CABRIT, Op SHADER and Op CROSSWAYS. The Regiment has continued to demonstrate the flexibility that Army Reservists bring to the Formation and the wider Army as a whole.

**The Demand is High for Air Defence:** In addition to overseas Operations, the Formation has been deployed on several UK Operations such as Op LONDON BRIDGE, whilst maintaining



AFU Soldier trained by 7 AD Gp using UK STORMER in Ukraine

readiness for Op ESCALIN and Op TEMPERER. Furthermore, it deployed its Air Surveillance capabilities on UK Military Aid to the



Civil Authority (MACA) tasks. Integrating into SJC (UK) ORBATs, it has conducted high profile events such as Op PALADIN which was the support to the Artificial Intelligence Summit in Bletchley Park attended by the Prime Minister. Of note was 7 AD Gp's support to the training of Ukraine's Armed Forces (AFU). The Group has provided several training packages which saw AFU soldiers train on various equipment to be better prepared for the War against Russia. Firstly, in Mar/Apr 23 circa 30 AFU Soldiers were trained on HVM both LML and STORMER. This training contributed directly to a confirmed KIA of a Russian Helicopter.

To meet individual preparation and collective readiness for operations, the Group has completed a wide-ranging set of training activities. In addition to GBAD specialist training and the completion of Missile Firing Camps, the regiments have continued to support Higher Headquarters and the fighting brigades. 12 Regt RA has supplied the Divisional Air Defence Cell as part of the 3(UK) Division's Joint Air Ground Integration Cell and supported the Armoured Infantry Brigades' training programmes. 16 Regt RA has advanced the Corps Air Defence Cell capability and deployed it on all ARRC exercises. However, Air Defence is not only about deploying on Operations and winning medals. The regiments have found time for extracurricular activity celebrating Battery birthdays, conducting multiple AT Expeditions, partaking in plenty of sport and completing arduous charity events (occasionally whilst deployed).



T BTY, 12 Regt RA birthday activity

**Closing Comment:** The breadth of 7 AD Gp capability development and equipment, which is at the cutting edge of technology, is on the radar of political leaders, meaning it continues to punch above its weight. The future is bright as it continues to grow, both in size due to workforce growth seen now and 4+1 in due course, but also in relevance as seen by its large operational footprint, arguable the highest in the Army for its size. Behind the delivery of this remains a force of dedicated, committed and highly capable officers, soldiers, RAF aviators, civil servants, contractors, and industry partners.

## The Royal School of Artillery

As always, change is a constant, and the RSA has certainly experienced significant change over the past twelve months. When in Jun 22, General Sir Patrick Sanders as Chief of the General Staff (CGS), delivered his speech at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Land Warfare Conference, he stated that the Army must both modernise and mobilise if it is to be a credible fighting force. Following this speech, CGS's intent was captured in 'Operation MOBILISE' and his direction sparked a wholesale review of the way in which the Army delivers its training. This article outlines much of the changes driven by Op



LML Live Firing at Manorbier @ Larkhill TIC

MOBILISE, including the new Land Training System (LTS), RSA restructuring and several of the training modernisation initiatives already underway at the RSA.

**The Land Training System (LTS):** The direction to both modernise and mobilise the Army has led to a wholesale review of Army training by Director Land Warfare (DLW). This review has led to the creation of the LTS, a radically different way in which the Army will deliver its individual and collective training in the future. The LTS hypothesis is that the existing Army training system was designed for the British Army of the late 20th Century and not today's Army, it was created for a much larger and more static force, with far greater resources and fewer commitments, and whilst it was right for its time, it cannot deliver the training required for a 21st Century Army. The LTS recognises the lack of training opportunities for sub-units, units and formations and the model ringfences the resources required for every single sub-unit to conduct both special to arm (StA) and combined arms (CA) training on an annual cadence. It will reduce time spent in training by bringing together individual tactical training with collective training events. For the RA, the LTS will mean some activities and training previously delivered on RSA courses being transferred to units for them to deliver as part of an annual 'CYCLONE' exercise. These CYCLONE events will be up to ten weeks in duration with the first three weeks being sub-unit StA training (including the tactical elements of trade training previously delivered at the RSA) before progressing to a CA training package. CYCLONE will be a departure from the current RSA courses model, which qualifies and awards a competency on completion of a course, in the future, students will only be qualified and competent on completion of a CYCLONE exercise with their unit.

**Project MANORBIER – RSA restructuring:** The RSA has been through various efficiency programmes and cost saving exercises over the past ten years and has lost in excess of 100 posts, but without any proportionate reduction in outputs. In fact, RSA outputs have increased over this period as the Army has embarked on its modernisation agenda whilst also simultaneously restructuring and increasing its appetite to do more. As a result of this, in 2022 the RSA undertook a review of its structure and outputs under Project MANORBIER. This review identified that the RSA was not structured to meet the challenges of Op MOBILISE, How We Fight 26, Project LEWES, the new LTS, the various modernisation programmes or the numerous additional responsibilities placed upon it (such as assurance, safety and publications). Project MANORBIER has sought to address these weaknesses through a resource neutral restructuring programme.



Joint Fires Synthetic Trainer @ Larkhill TIC

Early analysis of the RSA structure identified that there was sufficient military and civil servant workforce to meet mandated outputs but that it needed to be rebalanced with some roles changed and some posts moved to other parts of the RSA. In Jan 24, the RSA completed Project MANORBIER, clearly separating training delivery from staff processes and running the Operating Group. The changes under Project MANORBIER were extensive and far reaching but the most significant organisational change was the reduction from three Subsequent Trade Training (STT) wings to a single one titled the Training Delivery Wing (TDW). The centralisation of STT under a single wing has created far greater agility in addition to better cross-discipline, combined arms, joint and multinational integration as well as more coherent and efficient C2. Another, just as significant a change, has been the creation of the Deliver Pillar within HQ RSA. This pillar is configured to be forward-looking, able to innovate, learn and exploit lessons, develop tactics and doctrine, and prepare the RSA for the introduction of major new equipment programmes. The Develop Pillar has also enabled the RSA to better support external agencies such as HQ Land Warfare Centre (LWC), the Combat Manoeuvre Centre (CMC), the Collective Training Group (CTG), the Experimentation and Trials Group (ETG), as well as the AHQ (Army Headquarters) Programmes and Futures directorates.



Parrot Anafi (Small Uncrewed Aircraft System) SPTA @ Larkhill TIC

**Changes to Gunnery Staff training:** In 2018, the LWC reviewed Gunnery Staff training, with the result being the Gunnery Staff Course (GSC), a significantly shorter course with far less breadth than the previous Gunnery Careers Course (GCC) and Instructor Gunnery Course (IGC). The GSC was designed to deliver instructors with a single trade expertise, rather than multiple

trade proficiencies within a single discipline as was the case with GCC and IGC. A consequence of the GSC model has been that it delivers an individual that is highly niche but narrowly employable. To provide greater instructor employability, the RSA has established a Command and Staff Branch under Project MANORBIER to upskill instructors and broaden their employability. This branch will also deliver all RA staff training and will, in time, also have oversight of the RA elements of the Army Leadership Development Programme (ALDP).



24 Bty March and Shoot @ Larkhill TIC

**Project WINCHESTER – Review of RA Command and Staff Training:** Having established the Develop Pillar, the RSA has now instigated a review of RA command and staff training under Project WINCHESTER. This project will take a holistic approach to RA command and staff courses by identifying gaps in RA staff officer knowledge and bridging these through RSA delivered training courses. Early successes have already included the creation of extra BC courses and the addition of an enhanced and updated RA Staff Officer Course (RASOC). Also, Project WINCHESTER will drive the development of RA capstone doctrine (including the Tactical Handling of Artillery and the RA Staff Officers Handbook), an updated Joint Tactical Targeting Course with increased focus on Combat Engagement, as well as a refinement of the Land ISR Operator Course (recently renamed the Artillery Intelligence Course). Project WINCHESTER will also review the GSC for officers with the focus being to deliver an IG that is 'tactically excellent and technically aware'. Project WINCHESTER will bring all RA staff courses together in a final culminating synthetic exercise.

**Royal Artillery Army Reserve trade training:** In Autumn 23, the RSA delivered a Centralised Training Event (CTE) for RA Army Reserve (AR) individual training. The CTE was a response to the AR Executive Committee (ExCo) decision to remove 'equivalence' (parity with Regular Army training objectives) from AR trade training in order to deliver a more accessible and rewarding training pathway for reservists. The 14 day course delivered distributed Initial Trade Training (ITT), centralised STT as well as RA staff training to 255 RA AR personnel. This single training intervention addressed circa 54% of the identified RA AR individual training shortfall. Notably, of the 255 trainees, the RSA delivered training to 123 officers and soldiers with 117 passing their course first time. The CTE achieved a 56% uplift in RA Reserve STT qualifications from the numbers previously achieved over the period Apr 15 to Sep 23. The CTE was a significant shift from the way in which RA AR individual training has previously been delivered, and though this CTE was only a pilot, it has



greatly improved levels of competency in the RA AR. Whether or not the CTE will endure year on year will be a decision for the RA AR commanding officers and formation commanders.

**Training assurance:** In Apr 23, the Army Competent Authority and Inspectorate (ACAI) function for Joint Effects transferred from Assistant Head Joint Effects in Army Headquarters to Commandant RSA. As ACAI, the Commandant is now responsible for delivering all 2nd Line of Defence Assurance (2nd LoDA), including functional advice on high risk Joint Effects activity. This 2nd LoDA function is conducted by the Royal Artillery Capability Assurance and Training Team (RA CATT); the organisation previously known as the Gunnery Training Team (GTT). The RA CATT is of huge value to both the Army and the RA in delivering capability assurance, safety training, technical and tactical advice on the employment of artillery systems, as well as unit mentoring and support. As part of improving 2nd LoDA, RA CATT will deliver an Audit and Inspection (A&I) regime from Apr 2025, known as the Joint Effects Audit (JEA).

**Training modernisation:** The introduction of new platforms, including SKYSABRE (GBAD), ARCHER (CS Artillery) and TAIPAN (STA), has necessitated rapid changes to the way in which RSA courses are designed and delivered. The training for some of these new capabilities, such as SKYSABRE, has been deliberate and thorough; other programmes, such as ARCHER, have been delivered at pace with significantly compressed timelines. Whilst the rapid acquisition of equipment presents challenges to the RSA, Project MANORBIER and improved working practices at the RSA have provided much greater flexibility and agility, allowing the RSA to better meet the demands of modernisation. As part of the RSA's training modernisation and upskilling programme, instructors from TDW's Guns and Ammunition Branch will deliver ARCHER conversion for 5 Battery, 19 Regt RA in Apr 24. In addition, the RSA has started reviewing and updating all Royal Artillery publications, including the Royal Artillery Live Fire Safety Policy (Pam 53) and Royal Artillery Live Fire Competency Policy (Pam 57) ahead of the receipt of ARCHER.

**Communicating future changes to RA training:** The pace of change in both Army and RA training is, arguably, far greater and more significant than it has ever been before. In order to communicate this change, the RSA will deliver the inaugural Royal Artillery Training Symposium on 18 Apr 24 and issue termly newsletters with updates on changes to training, as well as lessons and best practice from across the Royal Regiment.

### 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

It has been a year of 'more' for 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery. More deployments, more exercises, more opportunities for our soldiers to grow. And more people, with I and N Btys firmly established in the Regiment. All while maintaining our Regimental commitment to deliver Joint Effects and Targeting for 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team.

Operational deployments have primarily been for individuals, though I Bty were forward-mounted to Cyprus with 2 RGR to assist in any potential Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations in the Middle East. We have deployed people to Iraq, on Op SHADER, to support coalition and host nation forces in stability operations; to Germany, on Op INTERLINK, supporting the training and logistics demands of the Armed Forces of Ukraine; and on other small scale operations. The steady drumbeat of individuals deploying on operations has been essential for our



*Sgt Griffiths (G Bty) supporting Direct Fire on Salisbury Plain during Ex CYPHER STRIKE 23 @ LBdr Mills*

understanding of the ever changing character of warfare, and to inform the development of our own doctrine.

In a varied and fast paced year, the Regiment and batteries have deployed on numerous overseas exercises. F Bty led the charge to Kenya on Ex HARAKA STORM, supporting 3 PARA BG on a tough exercise. They were followed by G Bty, who delivered force protection to the British Army Training Unit Kenya, enjoying much of the wider country in the margins. In the autumn, Ex PEGASUS AMARANTE saw H Bty and N Bty deploy to Oman to test and develop the Light Recce Strike concept. G Bty focused on developing interoperability with our US partners, deploying with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to Germany, and to Fort Liberty in the US to take part in, and nearly win, the 82nd Airborne Divisional Artillery Best Detachment Competition.

Like many regiments, we were proud to support the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, firing the salute at Colchester Castle, a secondary saluting station. As always, the Colchester community, local council, and the wider Brigade were hugely supportive of the historic event.

The Regiment's Future Soldier changes were completed this year. I Bty are well established supporting the 2 RGR BG, and N Bty are firmly ensconced in the 1 R IRISH Light Recce Strike BG. N Bty moved from Albemarle Barracks to Merville Barracks early this year; we look forward to I Bty moving south, and the Regiment coming together in Colchester in the near future.

Even with a busy year, members of the Regiment have continued to prove their excellence on the sporting field. We now have 14 personnel representing the Army in seven sports, and



*LBdr Stothard (F Bty) patrolling with the FST on Salisbury Plain during Ex CYPHER STRIKE 23 @ LBdr Mills*

lead the Royal Artillery in cycling, triathlon, and cross country. Encouragingly, following a near decade hiatus, the Regiment returned to the RA Boxing Championships this year, walking away as Royal Artillery champions.

The near future looks just as fast paced and full of opportunity. At the time of writing, the Regiment is deployed across three continents: Belize for Ex MAYAN WARRIOR, Estonia for Ex SWIFT RESPONSE and Kenya for BATUK Force Protection. We will come together in the summer for the Regimental exercise in Germany, before a well deserved summer break. With the Regiment back to its full size, we are well set and looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

### 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery

29 Cdo Regt RA continues to embrace the Commando Spirit and Values as they performed a wide range of simultaneous activities across the spectrum of conflict; mission rehearsal of high intensity warfighting in the Arctic, supporting Ukrainian efforts, crisis response in Africa and the Middle East, special operations training in the USA and conducting Joint Fires in the Indo-Pacific. All in the short timeframes and a proximity that befits their Very High Readiness profile between 48 to 96 hours' notice to move.

This characteristic display of determination, cheerfulness and excellence was perhaps best seen in Sudan in April 2023. 8 (Alma) Cdo Bty received orders for (the ironically titled) Op POLAR BEAR whilst fixed on another out of area operational task. This did not prevent the Bty from being formed up in Cyprus within 24 hours

of answering the call. As POLAR BEAR evolved, the Gun Group formed the core component of a QRF whilst BC's Tac and the FSTs deployed into Sudan as part of a joint Rapid Extraction Task Force



*8 Bty*

7 (Sphinx) Cdo Bty RA and 79 (Kirkee) Cdo Bty RA deployed to the Arctic as a part of Winter Deployment 2024. They conducted STA training alongside the Long Range Surveillance Battery of the Norwegian Army. Here they practised their use of hides in the evergreen forests of Norway and conducted amphibious build-up work whilst afloat with the 45 Cdo RM led Littoral Response Group. The Norwegians imparted their local knowledge, skills, and expertise of long range insertion, OP construction, and break contact drills in the freezing tundra of the High North. This activity was all focused on countering a neighbouring peer threat.

23 Cdo Bty has re-rolled into being a 'Firm Base' Bty to enable the high tempo and cadence of operating as a persistently deployed force. This pool of dedicated and depth knowledge J1, 4 and 6 expertise enables the other Btys to concentrate on looking up and out so they can rapidly meet ever changing world events as directed by the various higher formations in Northwood and Maritime Component Command.

148 (Meiktila) Cdo FO Bty hosted the final Amphibious Bombardment Association Reunion in RM Poole prior to successfully relocating to The Royal Citadel in Plymouth. Always in high demand, they were quickly back out of the main gate again for Project CONVERGENCE. Here the Bty found itself spread



*148 Bty*

across California and New Mexico conducting Tac Dev with the Army Special Operations Brigade and US Green Berets. They found themselves at the cutting edge of Defence, helping to



improve long range tactical data link interoperability as part of a larger 1 Deep Reconnaissance Strike (DRS) BCT construct.

A welcome addition to the Regimental family was the addition of RM Air Defence Troop to the team sheet. The 60+ 'Troop' is now part of 79 Bty and finding themselves in significant high demand not just for AD but also discrete counter UAS taskings. As the Transformation of the UK Commando Forces progresses, the Regt has been directed to continue planning for even tighter inclusion of RM Mor Tps and RM RPAS 1 (c) Tp, and the implementation of new effectors; yet another arrow to the Joint Fires quiver.



Direct Firing

Throughout the year elements of 29 Cdo have found themselves rotating through Defence's Main Effort of training the Armed Forces Ukraine (AFU) on Op INTERFORGE (M). The Regt has provided a steady stream of Joint Fires specialists to lead on the delivery of several training packages in close partnership with affiliated Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and Royal Netherlands Army personnel.

In March 24, 29 Cdo said farewell to the former CO, Kieran Phillips, who has given much to the Regt in numerous roles over the years since first arriving as an FST Comd. His relentless drive to keep Joint Fires and Targeting at the forefront of the UK Commando Force has been steadfast. He completes his 30 month tour, succeeded by Lt Col Jem Bersin RA.

The year ahead promises as much excitement and opportunity as the last, touching all points of the globe and an interesting 'do different' foray into Australia for Ex PREDATOR RUN. Priorities remain training for high intensity warfighting and out ability to integrate into 1 DRS BCT and contributing to the wider RA 'FIND and STRIKE' including AD and RPAS.

### The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery

The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery has experienced an incredibly busy and accomplished year to deliver: 8 Royal Salutes, 21 performances of the musical drive, multiple unit level moves while operating from 7 different locations. An enormous feat in planning and forward logistic supply for a unit comprising only 168 personnel. Key moments include the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla, the first King's Birthday Parade since 1951 and a Royal Salute at the Gallop in Hyde Park. Members of the King's Troop continue to be held at readiness for Op TEMPERER (internal security) and Op ESCALIN (fuel distribution). Individual augmentees have been provided at surge to 16 Regt RA, while a new partnership has been formed

to support 1RHA on deployments as well as ongoing support to infantry and armoured core regiments throughout London District.

The King's Troop continues to be at the forefront of Ceremonial Operations, winning the 2023 Mounted Unit Trophy for ceremonial excellence. On 6 May 2023, The King's Troop played an integral role during Operation GOLDEN ORB, the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Queen Camilla. For the first time in history, a six-gun salvo was fired on Horse Guards parade to the delight of spectators in St James Park and a worldwide audience of over 20 million. The Coronation Salute was executed the very moment the crown was placed on the King's head with the sound of the salvo being heard in Westminster Abbey. Precision timing and significant rehearsals ensured success, with the Troop then joining the Procession along the Mall to form up outside Buckingham Palace. As the senior regiment on parade, the King's Troop were right of the line to salute the newly crowned King and Queen for the first time.



Gnr Roberts preparing for the musical drive at the Royal Windsor Horse Show

In addition to Ceremonial Operations, the King's Troop continued to impress audiences with performances of the world class musical drive. Showcasing the unique blend of equestrian prowess, gun driving and ceremony that is central to the history of the Royal Regiment. In 2023, the musical drive was performed at the Royal Windsor Horse Show, Chatsworth Country Fair, and the London International Horse Show. Salutes were taken by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Master Gunner St James Park, Sir Alan Titchmarsh and Dame Mary Berry, all of whom took time to meet the Troop afterwards.



Royal Salute within the Green Park, London

The King's Troop entered 2024 with a focus on 'understanding the new normal', committed to a revised forecast of events in



The Colours on parade during the King's Birthday Parade.

fitting with the Ceremonial Review. The King's Troop will continue to play a crucial role in the Army's strategic leverage within London, with operations and influence at the forefront. The impact of Ceremonial Operations upon policy makers, domestic and foreign remains significant and continues to be an important pillar of our national heritage and identity. Recently the King's Troop have hosted defence engagement events with the Spanish, Hungarian and French, with planned activity in Italy and Canada later this year.

Understanding the new normal, has also afforded time for internal reflection, improvement and investment. Professional development remains a priority, with three internal ALDP (Army Leadership Development Programme) courses running and a number of personnel securing postings to phase one training establishments. A move to deliver initial trade training at the Defence Animal Training Centre will enable protected time and a targeted development pathway. Investments in health and wellbeing have seen the creation of a Troop gym at King George VI Lines, with adventurous training opportunities such as parachuting, skiing and mountain biking offering a challenging and enjoyable break from regimental duty. The return to the Troop Race saw 8 soldiers and military working horses race at the combined services point to point with one gaining their amateur riders permit a week later at the British Racing School. The launch of Project WOOD to establish the British Army's first equine centre of excellence has seen investments to equine infrastructure and further partnerships with industry experts such as the ZSL (Zoological Society of London) London Zoo.

Looking in to 2024, the King's Troop are committed to a plethora of Ceremonial Operations; including multiple Royal

Salutes, State Visits, The King's Birthday Parade, The King's Lifeguard, The State Opening of Parliament and The National Act of Remembrance. In addition, the musical drive will be performed at the Royal Windsor Horse Show and the Horse of the Year Show, with a Troop camp in September offering a well deserved break from the tempo of ceremonial life in London.

The service personnel and military working horses of the King's Troop continue to exemplify teamwork, courage, and selfless commitment. Reflected in the New Year's Honours List, two current and one former member were awarded MBEs for their exceptional performance, unwavering professionalism and achievements. The King's Troop have delivered on all fronts and continue to represent the very best of the Royal Regiment on an international stage.

### Workforce

**Workforce Situation:** As the Army's size reduces to the meet the funded structure of 73,000, structural sustainability of this smaller force can only be achieved by sufficient Inflow to the lowest ranks of Soldier and Officer. Following the difficulties imposed by the COVID pandemic, and the suspended use of the Defence Recruiting System (DRS), the Army has begun to see more settled levels of Inflow and Outflow. Without sharp peaks and troughs of unplanned external effects, the size of the Army's Workforce (WF), and its direction of travel, can be more clearly seen when plotted against the Workforce Requirement (WR). The challenge of years of Inflow insufficient to match Outflow has introduced WF gaps, which are progressing through the ranks with time. This 'air-bubble in the artery' is apparent within the



Royal Artillery; whose overall structural size was not reduced by the Integrated Review and the resultant Future Soldier structures. With an existing lower ranks' deficit against WR, the flow of Gunners through Basic training (BT) and Initial Trade Training (ITT) into Royal Artillery regiments has not matched the need; thereby expanding the 'air-bubble'. In response to approximately only 50% of its Inflow requirement being met, RHQ RA has introduced a number of initiatives to boost awareness of the Royal Artillery regiments, increase the number of potential Royal Artillery recruits contacting Recruiting Group and maximise the number of internal Army transfers via Digital Transfers, including those from the Brigade of Gurkhas, to whom the Royal Artillery can offer a fuller Army career. Royal Artillery officer recruiting remains strong, with the number of high quality applicants at RMAF continuing to exceed the availability of spaces.

**Regular Army:** Re-shaping of the Army in 2023, saw the Royal Artillery's WR grow by nearly 100 to 5835. This WR consists of 969 x Officers (DE (Direct Entry) and LE (Late Entry)) and 4866 x Soldiers. A sizeable proportion of the increase was due to the allocation of a further 49 x E2 DE Officer opportunities. This increased WR has helped absorb Officer surpluses, whilst increasing DE promotion quotas to the ranks of Major and Lieutenant Colonel. As at 1 Mar 24, Royal Artillery Officer WF Strength was 98% of WR. Soldier WF Strength was 86% of WR, with the aforementioned 'air-bubble' apparent in the ranks of Gnr and LBdr (each at 78% of WR) and Sgt (79%). Changes in operational requirements have resulted in re-prioritising the flow of new Gunners to regiments with different disciplines, but it is this flexibility which ensures the Royal Artillery remains to be generally evenly filled in each regiment and at each Main Trade for Pay. Pinch Points felt within the Royal Artillery are not by Trade, but remain to be those requiring successful completion of an Arduous Course and subsequent qualification for 7 Para RHA and 29 Cdo Regt RA. Introduction of the Royal Artillery's Arduous Course development initiative aims to increase pass-rates and has received positive reviews. The Delivery Pinch Point (DPP) of Watchkeeper Pilot within 47 Regt RA remains, but with greatly improved flight training opportunities in the USA, the number of Pilot qualifications has begun to grow.

**Army Reserve:** Although the Royal Artillery Army Reserve (Group A) WR remains unchanged at 2116, with 331 x Officers and 1785 x Soldiers, restructuring of the Reserve regiments at the end of 2023 will see a reduction in the WR when the next ResAWPR (Reserve Army Workforce Personnel Requirement) is finalised. Re-naming of NRHQ RA to 100 Regt RA saw an increase in its WR, with the introduction of specific PIDs (Position Identifier) for experienced MUAS (Medium Unmanned Air Systems) and TUAS (Tactical UAS) ex Regular soldiers. The implementation of the Future Soldier changes to 101, 103, 104, 105 and 106 Regts RA has seen a reduction of nearly 300 x Army Reserve Group A PIDs – generally 15 x PIDs per sub-unit being converted to Strategic Reserve. Inflow to the Army Reserve regiments remains a challenge in recruiting as well as in the time spent on progression through BT and then gaining an ITT qualification. However, a large number of Army Reserve Trade qualifications were gained through the RSA combined training initiative in 2023. Overall, Army Reserve WF Strength was 78% of WR at 1 Mar 24. Officer Strength was 116% and Soldier Strength was 71%. However, these figures are a little misleading as, particularly in the Officer space, a large proportion of Reservists are unposted within the Army Reserve Reinforcement Group (ARRG). Changes to the way the Army Reserve holds its unposted Volunteers, and how

they are accounted for, are currently underway but current WF Strength does not give a true indication of the RA Army Reserve, particularly at E1 Regimental Duty, where regiments are experiencing sub 40% of WR Strengths in the lower ranks; up to, and inclusive of, Sergeant.

## Royal Artillery Secretariat

**General:** In parallel with and in support of the Regiment's primary military activities, the Regimental Secretariat, which includes the welfare, finance and Royal Artillery Association teams, oversee a range of regimental charitable activity, which spans the whole Gunner family - serving and veteran and families. In 2023, working together under the direction of the Royal Artillery Board of Management, the three main regimental charities contributed some £1,490,000 in direct support of the mandated outputs of RHQRA, which deliver welfare and support ethos, commemoration, heritage, comradeship and a sense of belonging across the regimental family.

**Supporting Defence & The Regimental Family:** Below are the existing mandated tasks for RHQRA. Those highlighted in italics are largely funded through the charities. The figures in bold show, in broad terms, how much the charities spent in support of those key areas in 2023:

a. *Command the Regimental/Corps HQs to promote heritage, conduct commemoration and promote pride, ethos, identity and belonging in each Corps and Regiment.*

**Heritage - £177K**  
**Commemoration - £15K**  
**Pride, ethos, belonging - £264.1K**  
**Sports £190.8K**

b. *Support Regular and Reserve soldiers, and their families, throughout their service and as veterans.*

**Welfare - £818.9K including: £630K in individual grants (including £84.5K to individual serving personnel); £91.9K in regimental grants; and £48K in unit Betterment grants.**

c. Support the organisation, workforce planning and career management of soldiers and officers in each Corps and Regiment.

d. *Support engagement, recruitment and retention activity.*  
**Recruiting - £29K; plus elements a & b above.**

e. Develop efficiencies, enact IR measures and support the Civilian Workforce Commission.

f. Embrace change, exploit lessons, leverage diversity, exploit digital transformation and support the climate change agenda.

in order to *enhance the cohesion of the force, its engagement with society and the delivery of operational capability.*

**RA Charities direct contribution: £1.49M**

### Regimental Charities

The following provides a summary for each of the three regimental charities run by the Secretariat. Each charity has the promotion

of efficiency within the Royal Artillery as their key objective but they achieve this in different ways:

### Royal Artillery Institution (RAI)

The RAI was established in 1838. Its charitable object is the promotion of the efficiency of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The charity meets that requirement by making grants to regiments, individuals and other regimental organisations in support of regimental affairs. Regimental affairs are those matters which are essential to the domestic life of the Regiment as a whole. The following activities are included: regimental property; regimental ceremonies, events and entertainment; educational, historical and heritage affairs; regimental honours and awards; support to units and individuals, regimental sports and adventurous training, publications; policy for regimental matters such as dress, messes, heritage and ceremonial, all of which are supported by grants from the charity. The RAI achieves its charitable objectives, primarily through to the provision of grants to promote efficiency. For 2024 the RAI has made the following major grants in support of regimental events and activities:

- Heritage - £164K (Museum & archive)
- Regimental sports - £108.7K
- Grants to Regiments - £77K
- Recruiting £27.8K
- Regimental events - £20.2K

### Royal Artillery Charitable Fund (RACF)

The RACF was established in 1839 and its objects are to:

- Promote the efficiency and welfare of all ranks of the Royal Artillery.

- Provide relief and assistance of any past, present or future of the Royal Artillery and their dependants, and families and dependants of any deceased members, who are in need of such relief and assistance by reason of poverty, disability, sickness, infirmity or otherwise

The RACF achieves its charitable objectives primarily by making grants to individuals in need. In 2023, the charity expended some £655K in assisting individual cases, of which £84K was in support of serving members of the Regiment.

More widely, the charity makes welfare grants to Regular and Reserve regiments to help deal with individual cases and support unit welfare initiatives. It also makes grants in support of Gunner sports.

For 2024 the RACF has allocated the following funds in its budget:

- Individual grants (serving, retired and families) - £707K
- Regimental welfare grants - £95K
- Regimental sports - £80.7K
- Army Benevolent Fund - £79.5K
- Comradeship grants to batteries: £40K

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

### Royal Artillery Association (RAA)

The RAA was founded in 1920 to support those who had served in the Regiment during the First World War. The objects of the RAA are:

- To promote the efficiency of the Royal Artillery by:
  - Maintaining contact between past and present members of the Royal Artillery, fostering mutual friendship between them and providing for social gatherings for them and;
  - Fostering esprit de corps, comradeship and the welfare of the Royal Artillery and preserving its traditions.
- To relieve, either generally or individually members of the RAA or past and present members of the Royal Artillery, and their dependants, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

The RAA achieves its charitable objects by: making grants to support comradeship and welfare; raising and maintaining the profile of the RAA in order to improve comradeship for Gunners, both serving and retired; providing support to members and; planning and organising national RAA events. All serving and veteran Gunners are automatically life members of the Association.

The RAA supports Gunner batteries (all of which are considered to be branches of the RAA) by making grants in support of comradeship events. £40K has been allocated for this purpose in 2024.

Work is currently ongoing to ensure that RAA is more attractive, relevant and beneficial to: the serving regiment; our more recently retired veterans; those who do not have access to or choose not to belong to a geographical branch. Recent developments include:

- Creation of affiliated branches from existing Old Comrades and Past & Present Members groups:
  - Boys & Junior Leaders OCA
  - 137 (Java) Battery PPMA
  - New branches in:
    - Morcambe – combined with 46 (Talavera) Battery OCA
    - Sheffield
    - Fylde
  - Creation of 'interest group' affiliated branches:
    - Riders
    - E-gamers

### The RHQ Team

The support described above is coordinated by the Secretariat and delivered by the Finance, Welfare and RAA Teams. In addition to running the regimental charities the Secretariat team are responsible for the delivery of a number of key regimental events and activities. These include: Spring, Alamein and Hail & Farewell dinners; the Royal Artillery Assembly; the annual service at the National Memorial Arboretum and; secretariat support to the Master Gunner's Committee and RA Board of Management.

# Small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (sUAS) in the Near Surface Battlespace

By Major Steve Watts RIFLES



Major Steve Watts took over his current role as SO2 WARDEV in July 2022 at the newly formed Combat Manoeuvre Centre (CMC). This role saw him leading the design and delivery for the Land Warfare Centre (LWC) of small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (sUAS), and the wider Near Surface warfare development. He has recently project managed the creation and delivery of the Army's new sUAS School at Lulworth Cove. He joined the Army in 1991 completing his soldier career at 3 RIFLES and several training establishments including ITC Catterick, and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as a Colour Serjeant Instructor. He was the RSM of ITC Catterick before commissioning in 2015, and has been the MTO at 3 RIFLES, MTO and UWO at 4 RIFLES, and QM at 8 RIFLES. In addition to roles at regimental duty, he has been SO3 G1/4, and the Deputy Chief of Staff at HQ School of Infantry followed by his current role as SO2 WARDEV at CMC. He attended the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (ICSC) at Shrivenham in 2021. This combination of regimental duty and a variety of staff officer roles led to his selection for sub-unit command at 3 RIFLES from July 2024. Operationally, Major Watts conducted multiple tours of Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo. He also completed three tours of Iraq and a tour of Afghanistan on Op HERRICK

11. His experience is broad having trained and deployed in close reconnaissance, Light Role Infantry, Light Mechanised Infantry and Armoured Infantry roles. His operational experience over three decades includes the full spectrum of operations from peace keeping to war fighting. He is married to Lynn a mental health nurse and has a daughter Laura aged 13. He has a passion for travel, the outdoors, and walking his dog. His new love is kayaking which he uses to fill his spare time.

## Introduction

It has been said that the “emergence of drones on today’s modern battlefield is as significant as the introduction of tanks to the battlefields of World War One”. These systems known commonly as small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems or sUAS, and their impact on all parts of an operation can’t be underestimated. They are changing the way in which we fight as an Army, and becoming more dominant and lethal. From Ukraine to Gaza and beyond, these small platforms have emerged as the number one threat to the deployed force, and we must adapt at a faster pace or lose the fight in what is now termed the ‘Close Near Surface battlespace’.

The Royal Artillery are the longstanding experts in the use of Remote Piloted Air Systems known as RPAS. These highly technical larger systems operating at the Brigade level and above are flown by specialists that have extensive training like crewed aviators. However, it is not these aircraft that are expanding rapidly in number, it is the much cheaper and less complex systems. Currently the majority of those being employed are Commercial Off The Shelf or COTS systems, with Military Off The Shelf or MOTS used for specific tasks. The COTS systems are being adapted in countries like Ukraine with rapid innovation leading to lethal effects delivered by a system costing hundreds of pounds

rather than tens of thousands. These systems are operated by generalist users from all parts of the Army down to the lowest tactical level and impacting everyone’s survivability.

## Near Surface Battlespace

Historically we fought on the land supported by crewed aircraft both fixed wing and rotary, and in the most part enjoyed air superiority. We have always dealt with the tank, armoured fighting vehicle, or infantry unit to our front in a flat two-dimensional battlespace. Now however, our battle is three-dimensional, with our most vulnerable flank being our ‘vertical flank’. Even as we look to the future, we may hold air superiority in the higher airspace but still have threats at the tactical level in the lower orbit directly above our heads in the Near Surface. The Near Surface isn’t constrained by the traditional concepts of Deep, Close, and Rear Areas. It should be considered a blanket that covers every part of the battlefield from the point at which you leave your camp and begin the insertion to theatre. It covers the parts of the battlefield previously considered relatively safe, such as Sea Ports of Disembarkation, and divisional logistic nodes hundreds of miles from the Close battle.

The threat is persistent, with increasing numbers of sUAS able to fly further, deliver lethal effects, and with an increasing level

of autonomy. In Ukraine it is widely reported that there can be more than fifty sUAS above a single battle. This makes movement of personnel and logistics including casualty evacuation a real challenge. The threat from above is driving real change with units dispersed much further apart than ever before to lower their physical signature. We are having to rethink how we conduct things like defence, with trench systems and bunkers being constructed in a way that limits view from the air. We are bringing back traditional skills lost in the Iraq and Afghanistan years such as All Arms Air Defence (AAAD). With the increased capability comes opportunities to destroy targets in a new emerging space known as the ‘battlegroup deep’, which goes beyond the ranges of traditional or organic battlegroup weapons into what was the divisional deep previously. Countering the threat is a pressing priority with a system of systems providing a layered approach to defeating enemy aircraft. The Counter-UAS (C-UAS) is vital to our own survivability and will require every unit commander to review how they do their tasks with an exposed vertical flank.

## The Changing Landscape

The Field Army has a concept known as “How We Fight 2026” (HWF26). This concept looks at modernising the Land Force making it more agile and lethal. One major part of this work is the introduction of sUAS which range from very small palm size aircraft up to much bigger sub 25kg battlegroup systems. These systems will be operated by all parts of the Army with hundreds of different Use Cases. These uses include medium and heavy lift aircraft, Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance or ISR, and very soon lethal effect. The range of uses are endless, and the development across the whole of defence is significant and measured in the tens of millions. We will see very soon an ability to swarm using Artificial Intelligence where sUAS will be able to fly without a human in the loop and conduct their own target identification and destroy multiple targets at once. In Ukraine it is almost impossible to employ artillery without using UAS as part of the targeting cycle known by the Russians as the ‘Recce-Fires-Complex’.

The UK is rapidly catching up, and the use of sUAS to help target enemy positions for mass artillery or precision guided fires will soon be routine. Furthermore, lethal sUAS using One-Way Attack First Person View (FPV) systems can support or even replace Artillery for precision strike as their range and lethality increases. With the introduction of sUAS comes an additional challenge with the need to understand Electronic Warfare (EW) like never before. This is fundamental as both defensive and offensive EW form part of the wider challenge. Units will need to employ systems that are commonly referred to in Ukraine as ‘trench jammers’, enabling defeat of incoming enemy sUAS. We will also need to shift from defensive EW to offensive EW with a defeat system incorporated into our operations at every level that defeats the device before it reaches our position. When combining all of these systems together you can see that specialist skills have now become a generalist skill, and the battlespace has become very complex.

## Scale

The key point to takeaway is the scale of employment. These sUAS will be employed in very high numbers in comparison to RPAS, and crewed aviation assets. For example, an Infantry battlegroup will employ smaller systems at Section, Platoon, and Company level with largest systems operating up to battlegroup level. This could see around sixty sUAS for one battlegroup,

meaning a deployed Brigade Combat Team (BCT) with multiple battlegroups would have hundreds of sUAS operating all the time. This will bring logistical challenges and complications for battlespace management. Deconfliction between units will be vital to reducing fratricide and present some new challenges for commanders. With increased uncrewed ground vehicles and complex data networks all forming part of the challenge.



Black Hornet (L) and Parrot Anafi (R) Systems used at Section to Company levels.

## Emotional Preparation and Injury

Those that conducted foot patrols in places like Iraq and Afghanistan will be familiar with the psychological effect that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) had on the deployed units. Now consider that those IEDs can now fly, but even worse they can literally chase you through a wood or down a road.

*“you can try and run from the drone... but you’ll die tired”*

AFU – Tactical Commander

We must therefore prepare our units for the psychological injury that comes with operating in this type of environment under a persistent threat for prolonged periods of time. This requires us to employ sUAS in larger numbers in a more aggressive manner and force our soldiers to think seriously about the threat and increase their mental resilience. Furthermore, there is evidence from Ukraine in relation to the psychological damage of their sUAS operators (Remote Pilots). It is evident that operating UAS specifically in a lethal role takes its toll on the individuals controlling the aircraft. This provides additional challenges in terms of operator selection, training, and management once in the close battle.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, sUAS are now here and growing at scale with a wide set of Use Cases for the Field Army. This creates a congested Near Surface battlespace that will challenge both crewed and uncrewed users. The tactical advantage that UAS gives the Land Force is vital and can’t be overly constrained if it is to win the next war. This means that crewed aviation will need to deconflict airspace with greater consideration for small tactical systems operating in the same space. Our vertical flank is even more important than our traditional flanks, and the lethality and number of ways in which you can be targeted from above as never been more deadly. This will challenge every Army and impact every war or minor conflict we face in the future and winning the Near Surface battle will be our greatest challenge.



# Reconnaissance Strike in the 1st Division

By Brigadier Jon Cresswell



Brigadier Jon Cresswell is the Deputy Commander (Deep Battle and Joint Effects) for the 1st (French) Division which also doubles as the CRA. Cresswell has spent most of his operational career with Navy Command, his military education has been almost exclusively French, and his staff background lies in Capability and Acquisition. Operationally, he has also served in West Africa. He is the chair of Gunner History and President of Gunner Athletics and Hockey. In this article, also published in France, he describes the Divisional Reconnaissance Force as an essential enabler to kinetic attack and achieving tactical advantage. This was tested on the recent CPX/CAX, Exercise CITADEL BONUS 2023.

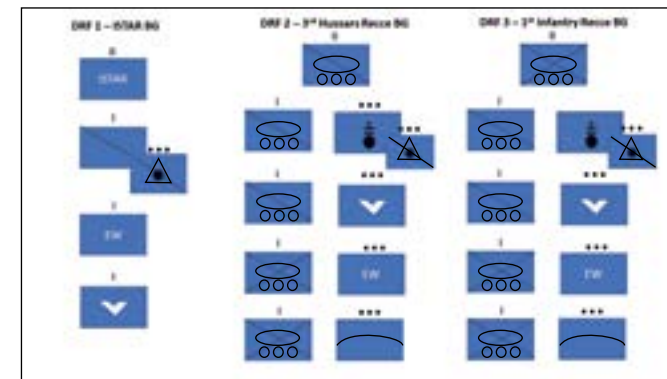
The theme of 'deep battle' is a headline theme for French army transformation, notably with the creation of the Deep Battle and Special Warfare 'Alpha' Commands. The concept came to the fore after 3rd Division's participation in Warfighter 21-4 but arguably has been present for several decades in other forms. Indeed, it can be clearly seen in the Great War by 1917 although not at the divisional level; this was very much Army and Corps business, in many ways it still is. Shaping in the Deep Battle seeks to create the conditions for advantage in the close or decisive phase and can be simplified as a symbiotic relationship between reconnaissance (information/intelligence) and strike (Fires or Effects in the virtual or cognitive domains). Based on the recent studies into the formation cavalry and infantry regiments by 3rd Hussars and 1st Infantry, HQ 1st Division conducted some experimentation recently on Ex CITADEL BONUS (CIBO) 2023. While recognising the limitations of a CPX/CAX, this is what we tried to do, and this is what we learned.

While we regularly refer to the transparent battlefield, our exercises seem unable to reflect what we assess to be the reality: the result is that we start with next to nothing and have



1st FR Div

to fight for understanding. We have few ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition & Reconnaissance) assets in the division save for a handful of UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems), relatively short-range EW (Electronic Warfare) capabilities and ground reconnaissance patrols. The latter are clearly of great utility in defence or operating on the flanks, but might not prove very effective infiltrating into heavily defended positions. We are always punished for this by SOULT! The result is that the Deep Battle and its shaping phase fails, and our close battle then takes place against unfavourable odds. This is where the Divisional Reconnaissance Force (DRF) comes into the game: two combined arms reconnaissance battlegroups based on 3RH and 1RI containing a force mix of mounted reconnaissance platforms, infantry, UAS, EW, artillery observers and JTACs (Joint Terminal Attack Coordinator) with radars, and in particular air defence, 120mm mortars and engineering capabilities.



For CIBO we also grouped an armoured squadron with each group to allow them to eliminate combat outposts at platoon strength. Known as DRF 1, 2 and 3 (DRF 1 being the ISTAR Group, and DRFs 2 and 3 being 3rd Hussars and 1st Infantry respectively), this force provides a multi-captor capability that operates in the Divisional deep area and within the range of the Divisional Artillery Group. In the absence of precise information, the two DRF battlegroups advance to contact, identifying and characterising the enemy, deliver joint fires and enable wider effects against the positions observed and against the enemy artillery that unmask on the understanding that the DRF is the lead battalion of a manoeuvre brigade rather than a reconnaissance force.



Quick Targeting Board SCH Thomas/AdT/132RIC

1. The French simulation system for staff training.



Caesar is a French wheeled, 155 mm 52 calibre self propelled howitzer. It holds 18 rounds and is typically operated by a crew of five, though if necessary can be operated by a crew of three. It can be transported by a C-130 or an A400M aircraft. France has ordered 109 more Caesars having gifted a significant number to Ukraine. Authorised by KNDS

To this end, the manoeuvre element of the DRF will operate at 20-30 km from the divisional artillery (155mm/52 calibre guns) which might need to raid forward to gain range. In the absence of targetable information from other capabilities, there is no option but to fight for information through the forward outpost zone and this is the force that does it. It seeks to pin the enemy allowing the manoeuvre brigades to pivot and strike. If the Corps shapes the battlespace in terms of attacking the adversary's combat system: its ability to fight; the division looks to create a favourable force ratio for close combat operations to seek a decision. It buys the division time to understand in order to adapt to the enemy's laydown. In particular, it protects the combat power and integrity of the brigades, and this extends combat potential as manoeuvre operations, while highly effective when they are successful, are costly in terms of the attrition sustained through exposure to the enemy. It is no wonder that confrontations are usually attritional, manoeuvre warfare is high risk – high reward.



Patroller is a long-endurance drone system, or Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS), used for ISR missions in the context of military operations or homeland security. © Armée de Terre française

The DRF is also well suited to creating operating windows for standoff attack with air power and army aviation as part of



a wider multi domain effects sequence. It is also well suited to conducting screening and guards on the flanks of the division to create freedom of manoeuvre for close combat manoeuvre and once again, preserve the fighting integrity of the brigades. Obviously, there is a logistic challenge, as the force must be sustained at reach with each logistic move being a combat patrol into the Deep. To this end, logistic economy and resilience are essential. The operating range is the range of the guns, not the rockets although this is accepted for DRF 1 (ISTAR Group), which will penetrate much deeper in more discreet, even covert role. The lateral operating range is offered as 60km which far exceeds the standard template but accepts gaps in the coverage which are then covered by UAS triggered by EW or GMTI (Ground Moving Target Indicator). In essence, this is the divisional version of the brigade reconnaissance force. It is commanded by the virtual deep battle brigade (recce – strike) at divisional level and tactically coordinated by the JAGIC (Joint Air Ground Integration Centre) where all the operators in the Deep Battle are co-located.



Jaguar: French armoured reconnaissance vehicle. It has a 40 mm gun and carries two anti-tank missiles. © Armée de Terre française



Divisional JAGIC SCH Thomas/AdT/132RIC

So that is what we tried to do, and this is what we learned. The notion of a clearly defined Deep, Close and Rear battles looks very neat on powerpoint slides but the reality is somewhat more fluid. 'Deep' must be viewed in terms of time as much as geography. Targets which we might consider as 'Deep' will become close in a matter of hours and the deep battle area in the offensive might roll forward quickly. What will also roll forward or backwards (six hours seems to be reasonable) is the Coordinated Fire Line (CFL). We must be careful with the term 'CFL' as we now seem to be using it at Corps and Divisional level to represent formation boundaries that are in fact Restricted Fire Lines (RFL). A CFL is clearly defined in doctrine as the line over which Fire can be uncoordinated with ground manoeuvre whereas behind the line, friendly forces are present. It exists, therefore, to deliver freedom of action over the line and protect own forces behind it. It should not delineate the boundary between Deep and Close, especially if we regard the DRF are operating in the deep as both DRF 2 and 3 must be protected and therefore the CFL sits to their front. DRF 1 operated over the CFL is protected by a restricted fire

area (RFA). Breaking the battlespace up can be useful in terms of targeting responsibility and the efficient use of assets, but this must not detract from the effect sought and the responsibility of the corps and the division to achieve transitional conditions.

It is possibly better to view the operating area of the DRF as divisionally owned battlespace rather than simply the Deep as this risks pushing the divisional effort far in advance of the brigades and as a result failing to deliver the conditions for transition to close and decisive combat. We must not give the brigades more battlespace than they can control/strike/influence and if this is the case then the divisional must assign means for them to operate in which case the division ought to retain control and fight the battle itself. This protects the brigades who must concentrate on their manoeuvre over the next 6-8 hours rather than shaping a future one. If the DRF is fixing an enemy force, then it is likely that the brigades will catch up and the divisional reconnaissance will have to re-subordinate temporarily to them as either TACOM or TACON until they are able to launch forward again. We must be flexible enough to do this.

The deep or divisional battle seeks to harness all the means that the division has at its disposal together with higher echelon capabilities that can be secured to achieve windows of convergence. In terms of artillery, all organic Fires within the division are first and foremost under the command of the Divisional Artillery Group (DAG). 1st Division assess our requirement to be no less than 72 x 155mm guns with additional 120mm mortar troops for the DRF and the manoeuvre brigades (four batteries in total?). To this is added a Rocket Regiment if not attributed to Corps. The basic rule of thumb is that a carousel system ensures that trajectories are always available for close and general support alongside counter fires.<sup>2</sup> Brigades on the main effort will be supported by the maximum firepower that the division can deliver, and this should include enfilade fire from flanking formations (range is not just about depth but also about width which in itself delivers mass). The flexibility of artillery fire is that it can quickly switch from the deep to the close and even to the rear if necessary. To this end, brigade artillery FSCC (Fire

Support Coordination Centre) (or even the DRF JFCs (Joint Fires Cell)) should expect to control the entire DAG for their fireplans and ideally trajectories from outside the division too.

The Deep Battle is not purely geographic or one of firepower. It is one of joint effects. The term multi-domain operations is used repeatedly but are we entirely sure what it really means and indeed at what level it can be meaningfully engineered? It is almost certainly at the higher tactical, routinely at Corps while a divisional ambition is also reasonable as is independent brigade such as 9th Marine Brigade when operating as Littoral Landing Force under the Maritime Component Commander. I see Multi-Domain Integration as a vertical construct where a force is able to converge multiple actions from across the five domains and the three dimensions of physical, virtual and cognitive to realise effects. For the division this takes us into the world dimensions of Joint Effects or *Non-kinetic* or *Non-material* effects where cyber and electromagnetic activities combine with Fires, DRF



The French Caesar 155mm/52 calibre gun. With an unassisted range of around 40km, the gun delivers both General Support and Close Support tasks and can support the DRF as well as the manoeuvre brigades. The range is as important for depth as it is for enfilade in order to mass trajectories in the close battle. *nexter.mourmelon*

ground reconnaissance, aviation manoeuvre and various forms of information manoeuvre. This requires reachback to specialist national centres of expertise in the Deep Battle Command and potentially reaching out to other sources and agencies. Many of these activities will have a long lead time and so we are reminded of the temporal nature of the Deep Battle. Equally, the geographic nature of the Deep Battle now has to be expanded as the virtual battle works to different parameters and the cognitive domain is almost without limits.

Success in the Deep Battle is about creating a team: a group of committed operators who by the nature of their different roles and skills will represent a very diverse enterprise. This is important, as the Deep Battle requires a variety of different approaches. It needs to combine the wisdom of senior and older leaders with the initiative and imagination of younger generations

and to get the most out of the latter they must be empowered and encouraged. If the team is composed entirely of men, then it is doomed to failure. A successful Deep Battle team will need civilians as well as military, contractors as much as civil servants. It



Deep Battle Board SCH Thomas/AdT/132RIC

is a multi-discipline network with the aim of hunting the adversary, limiting their options and gaining decisive advantage. While we might not have had this nirvana on CITADEL BONUS and because we were working to Rapid Reaction Corps - France, the national centres were working to the Corps level (Aviation was also held at Corps level), the diversity in the team was still impressive from Intelligence to Reconnaissance, to Cyber and Electronic Warfare, to information operations to Strike. The staff processes used by both French divisions integrate Full Spectrum Targeting through the designation of desired effects and objectives, which serve as the basis for Target Systems and Audience Analysis against which multiple actions are designed, converged and exploited. In the tactical environment of the division, these are constructed to deliver the transitional conditions that the commander seeks to commit their brigades to close combat. The pathway to these conditions is presented to the commander for validation at the daily Deep Battle Board.

Citadel Bonus offered a valuable opportunity to develop further the Divisional Deep Battle using a range of constructs including the DRF and the DAG. We will not pretend that we have invented anything; we have simply been able to take what we have identified elsewhere and seek to try to apply a deep battle approach in practice. Equally, we will not pretend that it was a magic wand but as a construct it proved coherent and its success or otherwise informed the commander's decisions against levels of risk to the force and to the mission in terms of force ratios and margins of advantage. In particular, the DRF allowed us to fight for information and achieve a certain freedom of manoeuvre and reach that our more traditional reconnaissance construct would not match; indeed, some of its kinetic actions were remarkably successful.

2. Notwithstanding a mission where the entire DAG engages, when a smaller number of trajectories are engaged, a counter fires unit is always stood by to respond to hostile battery reports.



# DUNCAN ESSAY 2023

## THIS MATTERS TO ME

### Assess Whether The Slogan “Artillery Wins Wars” Is Accurate

By Captain Mark Whitfield R Signals



*Captain Mark Whitfield R SIGNALS has had an interesting and varied career to date, covering six years. He commissioned in 2017 and posted into Troop Command with a ‘Sabre’ Troop in A (Yorkshire) Squadron in York before getting mobilised as SO3 J3 (Land), British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI). During the COVID-19 crisis he was deployed to Port Stanley as part of the Ops Forward Team, taking on the role of Liaison Officer to the Falkland Islands’ Government. Remaining in BFSAI for a second year, he covered both SO2 Info Ops and SO2 J5 before returning to the UK in 2021 and taking up an FTRS (Full Time Reserve Service) contract as Second in Command of 24 (Irish) Battery, Royal Artillery. He transferred to the regular army in June 2023. Currently he is the Squadron Second in Command at 3rd (United Kingdom) Division Signal Regiment.*

**“There is still a tendency in each separate unit ... to be a one-handed puncher. By that I mean the rifleman wants to shoot, the tanker to charge, the artilleryman to fire [...] That is not the way to win battles.**

**[...] To get harmony in battle, each weapon must support the other.”**

Major General George S Patton

(AFM Fires, 2019)

#### INTRODUCTION

Regiments frequently attempt to sum up their role and ethos with pithy and punchy slogans. We have all heard that, “G4 wins wars” and, “No comms, no bombs”. The phrase, “Artillery wins wars” has started to be used to capture the ethos of the Royal Artillery and sell the “brand” of the Gunners. This essay will argue that whilst this is a good slogan to try to bring the Regiment together, it is not an accurate reflection of the role of artillery in war, and specifically the artillery’s role in the way that the British Army envisages fighting wars; this poses a number of risks to the Regiment. To do so, this essay will discuss the conceptual and doctrinal issues with the statement, before examining whether the phrase is borne out in history by examining three conflicts. Ultimately this essay proposes a more accurate slogan around which the Regiment could coalesce.

Before we can determine whether the slogan is accurate, we must first define what war is and what it means to win one. This in itself is a hotly debated topic, and one that would require far more words than the limit of this competition allows. For the sake of simplicity, this essay will use the Clausewitzian definition, in which war is a political act conducted by military means and so requires a political solution (Clausewitz, 1997). War, particularly within the modern era, is almost never fought to the complete destruction of one side, but rather to the point that the will of one of the belligerents is shattered and they are no longer able to continue the fight. Even in examples of “total war”, such as the Second World War, the war ended as a result of the destruction of one of the belligerent’s will to fight, rather than the complete physical destruction of their armed forces. Therefore, a war is said to be won when one side is able to compel the enemy to fulfil their will (Clausewitz, 1997).

Additionally, at this stage it is important to note the difference between the nature and the character of war; the former being eternal and consistent throughout history, the latter being dependant on the context of the conflict. The character of a conflict is the result of the cultural, geographical, political and technological context in which it takes place. This distinction is vital to understanding what lessons can be drawn from wars as the Army seeks to plan for the future.

#### CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

As set out above, war is a political act carried out using military means, during which each side seeks to compel their enemy to fulfil their will. The object in war is therefore the enemy’s will to fight (Clausewitz, 1997) and so the physical destruction of the enemy is only useful in so far as it assists in breaking their will to fight (Smith, 2006). Indeed, physical destruction of the enemy can only ever be part of the breaking of their will. Focussing entirely on physical destruction neglects the other levers which can be used to compel the enemy and does not take into account the fact that the character of war is constantly changing.

Every war evolves during the course of the conflict, with changes being driven by the political, social, and historical context in which it is taking place (McMaster, 2013). There is a constant arms race between belligerents as they strive to obtain an advantage over their adversary. These developments can be technological, organisational or tactical, but always seek to utilise a force’s advantages or mitigate their disadvantages. As Galleotti argues, “Always a quest for the next silver bullet, the fact of the matter is war is complex and no one weapon clinches the deal” (Galleotti, 2023) and so any developments in artillery (whether that is destructive power, accuracy or method of deployment)

will be reacted to by the enemy who will adapt to protect their own forces and neutralise the development.

History is littered with examples of this process, one of the best examples being the development of Allied doctrine during the Second World War, discussed below. Therefore, from a conceptual perspective it cannot be said that artillery, operating alone, wins wars, because an adversary will always adapt to neutralise any advantage their opponent has and so to succeed in war requires an approach that does not rely on a single technology.

The main counter to this is that artillery is responsible for the overwhelming majority of battlefield casualties (discounting disease) and therefore must be a war winning weapon. However, this is a crass misunderstanding of how a war is won and, as discussed above, does not reflect the nature of warfare. Firstly, causing casualties does not necessarily result in the taking or holding of ground, a key element of success in war. As will be discussed below, artillery is the cause of the overwhelming majority of casualties in the war in Ukraine, yet has not allowed either side to strike a decisive blow. Secondly, the argument does not account for the fact that the enemy has a say in how the war is conducted and will take steps to neutralise any advantage. For example, a belligerent who is suffering significant casualties as a result of artillery will adapt their TTPs (Tactics, Techniques and Procedures) to reduce those casualties, such as dispersing forces, use of overhead protection or, in extreme circumstances, withdrawing from the battlefield to conduct more indirect military operations.

The Clausewitzian understanding of war is reflected in the British Army’s doctrine, best described as a combined arms manoeuvrist approach, which seeks to defeat the enemy by shattering their will through manoeuvre (AFM Conventional Warfare, 2022). The principles identified within the doctrine are focussed on the seizing of initiative, the destruction of the enemy’s will, and the preservation of our own (AFM Conventional Warfare, 2022); there is no requirement to physically destroy the enemy’s forces (though this is almost certainly required during conventional fighting). The Artillery’s role in this is to support the manoeuvre elements by removing the enemy force’s freedom of action and so allow manoeuvre forces to complete their missions (AFM Fires, 2019).

British doctrine revolves around the combination of effects that each arm can produce, appreciating that each arm has its own unique advantages and disadvantages which must be blended to achieve the intended outcome. For example, in the manoeuvrist approach, the destruction of the enemy’s will to fight relies on the ability to take and hold ground (Leonhard, 1991). Artillery alone is incapable of taking or holding ground but is important in supporting those forces that can (infantry and to a lesser extent armour) and so the three arms must work in concert to leverage their advantages and mitigate their disadvantages to achieve the goal. Therefore, the British Army’s doctrinal framework is based around the premise that a war cannot be won by artillery (or indeed any other arm) alone, but only when acting in concert with other arms. The phrase, “Artillery wins wars” is therefore doctrinally inaccurate.

#### HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Having considered whether the slogan is correct as a concept, this essay will consider whether it is historically accurate. For this it will focus on three conflicts ranging from the First World War to the modern day. Taking the First World War as a starting point, as, whilst historically artillery has played an important role in warfare, it is often seen as the coming of age for artillery.

## FIRST WORLD WAR

The war started with a highly fluid campaign as the German forces attempted to carry out the Schlieffen plan, using manoeuvre to bypass what was anticipated to be a heavily defended border area. The plan ultimately failed due to a number of reasons, including the unexpected response of Great Britain and the rapid mobilisation of Russian forces. The developments in artillery (as well as other defensive weapons and technologies) created battlefield conditions which favoured the defender, ultimately resulting in the deadlock on the Western front and the development of trench warfare. However, this deadlock only occurred after the German forces had been able to push into Belgian and French territory. This loss of territory created a situation whereby the German forces were able to achieve their war aims by maintaining the status quo, whereas the Allies were not able to.

The Allies struggled to restore manoeuvre to the battlefield, something that they needed to do in order to recover the territory lost to the German forces. On a tactical level the Allies sought to use massed fires to break through German defences. Iconic images of shattered woodlands and landscapes riddled with craters are testament to the destructive power of massed fires. However, they were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the German forces developed a system of bunkers and strongpoints that could be used to shelter from the initial bombardment. Any tour of the Somme, Verdun or Passchendaele clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of these fortifications, with many still intact 100 years later. Even where the artillery was able to hit a trench or fortification, engineers were able to limit the damage using staggered trenches and other innovative techniques. This meant that the shelling did not cause the level of casualties anticipated, resulting in the slaughter of advancing troops (Bourne, 1997). Secondly, where artillery was able to create the conditions for manoeuvre forces to capture part of the German defences, they were unable to effectively support exploitation or defeat German counter attacks, resulting in the loss of the ground taken. It was only with the development of an effective combined arms doctrine that manoeuvre was restored to the battlefield, albeit by the German army.

Ultimately the war did not end as a result of the destruction of the German armed forces, but rather the loss of their will to fight. A combination of domestic considerations, the failure of the German spring offensive of 1918, and the threatened arrival of fresh troops from the USA resulted in the armistice and eventual capitulation of the German High Command. It is telling that the war which is widely regarded as a high point of artillery (The Royal Artillery was 24 percent of the British Army in 1918 (CHACR, 2023)) ended as the result of the collapse of a belligerent's will brought about by a combination of domestic and international politics, and not as the result of the physical destruction of their fighting forces (Taylor, 1964).

## WORLD WAR TWO

At the outbreak of World War Two, the Allies took their cues from the lessons of the early period of the First World War and sought to defeat the German forces by focussing on static defence with a reliance on fires (Doughty, cited in Leonhard, 1991). This stood in stark contrast with the Wehrmacht which focussed on defeating the Allies through manoeuvre. Clearly the German approach was more successful and resulted in the fall of France and the withdrawal of British forces from the continent. During their advance, German forces relied less on traditional artillery to

provide fire support to their offensive actions, instead using air power to provide an element of "fires". This was in no small part because the rapid advance of their manoeuvre elements made it difficult for their artillery to keep up, with the exception of a small number of mechanised artillery units. Their success was based on the rapid seizure of ground which had a significant impact on the Allies will to fight, rather than the destruction of forces, which had been the focus of the Allies strategy. This highlights the fact that winning a war did not require inflicting overwhelming casualties on the enemy (France suffered approximately 85,000 casualties out of a force of over 3 million (Gorce, 1988)), just the destruction of their will, achieved by dislocation caused by manoeuvre. This accords with Basil Liddell Hart's statement that, "All decisive campaigns, the dislocation of the enemy's psychological and physical balance has been the vital prelude to his overthrow" (Cited in Galleotti, 2022).

Whilst the war is generally seen as one of manoeuvre, there were significant periods of attrition, during which one would expect artillery to have come to the fore. One example being the "Battle of the Bulge" in which significant numbers of the US forces were encircled by a surprise counter-attack by German forces. The battle saw the significant deployment of massed fires which resulted in major casualties, however, the US forces held out until they were relieved by the 4th Armoured Division (Ambrose, 2001). This is similar to the experience of the German forces in Stalingrad, in which a significant German force was surrounded and subject to significant artillery fire (Beevor, 1999). It is noteworthy that neither force surrendered as a result of the massive casualties they suffered as a result of artillery, but rather the battles only ended as a result of the actions of manoeuvre elements; in the US case being relieved and in the German case by the Soviet forces fighting through the city. This clearly demonstrates that even when cut off and subject to heavy bombardment (the trees around Bastogne are still unusable as timber to this day due to the number of shards of shrapnel embedded in them (Ambrose, 2001)) forces will continue to fight until compelled to do so by the manoeuvre forces of the enemy.

## UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine demonstrates clearly both the advantages and limitations of artillery in modern warfare. Since the initial Russian intervention in 2014, artillery has played a significant role in each stage of the war. During the course of the conflict, artillery has dominated the battlefield (causing up to 85% of the battlefield casualties amongst Ukrainian forces (Combat, 2016)). Recent footage from the conflict is reminiscent of scenes one would normally associate with the battles of the First World War, with soldiers fighting in trenches surrounded by landscapes shattered by artillery (The Telegraph, 2023). However, despite causing significant casualties and being able to deliver horrifying physical destruction, artillery has not been able to provide either side with strategic success.

During the Russian invasion of 2022, the invading forces enjoyed a significant advantage in tube and rocket artillery (Zabrodskyi et al, 2022), yet they were unable to convert this into operational or strategic success due to the failure of the manoeuvre forces to seize key objectives and destroy the Ukrainian will to fight. Indeed, the initial invasion and subsequent counter-offensives have demonstrated the fact that a belligerent's will to fight is the key element in determining whether a war is won. Despite significant over match, in terms of conventional capabilities, the Ukrainian armed forces have been able to not only halt, but also reverse the gains made by the Russian forces.

Much will be made of the repeated requests by Ukraine for western artillery to assist them and the subsequent successes of systems such as HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) on the battlefield. However, it is important to remember the context and not fall foul of Ukrainian information activities that are designed to maximise the support given by the West. It must be remembered that once HIMARS had been gifted the Ukrainian President then began to agitate for MBTs (main battle tanks) to be sent to allow them to win the war (The Guardian, 2023). Having secured the delivery of armour, Zelensky then moved on to request fighter jets, again to win the war (The Guardian, 2023). This is not to criticise the Ukrainians for requesting this equipment, rather to demonstrate that each arm is required to bring about success on the battlefield and so it is not accurate to claim that a single system or arm is capable of winning a war.

## THE RISK

The introduction to this essay referred to the use of an inaccurate slogan presenting a risk to the Royal Regiment. This risk takes a number of forms, the first being the setting of unrealistic expectations.

By maintaining that artillery wins wars, there is a risk that planners, both military and civilian, become attracted to the rhetoric that artillery is all the Army needs to succeed in war. This plays to the human desire to seek simple solutions to complex problems often resulting in poor decision making (Kahneman, 2011). This creates the risk that the Army will focus on the development of fires as a stand-alone capability, similar to the approach that the French Army took in the run up to the Second World War which ultimately failed (Leonhard, 1991). This will result in the Army having to relearn the lessons of the two world wars, and countless other conflicts, and attempt to rebalance our forces whilst engaged in a conflict. By taking a more balanced approach now, the Army can avoid this process and be better prepared for a future conflict.

Secondly, the slogan feeds into a focus on equipment at a time when the quality of the soldiers operating the equipment is of greater importance. The war in Ukraine clearly demonstrates that the quality of equipment is not the determining factor in military operations; the early war saw Ukrainian forces successfully engaging relatively modern T-72 variants with supposedly obsolete T-62 variants, inflicting significant casualties on Russian forces (Zabrodskyi et al, 2022). Far more important is having well trained soldiers, with high morale who are able to operate their equipment efficiently and innovatively.

Thirdly, the slogan does not accurately reflect the changes in the character of modern warfare. Due to the constraints imposed by the word count, this essay has been focussed on large scale conventional warfare, however, modern warfare covers a far broader spectrum of activities, in which the ability to deliver vast

quantities of ordnance are even less relevant. Counter-insurgency campaigns such as Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate the limited impact that artillery has in this type of conflict which is even more explicitly a battle of the wills.

## CONCLUSION

This essay sought to demonstrate that the phrase "Artillery wins wars" is inaccurate. It has examined the slogan using conceptual and historical analysis, both of which demonstrate that it is not accurate.

War is a complex human endeavour, in which two belligerents seek to achieve their political aims through military means. It only ends when one side loses the will to continue. Throughout history, and particularly in recent history, this occurs before the complete physical destruction of a belligerent's military forces. This is reflected in British military doctrine, which seeks to bring about the defeat of an enemy through the destruction of their will using manoeuvre, with artillery deployed in a supporting role. Therefore, a slogan which states that war is won by an arm focussed on physical destruction is not consistent with our understanding of war or the way in which the British Army seeks to wage it.

History shows that artillery is by far the most destructive conventional capability and a vital tool in enabling manoeuvre elements to complete their missions. Developments in the lethality, accuracy and employment of artillery can create significant advantages. However, the enemy still has a say and history shows that an enemy will adapt to neutralise or reduce those advantages. The examples explored in this essay demonstrate that for artillery to be effective it must be used in concert with other arms. All the examples above, and countless others not explored in this paper, show that historically artillery is not able to win wars, but is a battle winning asset when used in a supporting role. Therein lies the genus of a more accurate slogan. Artillery exerts a significant influence over the battle whilst remaining at a distance, it is able to provide significant fire power at an extended range and acts as an anchor for the manoeuvre forces; it is "Artillery, King of Battle."

Finally, this essay began with a quote from General Patton which clearly demonstrates the dangers of focussing on a single arm. In the same way that everything looks like a nail when all you have is a hammer, we are all guilty of viewing the conduct of war through spectacles tainted by the arm in which we are employed. Every armoured soldier sees shock action as the way to defeat the enemy, every infantryman sees the bayonet charge as the key to success and every gunner sees the bombardment as the way to win the war. All are equally incorrect, it is only when all of the arms work together that we are able to create the harmony referred to by Patton and create the greatest chance of success.

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**Rick Jennings**  
Independent Silver Consultant

Tel: 07970 712 852  
[rick@rickjenningsconsultant.co.uk](mailto:rick@rickjenningsconsultant.co.uk)






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# The War Letters of a Scottish Gunner

## The wartime experience of Lt Col Colin D C Simpson TD RA

By Major Malcolm Dix



*Malcolm Dix is a retired Gunner living in East Lothian who served in 145 (Maiwand) Battery in 29 Commando Regiment in Arbroath and in 19th Field Regiment (The Scottish Gunners) where he commanded 13 (Martinique 1809) Battery, the AMF(L) Battery, and also served as Second-in-Command. He completed two tours in the MoD working on Short Range Air Defence and subsequently writing the General Staff Requirement for Remotely Piloted Vehicles (Pheonix).*

*On retiring in 1984 he worked in the Defence Electronics Industry for 10 years, principally concerned with the Surveillance Radar for Rapier FSC, before becoming a Career Coach and a Director of the Officers' Association Scotland. He has been a member and patron of the Royal Artillery Council of Scotland for 30 years.*

Colin Simpson died aged 88 in 1996. I first met him in the 1980s as he was my stepson's grandfather. He ran a rough shoot in the Scottish Borders and was known affectionately as 'The Colonel' by his syndicate. As is so often the case, I knew very little about his military career until after his death when I was given a summary of his life and career by his cousin the late Professor David Simpson, who was severely injured when serving in the Highland Light Infantry in 1945 and subsequently, as a result of his injuries, became a renowned Medical Physicist. He described Colin as a man to whom service to

God, his country and his profession was as essential as life itself. Fortunately, Colin Simpson had kept a great deal of his wartime correspondence, all secured in a black tin box, which has provided the material for this article.

He served as a Battery Commander in the British Expeditionary Force in 1940 with 76 (Highland) Field Regiment until evacuated at Dunkirk, and I found a letter from a fellow Battery Commander describing their experience. After Dunkirk, the Regiment was deployed in Sussex before he was seconded to



*Colin Simpson at his shoot in the Scottish Borders, aged 85, in 1994*

an Artillery range in Wales where he worked on a secret project: the development of 'Z' guns. There was also a subsequent letter from Colin recounting his wartime career, initially commanding the experimental 'Z' Anti-Aircraft Battery (143 'Z' Battery RA 23rd June 1941 to 17th May 1944) before being promoted to command the 'Z' Regiment (11 AA 'Z' Regiment) and finally, establishing a Dispersal Organisation for the demobilisation of troops at the end of hostilities.

I had never heard of 'Z' guns, but I discovered from Col Tommy Weston (1920-2010), at that time the Honorary Colonel of 40 Field Regiment, that his wife Noreen had served in one of the 'Z' batteries when in the ATS. The batteries had 64 dual projectors that could put 128 rocket-propelled shells into an ellipsoidal target area. She had vivid memories of dousing the rockets with water in hot weather to prevent premature explosions. I was able to understand more about the operational aspects of this weapon system from the Colin's briefing notes from 1941 and I have included extracts below.

Finally, I have included a letter written at the end of hostilities by Monsieur Taquet, with whom Colin was billeted in 1940, recounting his own wartime experience as a prisoner of the Germans and on his return home in 1945.

### Tribute to Colin Simpson

The following is an extract from the tribute by the late Professor David C Simpson MBE FRCP Edin:

"Colin was born in 1908 and educated at Edinburgh Academy.



*Maj Simpson*

He enjoyed his school years but gained particular pleasure in his membership of the OTC in the Upper School. As well as gaining his Certificate 'A', he discovered a love of shooting, gaining his marksman's 'First Class Shot' badge. On leaving school in 1926 he joined a small bank in order to gain experience working in an office. He didn't enjoy the experience and in 1928 entered Edinburgh University to read for an Honours B Com. Once at university it was natural for him to join the UOTC where he soon became a member of the Shooting Team and competed at Bisley. In 1931 his team won the Challenge Cup, Colin achieving the highest score; two points short of a 'possible'. As well as shooting he also enjoyed the opportunity to ride the horses that pulled the



*Colin's Wedding in 1936*



18pdr guns. He was promoted to sergeant and also collected his Certificate 'B' on the way.

"Having graduated, Colin joined the Simpson Label Company, the family firm that had been established by his grandfather and he remained a Director of the firm until his death. He also enrolled in the Territorial Army and armed with Certs 'A' and 'B' was commissioned into the Royal Artillery. By the time of the outbreak of war in 1939 he had become a Major in command of 302 Field Artillery Battery in Fife. He took the battery, equipped with 18pdr guns, to France with the BEF, but they were eventually forced back and came through Dunkirk, after spiking their guns. He and many of his command managed to return in small boats, and Colin, who had a strong Christian faith, encouraged his men by leading them in prayers in their boat."

### Dunkirk

The following letter from Major Sandy (A J) Henderson, a fellow Battery Commander of 303 (City of Dundee) Battery to his mother dated June 1940, was forwarded to Colin Simpson prior to a 76 Field Regiment reunion dinner in 1991:

"I don't know which, if any, of my letters you have got since we advanced into Belgium so will give you a resume of the whole affair.

"On leaving my billet at Avelin not far from Lille, for breakfast in the Mess my hostess met me at the top of the stairs and told me that the Germans had advanced into Holland and Belgium. This was eventually confirmed one and a half hours later through the usual military channels. That day we were busy packing up everything, expecting to move at any minute. However, we did not move until 8.30 on 11.5.40. We advanced without any checks or trouble to the Belgian frontier which we crossed at 10.30 a.m. and were given a rousing welcome by the crowd, this welcome increased as we advanced and was overwhelming in Brussels.

"Whenever we stopped we were offered food and drink, also eggs and fruit etc. The advance was without incident, we had a few of our own aircraft looking after us but never saw a Gerry all the way. We naturally thought this wonderful but as after events showed it was all done on purpose by Hitler so that we should get as far as possible from the coast, and so be cut off. Near Brussels we saw the first results of the bombardment, a large electric station completely burnt out, also some houses badly damaged.

"We spent the first night just east of Brussels in a suburb and from here saw several air-bombing attacks on Brussels but we ourselves were left alone. Early the next morning about 4 a.m. we went forward with the Colonel to reconnoitre positions, but it was not intended that we should come into action for probably a day or two. The Belgians were still on their line, and they had stated they could hold it for four days. About 7 o'clock orders came to deploy the regiment at once as the Belgians had had to withdraw, so we set to and deployed at once. Our sector of the front was the railway station in Louvain to a small village (Vieux Heverle) about two miles south west. The front line being along the railway line and the canal. Our guns were ready to fire about mid-day, but nothing happened.

"In the evening, I went for a drive well across the canal and all this country was still in Belgian hands and their withdrawal was proceeding according to plan. Their last troops were to be back shortly before 10 a.m. the next day, 12th May. About noon we got orders that we could now open fire so as to record our zone and then await Gerry. The first I saw from my OP arrived in the afternoon at one of the points I had registered, which was luck, I gave them a few moments to get gathered and then let them have it, with, I think, very satisfactory results. We saw small

parties of them during the remaining daylight but well away from our troops. In the evening, we were given our defensive tasks and from then on the telephone continued to work overtime. For half the night I was the typical picture of an American business man, two and three telephones all going at once.

"It was not until the next morning that our guns were shelled by the enemy and thanks to good work on the part of the OP officers we were able to identify their gun positions and able to save ourselves. In the morning, we got word that Gerry had broken through the Belgian line and also penetrated into France, we would therefore have to withdraw that night, which we did, about twenty miles. We all got out safely and up to date had no casualties. We had been in battle position for about 36 hours and in that time fired about 130 rounds per gun, mostly between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. The result was so effective that when the Guards advanced a short distance in the morning they found whole enemy regiments blotted out. Our actual withdrawal was done in daylight and not at night as originally intended.

"We went right back through Brussels to D... (sic) and took up a position there. On the way back we got our first experience of bombing attack, and it was decidedly nasty, most terrifying but did no damage. They bombed us whilst passing through a town, just why I don't know, unless Hitler wanted to damage the bridge over a canal and so upset our withdrawal. If he had waited another half an hour we would have been caught in open country and not even a ditch to get into, such is luck.

"In our next position we were near Alost. Experiences were much the same as at Louvain except that this time instead of the guns being evacuated first it was decided to take them out last and Hamish Lindsay's Troop were left to cover our withdrawal. At this position Gerry got his guns up much more quickly and we had some fairly rough handling from him but no serious results. By this time, of course, the enemy were at the Channel ports and things had become serious, also he was pressing very hard on our right. Days and dates have, I'm afraid got lost by this time. We stayed there for two days and then retire to Tourcoing, near Roubaix in France.

"This move was carried out with the idea that the French would manage to bridge the German corridor and then the BEF would retire into France, that however proved impossible.

"At Tourcoing we had our gun positions in private gardens and my own HQ was in a large house, complete with H. and C. in all the bedrooms, electric light, Frigidaire and three wireless sets. The owner had an excellent cellar which we made use of, and all together life was very pleasant. We had two days more or less complete rest before the enemy arrived. On the second afternoon, I had been back to find all the officers off the RHQ to meet the Colonel. Here about 7 o'clock, we heard news that the BEF were to withdraw to England. The first idea was that we should leave that night at about 10.30 p.m. but that was eventually changed, and we did not move back until mid-night on 29/30. I had a very lucky escape in this affair. I went up to the OP about 9 p.m. and the Colonel had told us that we were to hang on as long as possible, the infantry were to retire first and then the gunners, probably about 12.30. About eleven o'clock the telephone went 'phut', and to leave as small a party as possible with the guns all available personnel had been evacuated at 10.30 so there was no-one to mind the wire at my end. I waited, hoping that a DR would come with a message, but none came, eventually shortly after 1a.m. I decided to go back and find out for myself. I could already hear the enemy track vehicles coming along the road, probably about two miles away. I had two miles to go through the town to our guns and if necessary two miles back again to the OP, so things did not look good.

"As luck would have it I bumped into one of the DRs who had a message for the guns of my opposite number Major Simpson who told him to take it on to the Ops for information. The message was for certain guns to be withdrawn and they agreed exactly with the Colonel's forecast, so I decided all must be well and continued back to the battery position, found the gunners gone, came back on to the main road and bumped into our own track vehicles, the CO (Lt Col W E Vaudrey MC) told me that they were the last troops in the town and Gerry was half a mile behind, needless to say I asked no further questions but got going. That was a very sad evening for my battery as we had been ordered to spike our guns and leave them where they stood, also most of our vehicles were left behind, out of 68 vehicles we only took away 7. Our next move was to near Ypres. During this march and at our hide we were continually attacked from the air. It was the idea that we should make straight for the sea and embark but that did not happen. The Belgians had made peace at midnight while we were marching back, and a new threat arose, that the whole of the BEF would be cut off from the sea. By this time the men had no rest for two days and nights.

"On arriving at the hide we were given the order to form the regiment into three groups. Gunners under Major Simpson, infantry under Major Kennedy and Bren Gunners and anti-tank riflemen under me, and to advance at once to new posts to stop the enemy. For almost twenty four hours we were infantry and held the line against the Gerry. Why he did not attack God alone knows, my own sector, about 200 yards was held by eight Bren guns and eleven anti-tank rifles and a small force of about 24 Guards, an impossible task if the enemy had tried hard. They did attack in a half-hearted way on Ronald's sector, but were soon put to rout, there is no doubt about it, their infantry are poor weak things. In this position we were shelled by guns and trench mortars for two and a half hours, Ronald had some casualties but my own only suffered one slightly hit and Seymour Nicoll rather badly. Eventually we were relieved by infantry and started for the sea, arriving about 4.30 a.m. At 9 o'clock we were again ordered to go back and establish a second line of defence: that nearly broke our hearts, but the men were wonderful and by that time the Colonel got a message from the Corps Commander congratulating us on our previous work, that put spirit into us all. So off we went, we established two small forts Kennedy and Henderson, rather like the ones we used to make in the woods at Edzell only on the sand dunes and waited for Gerry. However, our own infantry had done so well that we were left alone all that night and for the first time for about a week we got a really good sleep and rest. The next day at 9.30 p.m. we had orders to leave and embark at La Panne.

"We arrived at La Panne about 1 a.m. on the 1st June after walking over four miles on soft sand and expected to embark at once. The tide was out and would not be in until 3.30 a.m. about an hour before full daylight and then the water would be about a mile from the coast. Ten minutes after arriving we were shelled, and this continued through the night. Luckily for us Gerry's idea of high tide seemed to be as far out as our own for he never once got down to the water mark where some thousands of the troops were ready to embark. No one knows anything and it seemed impossible to get any information. Well, 3.30 a.m. arrived and so did the boats to take the troops out, but the demand was far greater than the supply. The men, however, were wonderful, they just waited their turn like a football crowd. At 4 a.m. the first real trouble started. I did not actually count them but about six or eight Gerry planes came from no-where and administrated a low flying machine gun attack on the beach. There was no possible cover and all one could do was to bite the sand and hope

for the best. The morale effect of this attack was terrific, one felt absolutely helpless, more than helpless and yet the casualty list so far as I know was not high. At this time, we had given up hope of getting off on one of the boats provided and were trying to float a boat of our own, I think the boat probably saved quite a number of us. We then went to the sand dunes to think, and while on the way came under shell and bomb fire, but no trouble. We dug and improved on the holes we found and considered our position. By this time, I had lost sight of everyone except Ian Rae and some six other ranks. Ronald I had seen just after the first attack but now had lost. We had a council of war and decided to take shelter under a stranded paddle boat. On the way we passed a naval life boat capable of carrying ninety people, but it was not for another half an hour or so after that I finally decided to take control of this boat and rescue who I could. We had to wait for the tide so sat down and consumed a large tin of sardines I had found in the boat.

"At about 6.30 a.m. Ronald, Sandy Abbot and some men arrived on the beach and came to our boat. There were still hundreds if not thousands waiting to get off the beach, so it was essential that the boat return. I was told by Ronald to get volunteers and soon got them to bring the boat back. Eventually the tide came in and by wading almost up to the neck we got the boat to float. By the way, I should have mentioned that an AB (Able Seaman) and RN Lieutenant had arrived before this, and we had an AB to navigate the boat. The Lieutenant went on another boat. We got the boat filled and rowed out to a destroyer and then the volunteer crew except for two vanished so back I had to go with the life boat. I put my last remaining goods on the destroyer at this time as I should have mentioned that when we left our guns we left all our kit except essentials.

"Four of us then rowed back to the hulk that we took shelter under, then to a destroyer. At first all wanted to be put ashore, the hulk was all surrounded by water. Eventually we took all the wounded men off the hulk and some seventy others. We told them we were making for the sea and the destroyer, but alas, by the time we had loaded up the last ship had left the bay except one and it was a long way out. However, off we paddled, but Gerry decided otherwise because they started a bombing attack on the last ship which went round in circles trying to escape and always getting further away from us. Eventually she disappeared and we were left. A second council of war was held, and it was decided that we paddle our own boat to England some seventy or eighty miles away. We had actually seventy two persons all told on board. We started our journey shortly after 10 a.m. All this time we were of course, a fair target for Gerry's planes and every time they came over our AB followed their flight with the greatest of interest the result was that the boat instead of going towards England went in ever-decreasing circles until I drew the AB's attention to the fact, when the reply was invariably 'I am steering a zig-zag course'. Which was more or less true, but the poor kid had never seen a bomber or been under fire before, and in actual fact all we did was follow the enemy bomber.

"Eventually, things went better, and we started our course for England. Several times we sighted planes and they sighted us, flew over and around and each time it was a Gerry and each time we expected to be machine-gunned or bombed but to give him his due he left us alone and so we paddled on for about eight and a half hours. Then all of a sudden out of nowhere three planes – down they went straight for our boat and we all thought our last moment had come, but no, they were our own planes. Round and round they circled, and what a cheer went up; in a few moments they had hailed a tug boat still out of sight to us but we soon saw her smoke and in about forty minutes we were aboard her

and who should we meet but the RN Lieutenant who had also paddled out to sea and been picked up. We were given food, drink and dry clothes and so to bed and Ramsgate early yesterday morning. The organisation on this side has been magnificent.

“As soon as we arrived we were given tea, bread, and cheese by the YMCA and in the next four hours had three meals as the train brought us here. On arriving we were taken to this hotel, given clean and new clothes and generally fitted out.

“The only real snag now is to get information about the rest of the unit and what is our future. Here everyone is wonderfully happy and all friends but waiting and hoping for a few days leave, which will come sooner or later, so until then my best love to you and the family.”

### Deployment in 1940

302(Fife) Battery, 76 (Highland) Field Regiment RA, was in 3rd Division (Commanded by Major-General Bernard Montgomery)

The following is an abridged extract from 76th (H) Field Regiment RA Operational Instruction Number 1 dated 30th June 1940:

*OWN TROOPS. 3rd Division is covering the beaches from Littlehampton exclusive to Brighton inclusive. They are responsible for the protection of the Downs against parachutists and troop carrying aircraft as far north as the general line 35 approximate.*

*METHOD. The 76th Regiment is being superimposed on the eastern portion of the 33rd Regiment's zone and the western portion of the 7th Regiment's zone to over the front from MILLFIELD SEASIDE HOME to SHOREHAM HARBOUR.*

*302 Battery will select and occupy, by 1800 hours to-day, two three-gun troop positions in the vicinity of CISSBURY RING and will establish a general OP in the vicinity. The primary role of the Battery is to cover the Regimental frontage with defensive fire; the secondary role is the engagement of enemy troop carrying aircraft whilst attempting to land. A thorough reconnaissance will be made of the beaches from MILLFIELD SEASIDE HOME to WORTHING PIER inclusive. A reconnaissance will also be carried out for possible enemy landing grounds on the DOWNS.*

*303 Battery was given similar orders covering the beaches from WORTHING PIER to SHOREHAM HARBOUR.*

### 143 AA Z Battery and 11 AA Z Regiment RA

Letter from Colin Simpson to Sandy Henderson 24th September 1991 (No mention of the equipment is made, presumably as it was classified SECRET).

“Like you I was posted away from the 76th shortly after Dunkirk. This was a fearful wrench at the time to be taken away from my beloved Fife Battery. However, I was shortly given the task of forming a completely new battery. I had a small cadre of NCOs, a BSM & Q – the rest called-up chaps, who entered one end of a double marquee in civilian clothes and were documented, fitted out and came out at the other end at least dressed as soldiers. At first I did not even have any officers, although they were gradually posted in over the next few months. The first one was a very nice chap and apparently a teetotaler until he had a 24hrs leave in London and was arrested when he broke up a nightclub in London, turning out to be a supposedly cured alcoholic! This was

a little bit of a set back because otherwise he was a very efficient, likeable and respected by the troops. However, eventually and gradually officers were posted in to me. Some were good and some not so good, but the joy was that I was an independent command and not under any CO. Therefore, it wasn't too difficult to persuade AG6 to provide me with suitable types.

“However, the short story is that my battery, recruited from Devon and Cornwall, were first rate chaps and we were quickly recognised as being a most efficient one... I was very proud of them, and they were a happy unit. Unfortunately, the powers that be then decided to post me to be OC to another battery, whose BC had become an alcoholic and as you can imagine it was a unit in which discipline did not hardly exist. The first day I took command I had seven men in front of me for absence without leave (something I had never had in my previous battery).

“However, it was a challenge and basically the troops were good quality. We were involved in the AA defence of Plymouth in an exposed position and one night we had more casualties than the Fife Battery during Dunkirk. I am glad to say that we came to be recognised as a most efficient battery. We also had a good soccer side, and I started a rucker one, soon we were taking on some of the best sides in Plymouth and giving a good account of ourselves. I then started a hockey side for those who could not reach either the soccer or rucker teams. The chaps were so enthusiastic that with the help of my BSM, who was a good player himself, we soon had a very keen and enthusiastic team. Eventually, they were even able to give a good county side a good game.

“Eventually, we were moved territorially and from one Regt's command to another. However, in time, one of my COs decided to recommend me for promotion and of all things I became AADC (Anti-Aircraft Defence Commander) Glasgow as well as commanding a Regiment of 5 batteries (11 AA Z Regiment RA). It was a pleasant command and I enjoyed it. Finally, I was given command of one of the Release Scheme Units which I enjoyed even more.

“This was a very interesting assignment. I was given command of a unit in the Release Scheme which had to deal with shiploads of officers and men returning from overseas and due for immediate release from their Army service. The personnel of my unit consisted mainly of officers, NCOs and men of a disbanded AA Regiment. They were a good crowd and soon entered enthusiastically into the task ahead of us. This was a most unusual one for the army in that we were only told what we had to achieve but not how to do it. No Artillery Training Vols I & II, no drill-book, we had to write our own. We had to deal with batches of 2-3,000 men at a time. Their personal equipment had to be taken in and checked and their documentation completed. Teams had to be arranged to take them in parties according to the part of the country they lived in and where they would be finally released and given their civvy suit.

“It was really like running a business and establishing an organisation to deal with this large number of men as quickly and smoothly as possible. It was important that they went out of the army with a good taste in their mouths, so they had to be looked after and not kept hanging about. The initial planning was of vital importance, and it was quite an exercise in time and motion study.

“It was an exciting event when the first troopship came in. It was a large one – so how was our scheme going to work? Well, we had been given 48 hours to carry out the job and despatch the last train and we managed it in 24 hours. This was a standard we maintained for all future troopships. Actually, I felt very sad on the day I had to go and choose my own civvy suit! The powers

that be seemed to think that I had done the job well and the Adjutant General tried to persuade me to stay on in the army with the promise of promotion.”

“It was tempting because I loved the army life. However, I did not feel that the regular army in peacetime really had the same appeal. In any case I felt that I was due to come back to the family business, which my father and uncle had carried on during the difficult war years when otherwise they would have retired. In a way it was a difficult decision at the time but one which I have never regretted as – first of all my darling Tita developed TB and I was able to be with her until she died (in 1946) – second I have been able to carry on the family business started by my grandfather in 1858, until it has developed into a much bigger and I am glad to say – very successful company.”

Extract of a Letter from Alan Byott (?) dated 14th November 1945:

“Dear Simpson

I feel that I ought to have written to you before now to thank you for all you did as one of the original Commanding Officers in the Dispersal organisation. It was no easy task to start on an entirely new task as you had to do but the admirable way in which you and all your fellow Commanding Officers did your work laid the foundation of a thoroughly good organisation. Your great achievement was to make everyone feel that they had a job of real importance to do and to create that spirit of being eager to do the best for those who passed through their hands.”



The silver inkstand presented to Colin Simpson in 1944.

The inscription reads: Lt Col C D C Simpson RA, Presented by the members of 143 Z Bty, In appreciation of the pleasure it has been to serve under your command. 23 June 1941 to 17 May 1944.

### Characteristics of the Z Projector

#### 3" AA Projector, Notes for 142nd AA 'Z' Battery RA dated 2nd February 1941

The projector is at present designed for the purpose of engaging dive bombers or low-flying aircraft flying directly, or very nearly directly, towards the VP (Vulnerable Point), where the projectors should be sited. The projector fires a rocket, which is 6 feet long and has a total weight of 56 lbs. The shell weighs 18 lbs and contains 4.5 lbs of TNT. The effective radius of the burst is, therefore, considerable. At 33 ft it is 100% lethal and is effective up to 200 feet. Properly used, at least four rockets are

fired at one time at one target. If fired at 70° the rocket would reach 22,000 feet. At this height, however, it is not accurate. It is intended, therefore, for short ranges. The propellant charge of the rocket lasts for 1,500 feet, during which time the rocket is accelerating. It covers the first 1,500 feet in 1.5 seconds and the second 1,500 feet in 1 second. The velocity at the end of 1,500 feet is 1,650 feet per second. The moral(e) effect when used against an enemy aircraft should be very great as the airman will see a sheet of flame shooting up at him and then a terrific explosion. If used at night the effect will be greater still.

The projectors are very cheap to produce, costing about £10 each, and can be operated by 3 or even only 2 men each. They



Projector 3 Inch of Z Bty

are normally fired off a concrete base but there is no reason why they should not be fired off a temporary platform – even a wooden one on an old car chassis, as there is no recoil. The blast is certainly considerable but for a matter of a few rounds wood would only be scorched. It would seem to be a practical proposition, therefore, to concentrate a fair number of projectors, say 16, or even 32,

in order to engage one particular target. At the moment the difficulty seems to be an unsatisfactory fuze. The proximity fuze is not yet fully developed but there is an aero-dynamic fuze which can be set to explode on a time basis. Higher Authority do not seem to be confident that this fuze will explode every time in the air, although, if it is properly looked after, there is no reason why it should not. If, however, the arc of fire of the weapon should be limited so that any unexploded shells landed in the sea, there does not appear to be any reason why it should not be used against a target such as a mine-laying aircraft.

If searchlights were able to illuminate this target, a very good chance of success could be expected, as the plane (in question) flies on a definite course at a low altitude. If it is not illuminated, then the projectors could be layed beforehand (with a Field Artillery director) to form a barrage or concentration. If sufficient projectors were employed the area covered would be considerable and a very reasonable chance of success could be expected.

### A French Officer's Experience as a POW

Letter to Colin Simpson from Monsieur V Tacquet, Arras dated 22nd November 1945 with whom Colin was billeted prior to the German invasion of France in May 1940

Dear Sir,

“No doubt you will be at a loss to know who is writing to you from the Continent and after so long a time. I am well aware that your reasons of being puzzled are good ones. But I happened to reach home after a memorable journey of five months...and after a captivity of five years. I suppose that you are not keen upon an accurate account I spent in Nazi camps. You know how we, French officers, were treated and the way those beastly Jerries acted as for food and bad treatments. My condition was by far worse than my friends' because I used to teach them English which was not the proper means to avoid further trouble. So, last January, I succeeded in escaping from the camp, but to fall, near the front line into that awful mess:



the red army – it was not a success and, after interminable days of anxiety and...starvation, I reached Odessa. I must tell you that I found these members of the Red Cross Committee who were very kind to me and, above all, after a long waiting of three weeks - the Empire Pride, a good English ship to leave Russia and be taken home at last.

“My return, however, was not, though long waited for, to be very happy. Just before reaching Ourton, I heard that the centre of the small village had been nearly flattened down by American bombers in August '44 and that the two houses were practically destroyed. The casualties were significant as thirty three people were killed on the spot. It's a miracle if Mrs Tacquet, Amy and my father and mother-in-law are still living, since a bomb exploded at the very corner of the house. To make matters worse, little Amy, a week ago, say on the 3rd of June, had a narrow escape. She was injured (right leg broken) by a car while my wife was busy in the house. But now everything has improved. Mrs Tacquet and Amy are up to the mark and we are back in Arras where I teach English in the grammar school. I'm afraid I have not been very polite, as I only mention my “adventures” and my family life,

but I suppose your life has been better and you carried it safely through these awful days of wartime. My wife has always in mind the rare moments of relief she got at the beginning of the war when you were billeted at Ourton and the friendly intercourse which helped her to spend, in somewhat manner, the long winter days. I must also tell you that Amy is a nice little girl, very keen on school and so lovely! After five years and more, it is the long sighed for reward – home again.

“Mrs Tacquet and I should like to hear from you and guess all your family is getting on and we hope (though, maybe the films are as scanty in England as here) some snapshots of your little boy. May I venture a question? My book case is rather empty – would you be so kind as to tell me, if they are not too expensive – I have a mind to ask for some magazines by subscription for my pupils, but I don't know about the price and how to manage it all.

“I hope you'll not mind the trouble and I apologise once more. I must stop now. Will you find here, dear sir, with our best regards to Mrs Simpson and Murray and to yourself a big kiss from Amy and our best wishes for a happy and peaceful life – sincerely yours (signed V Taquet).”



*Lt Col Colin Simpson and fellow officers*

# The Military Archaeology of SALISBURY PLAIN TRAINING AREA

## A Presentation to the Royal Artillery Historical Society

*By Richard Osgood MBE*



*Richard Osgood is Chief Archaeologist of the Defence Infrastructure Organization (DIO). The MOD is responsible for preserving, protecting and maintaining 781 Scheduled Monuments, including parts of 10 World Heritage sites including Hadrian's Wall and Stonehenge and for overseas MOD sites. Richard studied archaeology at the Universities of Wales and Oxford and is particularly interested in the Bronze Age and the 20th Century. He was awarded Current Archaeology Live's Archaeologist of the Year prize for 2019 in recognition of his work on Op Nightingale, which has centred on the rehabilitation of military personnel who have been wounded.*

*Particular highlights have been the excavation of a Saxon cemetery at Barrow Clump and a Napoleonic prisoners burial ground on Rat Island in Portsmouth Harbour. He has been instrumental in 'Layers of Larkhill' and 'Digging War Horse' projects, the latter investigating the site of a First World War horse hospital. Richard's work on community and conflict archaeology has deepened and broadened awareness of, and interest in, the rich and varied archaeological resource on Salisbury Plain, which military ownership of the Defence estate both preserves from modern disturbance and continues to add to as the focus of military training evolves in reaction to changing threats.*

notice that you had a lot of re-enactors outside in early uniforms. I have come in my archaeological uniform as I am digging an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at the moment at the former proposed RA Museum site at Avon Camp West where there are some interesting 7th Century burials.

I think you are in the most important archaeological landscape in Western Europe. Fitting in with Colonel Jon's (Cresswell) talk on the History of the Royal School of Artillery, the military first bought land here in 1897 and started using it for training. Since then, I think that the army has been laying down its own archaeology.

Archaeology is just about people. This does not mean that it has to be about the prehistoric past or the early mediaeval burials. The military has its own legacy. My archaeological range is from very early prehistory stuff to the 20th century.

What we are going to do today is to look at the legacy that the army has collectively laid down over the years.

Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) is 40 km wide from west to east and has three distinctive parts - West, Centre and East. This map shows the sites of military archaeology, excluding all the Roman and Medieval stuff. And there is more there that we don't



know about. You can basically trace all the actions that the British army has fought from the Boer War to the present day - from Bloemfontein to Basra.

If you look across the area, and I'm sure a lot of you have not only fired into it but travelled round it extensively, you will find little traces of things and wonder why they are there because they are incongruous and shouldn't naturally be there.

When I first joined the MOD I was told that north of Imber village, there are sunken lanes, and fields surrounded by big banks with hedges on the top which are really bad tank country and which represented the Bocage country in Normandy in 1944. The aerial photographs show that there are criss-crosses of hedges in very prominent locations in the landscape which are really out of place on the wide-open chalk grasslands of Salisbury Plain.



Fig 1 - Comparison of SPTA with the Normandy Bocage 1944

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the hedges on the SPTA with the Bocage in Normandy in 1944 which confirms that they would have been pretty good for that form of training. I had been busy telling people this until I looked at some air photographs that appeared in the 1970s. The hedges actually represent Armagh for Northern Ireland training. So don't always believe what you are told!

I love prehistory such as the impressive Carnac stone alignments<sup>1</sup> in Brittany. These are megalithic and extend for hundreds of metres. This is my version on the west of Salisbury Plain near the site of the Overseas Artillery School. These are anti-tank dragon's teeth made of concrete with bunkers, dug in positions and wire that are a good approximation for the Siegfried line. It is all to replicate what the army will face in 1944 in Europe. As these are a really important piece of heritage, I went to the Commandant of the Training Area and said that I wanted to protect them with my own anti-tank measures; I did not get anywhere!

Let us look at the physical archaeology on the Plain starting with aircraft. We have already heard about the Germans bombing



Fig 2 - Siegfried Line Training Facility on SPTA

Salisbury Plain in WW2. In addition to anti-aircraft guns, there was a searchlight battery along the Packway.

German aircraft navigated using the X-Gerät and Y-Gerät radio beam systems<sup>2</sup> which provided a series of signals through earphones to the crew to direct the aircraft onto their targets and to tell them when to drop their bombs. Up on Beacon Hill, the British were intercepting and

bending the German beams so that the bombs were dropped in the wrong place.

The Plain was bombed from time to time and there are crashed aircraft around the place including a German aircraft somewhere in Area 15. During the Battle of Britain, a German bombing raid took place on Andover by a lone raider. Three Spitfires were scrambled from 609 Squadron based at Middle Wallop, and they identified the raider as either a Heinkel or a Junkers - so perhaps needed to work on their aircraft recognition! They brought the raider down but one of the RAF aircraft was hit by return fire. This was Spitfire P9503 which was spewing fuel over the canopy so that the pilot could not see where he was going. The aircraft caught fire and the pilot bailed out.

The pilot's name was Pilot Officer Paul Abbott Bailion. He said: "Bailing out wasn't an altogether unpleasant experience. I landed near Upavon and my aircraft landed nearby." Landed is a little bit of a euphemism as the aircraft hit the ground vertically at 500 miles an hour near Lidbury Camp, one kilometre SE of Upavon Airfield near Bailion Wood (named after him).

We started the search for the aircraft with a geophysical survey. The results are in Figure 3. The thing that looks like botulism is in fact a really good signal showing where the bits and pieces of the aircraft lay. The little black dots represent ferrous pieces that we investigated and the big blue response is where we felt the aircraft had come down. We dug some excavation trenches over the site. The trench shapes are a strange shape. Normally archaeologists are quite picky about having nice square trenches or regular shapes, but actually following an aircraft shape is not altogether easy. There was a big central hole and excavating that soon produced bits of the airframe.

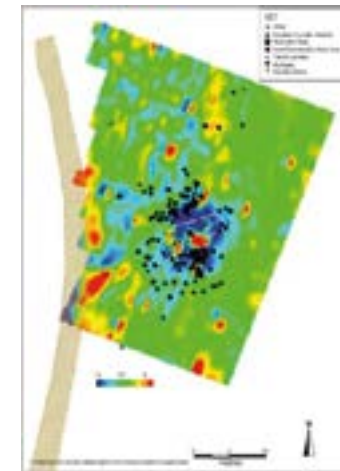


Fig - 3 Geophysical Survey of Spitfire site

The reason that our excavation is that shape is because it's a perfect fit for a Mark 1A Spitfire that has flown straight into the ground. See Figure 4. We found the pitot tube sticking out in the port wing and bits of the machine guns all laid out in the correct order. It was really nice to be able to fit the aircraft shape on top of the excavation.

We found a number of other pieces of the aircraft. Unusually for an archaeological site, there is a Haynes manual for a Spitfire Mark 1A which helped to identify the various artefacts

coming out of the ground including:

- The reduction gear from the Merlin engine.
- Parts of the eight Browning machine guns.
- Various dials such as the fuel gauge.
- Aircraft identification plates. There are lots of these plates in an aircraft but they do not tell you which particular airframe it is. However we knew already that it was one of the aircraft made in Eastleigh near Southampton.



Fig - 4. The Spitfire excavation site with aircraft profile superimposed

This is easier than normal archaeology as you can locate the artefacts in exactly the right place on an aircraft.

All the artefacts were given to Paul Bailion's school in Northampton. They have a project to rebuild a Spitfire using all the original blueprints, and they are going to incorporate the parts that we excavated in their build, which I think is a really nice memorial to Paul Bailion.



Fig 5 - Pilot Officer Paul Abbott Bailion, 609 Sqn

The only elements that did not go to the school were the personal effects. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) is based in Imjin Barracks. When they issue a licence for recovery of an airframe, it is on condition that personal equipment has to be offered to the family. We were able to give the communication equipment from Paul's flying helmet to his daughter Rosemary Bailion. She had never met her father. Although Paul survived this particular crash, he was shot down by leading Luftwaffe ace Helmut

Wick<sup>3</sup> into the channel in November 1940, Wick was then shot down probably by John Dundas<sup>4</sup> the leading ace of 609 Squadron. He in turn was then thought to be shot down in turn by Wick's wing man. Only Bailion's body was recovered and he is now buried in Bayeux Military Cemetery in Normandy. This is what grips me about military archaeology; it is about people and there is often a story connected with a find. It is the story that is the reason that we look at heritage. It is incredibly powerful and incredibly poignant.

There are many first World War elements all over Salisbury Plain. Some of these are designated; the most obvious example being the chalk kiwi figure dug on Beacon Hill in 1919 by the New Zealanders. This was not a labour of love, I hasten to add, but a fatigue. The New Zealanders had survived the First World War and the flu pandemic, were fed up with being stuck in cold Wiltshire and wanted to go home. However there were only a limited number of troop ships. So they caused trouble. The final straw is when they raid the officers' alcohol store at which point the army decided to solve the problem. The Sergeant Major in the New Zealand army education centre worked out how to put a chalk hill figure like the Westbury White Horse on the hillside to commemorate the New Zealand presence at nearby Sling Camp. This is now an important scheduled monument with the same protection as the burial mounds on the training area.

Just east of Oscar Oscar tank crossing near Bulford Camp, there is the best preserved of the training landscapes on Salisbury Plain. See Figure 6. This is on Beacon Hill and replicates a classic WW1 reverse slope entrenched position. There are frontline trench positions, a command dugout, bombing pits to repulse an attacking enemy, and large communication trenches running

1. The Carnac stones are an exceptionally dense collection of megalithic sites near the south coast of Brittany in Northwestern France, consisting of stone alignments (rows), dolmens (stone tombs), tumuli (burial mounds) and single menhirs (standing stones). More than 3,000 prehistoric standing stones were hewn from local granite and erected by the pre-Celtic people of Brittany and form the largest such collection in the world. Most of the stones are within the Breton village of Carnac, but some to the east are within La Trinité-sur-Mer. The stones were erected at some stage during the Neolithic period, probably around 3300 BC. © Wikipedia

2. X-Gerät used a series of beams to locate a bombing target. The German aircraft flew along the main beam called, Weser. This was crossed by three very narrow single beams, Rhine, Oder and Elbe. They were carefully aimed to define a precise bomb release point along the Weser beam. The successor Y-Gerät used a single beam for the aircraft to follow which could measure the distance the aircraft had travelled and hence direct it when to drop its bombs. The British led by Dr R V Jones produced successful counter-measures for both systems and, when they realised what was going on, the Germans stopped using them after they invaded Russia in 1941.

3. Helmut Paul Emil Wick (1915 – 1940) was a German flying ace of World War II. He was a wing commander in the Luftwaffe and the fourth recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, the nation's highest military decoration at the time. Wick was assigned to Jagdgeschwader 2 "Richthofen" and saw combat in the Battles of France and Britain. He was shot down near the Isle of Wight on 28 November 1940, most likely by the British ace John Dundas, who was himself shot down by Wick's wingman. He had been credited with the destruction of 56 enemy aircraft, making him the leading German ace at the time. © Wikipedia

4. John Charles Dundas, DFC & Bar (1915 –1940) was a RAF flying ace of the Second World War. He was commissioned into No. 609 (West Riding) Squadron and trained as a pilot at his own expense. Dundas remained with his squadron throughout the Battle of Britain in 1940. On 9 October he was awarded the DFC. During a battle over the English Channel on 28 November 1940, Dundas is believed to have engaged and shot down Helmut Wick. Moments later Dundas was also shot down into the sea.. He is credited with 12 victories. ©Wikipedia





Fig 6 - The Beacon Hill Trench System

back. This enables full mission specific training to take place. To add realism, artillery shell craters have been dug. The front line is laid out as an island traverse very similar to the trenches at Beaumont Hamel occupied by the Newfoundlanders in 1916 which suggests that it is dated after this.

There are artillery legacies too. When I went looking for the crashed Heinkel in Area 15, I found the trail of a 15 Pounder QF (Quick Firing) gun. This is a very interesting piece of equipment. The data plate states that its number was 1910. This was used at Fargo camp by the Honourable Artillery Company in 1914. I think there is an 18 pounder out on the Plain somewhere as well.

One of my main aims is to let local families know about their heritage. This is particularly important for children. Julian Richards, a well known archaeologist, led an excavation to try and find traces of the WW1 Horse Hospital at Fargo.

We linked this excavation to the War Horse book, so that the kids in the local school could learn about it. They all got a free signed copy of the book by Michael Morpurgo<sup>5</sup> and were allowed to join in the excavation.

One of the things I'm really keen to tell schoolchildren, is that the Blackadder idea that soldiers were sent over the top with no idea what they were doing is a fallacy. The generals were not all idiots and it was not a case of lions led by donkeys.

Some of the Phase One Gunners from Larkhill were employed as labour which saved the archaeologist and me a lot of time and trouble. We also used a lot of veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq to do some of the archaeology. We taught them all the different archaeology skills like excavating, marking finds, and making drawings.

We found some interesting artefacts at Fargo including Australian military buttons and the rising sun cap badge, the design of which is one of the Fovant Badges. One is also dug into the side of a hill near the WW1 camp sites at Codford as a memorial to the Australians' service. There was a Royal Field Artillery shoulder title, an officer's fob watch and, of course, lots of horseshoes.



Fig 7 - The Perham Down Trench System

The trench system on Perham Down is another good example of a training facility. It has redoubts, front line and communication trenches, and was designed to replicate a German position. The German position is on the left with the Allied position on the right.

The training was intense and good. I found an Op Order in the National Archives for a training attack exercise at Perham Down

that took place in October/November 1915, in readiness for the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. The Essex and Middlesex Regiments and the Rifle Brigade were to work with the artillery to attack the German position on Perham Down. The Op Order talks about all the different elements and states that the artillery is to cut the wire. The Op Order specifies which guns are to fire on which targets and when and also when the infantry is to attack. Although it is clear that the first day of the Battle of the Somme did not go well for all the troops, this was not for want of practice.

When we excavated Perham Down, we wondered how deep the trench positions were. They were not just surface scrapes to give a visual impression; they were actually very deep. Chalk is the best archaeology material ever because it's got white original bedrock and brown material where disturbance has taken place. Dig the brown stuff and leave the white. The excavation showed that the frontline positions were properly revetted with timbers, and helpfully there were enough artefacts left behind to help date the trench build. .303 inch rounds for instance are all date stamped when they were manufactured.

One of the least popular things to excavate was the latrine, but I did make them do it to make sure that it had been built as specified in the Field Fortification Manual 1916. There was a long drop to a bright yellow patch at the bottom which was quite smelly. We also found corned beef, brown sauce and condensed milk tins. Cartridges and grenade strikers were also found so they were live firing and practising trench clearance techniques like bombing along the German position.

The 1916 film *The Battle of the Somme*<sup>6</sup> has a famous scene showing the detonation of the mine causing the Hawthorn crater on the first day of the battle. It was then assaulted by British troops. You see them attacking and you can see British troops being apparently killed in action. When the film was released in Britain, it was seen by more people than Star Wars. It was that popular.

However, having received the news that one of your relatives had been killed in action or was missing in action, can you imagine sitting in the cinema to watch it. The soldiers in the film were from the Middlesex Regiment that trained at Perham Down.

The first day of the Battle of the Somme caused 60,000 casualties and about 20,000 dead. However it was a success for the Liverpool Regiment (the Liverpool Pals) who also trained at Perham Down. Unlike the rest the Pals battalions further north, they took all their objectives and had minimal casualties because they were fighting alongside the French and the magnificent French artillery who were working well. During the excavations we put up images of some of the guys that had trained at Perham Down but never made it through. This made it appear more real and human for the those doing the dig.

In WW1, there are army camps all over Salisbury Plain. By 1917, in Larkhill Garrison there were lots of wiggly tin barrack huts. Most of these were demolished after the war, although there are still a



Fig 8 - Larkhill and Durrington Camps

few remaining in Westdown Camp. When you strip the topsoil off where they were, you find the brick footings of the huts, the pipes for the utility services, and a lot of coal and coke in the ground from the braziers.



Fig 9 - Underground workings in the Larkhill trench system

The Army Basing programme has recently built lots of new married quarters and a new civilian school on the east side of Larkhill Camp. An archaeological investigation, where this school has now been built, uncovered a trench system with a lot of underground workings which have been cut into the chalk. See Figure 9. These galleries were still lined with timbers. A 3D scan had to be conducted because a school was being built on the site. Lots of live hand grenades were found which were perfect for bombing trenches but less good for a school playing field. These have all been removed.

One thing that I have learnt is that soldiers will always do it graffiti. This is not new. There is Roman graffiti on Hadrian's Wall, and quite fruity Viking graffiti and runes in a chamber tomb in Orkney. There is also English Civil War graffiti on the font in Burford church:<sup>7</sup> 'Anthony Sedley prisoner 1649'. In the chalk at Larkhill there is graffiti written in pencil by different soldiers. The example in Figure 10 is by Australians, and includes the name



Fig 10 - Australian Graffiti from the Larkhill trench system

of Lawrence Weathers.<sup>8</sup> He was awarded the Victoria Cross in September 1918 but was killed shortly afterwards before he was told that he had been awarded the medal, so again a very important story to be told.

Figure 11 shows Australian miners tunnelling at Larkhill from the 3rd Australian Division who came over in 1916 and were training for the Battle of Messines in 1917.

I have a picture of the Bustard Inn as it was in 1916. I showed this picture to an Australian friend who was appalled to see three Australians standing outside a pub and not inside it! The building is still there but has changed its role; it is now no longer a pub but a religious centre.

The battalion historian of the 38th Battalion of Infantry described training on the Plain in 1916 as: 'Rain swept the open country and poured into the white-chalk trenches. When at night several companies entered the trenches to take up their positions, men floundered through pools of whitewash, and got covered with sticky white mud. Very lights went hissing up through the driving rain, to illuminate a dreary landscape. Rifles cracked, and

5. "War Horse" by Michael Morpurgo. Pub Egmont in 2017. ISBN-10: 1405226668. ISBN-13: 978-1405226660.

6. "The Battle of the Somme" is a British documentary and propaganda war film, shot by two official cinematographers, Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell. The film depicts the British army before and during the early days of the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The film premiered in London on 10 August 1916 and was released generally on 21 August. The film depicts trench warfare, marching infantry, artillery firing on German positions, British troops waiting to attack on 1 July, treatment of wounded British and German soldiers, British and German dead and captured German equipment and positions. A scene during which British troops crouch in a ditch and then "go over the top" was staged for the camera behind the lines. The film was a great success, watched by about 20 million people in Britain in the first six weeks. © Wikipedia

7. In 1649, a group of soldiers, angered by arrears in pay, mutinied at Salisbury and began to march to join other Levellers near Banbury. Government troops surrounded the mutineers near Burford and some 340 prisoners were locked in the church. During their imprisonment, they left evidence of their time there, in particular a carving by Anthony Sedley in the lead on the font, dated 1649.

8. Lawrence Carthage Weathers VC (1890–1918) was a New Zealand-born Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross. He enlisted as a private in early 1916, and joined the 43rd Battalion AIF (Australian Imperial Force). His unit deployed to the Western Front in late December and he took part in the Battle of Messines in June 1917, during which he was wounded. Promoted to lance corporal in March 1918, Weathers fought with his battalion during the German Spring offensive, but was gassed in May and did not return to his unit until the following month. He participated in the Battle of Hamel in July, the Battle of Amiens in August, and the Battle of Mont Saint-Quentin in September. At Mont Saint-Quentin he was recommended for the award of the Victoria Cross. Promoted to temporary corporal, he was mortally wounded in the head by a shell on 29 September during the Battle of St Quentin Canal, and died soon after, unaware that he was to receive the Victoria Cross. © Wikipedia





Fig 11 - Australian miners at Larkhill

the dull detonations of hand grenades momentarily drowned the angry hissing of the rain.' (Fairey, 1920, 7). This is a perfect dedication for the Battle of the Somme, except that it was written about Larkhill.

In the backlines where these guys had time to spare, there is more graffiti. There are interesting tree carvings in Half Moon Copse (Figure 12). This is where the 3rd Division were bivouacking



Fig 12 - WW1 tree carving Half Moon Copse

before they went into the practice trenches nearby. AIF stands for Australian Imperial Forces so these carvings were done by an Australian infantryman. I was keen to identify him. 'Orbost' is a place in the State of Victoria, 233 miles east of Melbourne.

The next step was to find someone with the initials AT from Orbost who served in the 10th Battalion at the time but there was no one with these initials. I therefore tried the 10th Brigade, which means a lot more soldiers records. Eventually I found someone in the 38th Battalion who lived in Orbost whose name was Alexander Todd. In the winter of 1916, when they were training for the Battle of Messines, he carved his name in a bored moment on this tree.

He was a civilian who learnt to be a good soldier on Salisbury plain, and later he won the Military Medal. The citation states: 'At the beginning of the operations of August 31st and September 1st 1918 near CLERY-sur-SOMME Private TODD rushed to with 30 yards of an enemy machine gun position, shot three of the enemy and put the remainder to flight and capturing the gun. About a mile further on a 77 mm gun was firing point blank at our

advancing troops. TODD worked up to the gun and shot 5 of the crew, and thereby silencing the gun and enabling the advance to continue.' It ends with wonderful, understated British language: 'Throughout the advance this man did excellent work.'

Todd wins the military medal, but he doesn't get through the war. Just under a month later he is killed in action by an artillery shell and is buried in France. The tree carving is his last monument really. It has out-survived him already by 100 years and is a very poignant thing to a particular action.

Figure 14 shows Bustard trench system where they trained. They were commanded by Gen Monash a really innovative commander in the 3rd Division. These are all named trenches after London places such as Oxford Circus and Haymarket. which replicates similar place names given to trenches in France. The aerial photograph shows Downbarn Plantation on the left and Half Moon Copse at the top. Overlaying the air photograph taken in the early 1920s onto the original blueprint of the trench plan shows that all the trenches on the blueprint had been fully and properly dug.

The big circle is interesting because that is a mine. 40,000 pounds of explosives were used in a typical mine in Belgium. This



Fig 13 - Bustard trench system and mine crater. 1920 Aerial photograph. It is not clear where the entrance was for the horizontal passage (adit) dug by the miners to plant the mine.

one had about 4,500 pounds, about a ninth of that but it was still a big old bang when it is set off. They experimented very carefully to see how close they could get the infantry to these explosions without killing them with the shockwave.

Some time ago, we excavated to see what was left of these positions and found some of the paraphernalia that you would expect on a battlefield. There were 1914 dated rounds, some

of which were blank, and a burster tube from a shrapnel shell. The trench we excavated had a decent depth of about one metre. When you add sandbags at the top there was quite good coverage, especially if you dig that deep in Belgium you will get into water. There are traces of duckboards and some telephone wires. Soldiers were living in these positions for days on end. They write back to Australia from 'the front' in Larkhill. This is all about building team spirit and ethos and gaining battlefield inoculation. Lots of good lessons before they send them over to Belgium.

We found scissors, brown sauce and Bovril bottles. Brown sauce is one of those things that is evocative of the Great War. There is a veteran, who was interviewed in a book called *Beneath Flanders Fields*<sup>9</sup> and he said: "To him, it was the sense of smell that made him think about the First World War and those smells were from walking past a butcher's shop, from the smell of leaves on a wet autumn morning and from the smell of brown sauce." We also found some Anzora bottles which we felt had to be connected to the Australian presence. I found a copy of the Anzora bulletin on eBay and in it was an advertisement for Anzora. The stereotypical image of the Australian soldier of the Great War is of



Fig 14 - Punch cartoon May 1916

a bit of a larrikin not playing by the rules, which is the image that Mel Gibson tries to portray in the film Gallipoli. In fact, Anzora is a viola scented hair tonic, so somewhere on the Western Front, there was a soldier who wanted to smell of violets!

WW1 must have caused quite an upset to the local civilian population, many of whom would not have left the county of Wiltshire ever in their lives. Suddenly half the British Empire descends upon the Plain for military training. The Punch cartoon says it all: The Dear Old Silly says; "Where are you from?". "We're Anzacs, Madam." To which the Dear Old Silly replies: "Really? How delightful! And do you both belong to the same tribe?"

The 7th Field Artillery Brigade within the 3rd Australian Division write about a particular exercise in November 1916

as being really important because they're just about to deploy overseas. The divisional infantry goes across to France at the end of 1916 and the artillery follows early the next year. They go to a village called Ploegsteert (Plugstreet to the Tommies) 8 miles south of Ypres in Belgium in readiness for attacking Ploegsteert Wood and for the Battle of Messines.<sup>10</sup>

At 0310 hrs on 6th June 1917, 19 mines are detonated underneath the German positions on Messines ridge. This is the support barrage for the 3rd Australian Division for their attack at the southern part of the 2 AIF battlefield. The artillery has cut the barbed wire and then carries out counter battery fire, which was really important to neutralize the German guns.

Australian positions were dug into the upcast of one of the mine craters. When we excavated this site in 2008, we found the



Figure 15. The Australian

body of an Australian who had been killed by artillery. (Figure 15). He had lost one of his arms, and the archaeological drawing shows how we found him - lying on his side covered by the spoil thrown up by another shell.

Both ourselves and the JCCC use the same forensic techniques to identify an individual soldier such as this. We knew he was likely to be an Allied soldier partly from where he was found. He is wearing Allied boots and he is carrying 150 rounds of .303 inch in pouches. He's got his medical dressings and iodine ampoules (still full).

He has a standard British army helmet, the Brodie design which is introduced in 1916, but this was strapped to his bottom; he did not wear it into battle. His water bottle is British pattern bright blue covered in green webbing and still held water and he has an entrenching tool. His trousers are made of corduroy which is significant because only certain regiments wear corduroy, one of which is the Australian infantry. In his pocket there is a wallet.

9. *Beneath Flanders Fields: The Tunnellers War 1914-1918* by Peter Barton, Peter Doyle and Johan Vandewalle. Pub The History Press in 2006. ISBN-10: [186227357X. ISBN-13: [978-1862273573.

10. *The Battle of Messines began on 6 June 1917 with the detonation of 19 mines beneath the German front positions, which devastated it. A creeping barrage, 700 yd deep began and protected the British troops as they secured the ridge with support from tanks, cavalry patrols and aircraft. The effect of the British mines, barrages and bombardments was improved by advances in artillery survey, flash spotting and centralised control of artillery from the Second Army headquarters. British attacks from 8 to 14 June advanced the front line beyond the former German Sehenstellung (Chord Position, the Oosttaverne Line to the British). The battle was a prelude to the much larger Third Battle of Ypres, the preliminary bombardment for which began on 11 July 1917.*



He had a Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) rifle with bayonet but only the metal parts remain. He had put two rounds into the slider on his rifle sling. This is an old soldier's trick to stop the slider moving along the rifle sling and extending it as it is liable to do when the leather gets wet. This is a common practice. Sometimes you get discs and numbers on the butt of a rifle which helps identify the user, but in this case none of these things survive. He does have a live Mills bomb.



Fig 16 - A British Soldier wearing a WW1 Small Box Respirator

He has got three gas masks. He has got the Small Box Respirator (SBR) which was only introduced in 1916 so he cannot have been killed before that. He has got gas goggles and he has what was colloquially known at the time as the 'goggly-eyed monster with a tit'. This is the PH (Phenate Hexamine) Hood that comes in quite early and is carried as a backup should his SBR fail. The PH Hood does work and is lightweight.



Fig 17 - British Vickers machine gun crew wearing PH-type anti-gas helmets near Ovillers during the Battle of the Somme, July 1916

He has a fork and spoon which quite often have a name or number written on them. The toothbrush is the same; it is the one thing I know that soldiers don't share. The key identifier that he was an Australian is the rising sun cap badge. The epaulettes should have Australia shoulder titles. However he was obviously an experienced soldier as his shoulder titles were in his back pocket because they are liable to snag on his webbing straps. Finally there were flecks of dark hair on his collar so he had just had a haircut and he suffered from lice.

Weirdly, the first thing we excavated was a German NCOs Hessian Pickelhaube helmet in quite good condition. Since the 33rd Battalion of the 3rd Australian Division never faced the Hessians, this was probably a souvenir. (Figure 18). He has taken it into battle in his large pack as he knows it will be stolen if he leaves it in his backpack in the lines in the rear.

After two years work, we managed to narrow down the identification of this man. We knew he was not an officer. From his equipment he was training in the Summer, it was after 1916 and he was dark-haired. We knew he was between 5 ft 7 inches

and 5 ft 10 inches tall. He had a certain amount of traceable dentistry and the isotopes taken from the enamel of his teeth showed that he was from New South Wales. We now carried out a DNA assessment. As no further progress had been made to identify him, we planned a funeral with the Australian army and a headstone was prepared for an Unknown Soldier of the Great War.

Two weeks before the funeral, I had a phone call from Australia, saying that there was a DNA match to a woman called Kath who was aged 101 and remembered her mother getting the telegram to say that her mother's brother, Private Alan James Mather, had been killed in action. Both the DNA and the isotopic dental signature matched. He was from Inverell in New South Wales (283 miles north of Sydney) and was the right age (37) and the right height.



Fig 20 - Private Alan James Mather

Seven members of his family, including his nephew, flew here for the funeral. His headstone records the official date of death as 8 June 1917, although in fact he was killed earlier than that. He is still listed on the walls of the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing but there is now a record of his burial. His equipment is now in the Museum of the Infantry of the Australian army in Singleton, New South Wales.

He lived just opposite the Larkhill main gate when he was in England. When they plough the field just opposite the AS90 gun, you see little dark marks where the coke stoves and the hut footings were. Alan lived in that field for the last four or five months of his life before he went to Belgium where he was killed in his first action. That is why archaeology is about people. The legacy that soldiers lay down is just as important as the Bronze Age or early mediaeval Saxon burials. Equally important are the artefacts that tell you stories about people.



Fig 18 - The German NCOs Hessian Pickelhaube Helmet

I finish with the very famous painting 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'<sup>11</sup> by Magritte. He made the point that this is only a representation



Fig 20 - René Magritte 1929

of a pipe not a real one. You can say that about anything. Figure 21 is an army fork found at Barrow Clump in the 6th Century cemetery that I have been excavating, not far from Charlie One tank crossing. There is a service number stamped on it which was traced by one of my researchers to a Gunner James Roger Moderate who was an anti-aircraft gunner in WW2.

He was posted to Singapore, where he was captured by the Japanese and used as forced labour to build a runway on one of the Pacific Islands. The commandant of the island was told that if it looked like the Allies would liberate the island then he was to kill all the prisoners. This is exactly what happened when an Allied



Fig 21 - Gunner Moderate's fork

warship appeared. Gunner Moderate has no known grave and is commemorated on the Wall of the Missing in Singapore. As such that fork is way more than just a serviceable fork because it is associated with a man and a story with a life from Salisbury Plain.

## QUESTIONS

### Secretary:

Plug Street. I believe there were 19 mines but only 17 went off.

### Lecturer:

There were 21 mines but only 19 went off. There is only one left as one of the two went off in 1955 in a thunderstorm killing a cow and nobody else. I have met the farmer who farms the land over the last one. It is in a place called the birdcage and he says that it is fine; he lives about 20 metres away from it! They have taken away all the detonators but I would keep well away from the Ammonal down there as it is very dangerous stuff that deteriorates with time.

### Questioner:

Were you involved in the rebuild of the area around St Michaels School?

### Lecturer:

Only en passant when the initial plans came through the Defence Infrastructure Organization (DIO) where I work. We told them that they were near a World Heritage Site and would need archaeology to get planning permission. At that point, the MOD got consultants involved, and a company that used to be called White Young Green worked with the local authorities to arrange the excavation. It was excavated by Wessex Archaeology, who are the guys helping me at the moment at Avon Camp West.

They did a really good job and the finds were fascinating. I believe that the school has had etchings of some of the finds put in their windows such as golden syrup tins and so on. They found a 1950s machine gun in one hole and the MOD Defence Disposals managed to sell this knackered MG for about £5K!

### Chairman:

Are there any long-term archaeological projects for the SPTA at the moment?

### Lecturer:

I think that the archaeology of SPTA is unsurpassed. Everywhere you put a spade, you find stuff. The universities would love I am sure to do more longer term projects. But archaeology is in a bit

of a state of flux at the moment and many university archaeology departments are struggling to exist.

A lot of archaeological research would normally come through university bases. In the near future, I don't think will be seeing any new external research projects on the Plain. The ones we see at present with the wounded and the veterans will continue.

Depending on the judicial review results, the A303 work near Stonehenge will be the big archaeological project, equivalent to the HS2 railway. And you will probably see a lot more archaeology going on there in the next few years causing a lot of disruption when roads get closed or re-routed.

### Chairman:

Thank you very much. You have given us a really fascinating and diverse lecture on Salisbury Plain archaeology this morning.

11. The Treachery of Images is a 1929 painting by Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte. Magritte painted it when he was 30 years old. It is on display at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The painting shows an image of a pipe. Below it, Magritte painted, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe". Magritte said: "The famous pipe. How people reproached me for it! And yet, could you stuff my pipe? No, it's just a representation, is it not? So if I had written on my picture "This is a pipe", I'd have been lying!"



# Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Herbert Macllwaine

## DSO MC RA

### The Gunner and the Rugby Cup

By Gerry von Tonder B.Admin (Hons)(UCR)



Gerry was born in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), in 1955. Upon completing his A Levels, in 1975 he joined the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Intaf), which was responsible for the total civil administration of the country's indigenous peoples in tribal areas. During this time, there was a dramatic increase in the guerrilla war waged by insurgents against the Rhodesian government, in which their Maoist doctrine meant the subversion of tribespeople was the main objective. National service was mandatory, and for the whole of 1976 Gerry underwent military training followed by deployment into the tribal areas where the people had been moved into concentrated 'protected villages', a strategy copied from the British example in the Malayan Emergency. Postings included Mount Darwin in the northeast, a district in which the war was extremely intense, bordering as it does with Mozambique, a rear-base haven for ZANLA insurgents. In 1976, Gerry received 'early release' from his two year military obligation to read for a Bachelor of Administration (Hons) Degree at the University of Rhodesia. During the three-year course, in university vacations he was required to return to active service. After graduating late in 1979, Gerry returned to Mount Darwin where the British sponsored ceasefire had just come into effect and armed guerrillas had concentrated into assembly points throughout the country.

As the Ministry of Internal Affairs was responsible for election administration, Gerry was appointed an Election Returning Officer for the forthcoming universal-franchise general elections. This was a difficult time, performing the role of facilitator, mediator, liaison officer, coordinator and elections polling observer of the extremely sensitive and volatile transition from Southern Rhodesia to an independent Zimbabwe. This was a 24/7 function, involving daily discussions and meetings with armed guerrilla leaders, Commonwealth Monitoring Force officers, the British Election Supervisor, British Bobbies

and numerous competing rival political parties. In 1980, Gerry married Tracey, his English rose from Derby, whose parents were living in Zimbabwe at the time. There no longer being a career future in government, Gerry went into commerce until 1999 when, together with his wife and two children, he emigrated to Derby in England. Since then he has cultivated his love of things military to become an internationally recognised researcher and published author of eclectic subjects relating to the military genre. He has published 26 books, and is a regular feature article writer for British magazines Britain at War and Classic Military Vehicle. With a vast source network and personal digital and printed libraries, he also conducts contract research projects, factual corroboration of non-fiction book scripts, copy-editing and proofreading, image and illustration sourcing, and freelance writing.

In 1962, at Larkhill veteran gunner and ardent former England rugby player, Herbert Macllwaine, presented the Royal School of Artillery commandant, Brigadier Peter Glover, with

the eponymous Macllwaine Cup to be contested for in inter-regimental rugby. Many will be familiar with this annual trophy, but perhaps the man himself is not well known.



Lt Col Alfred Herbert Macllwaine DSO MC RA  
(Gunner by Tort)

Alfred Herbert Macllwaine was born in Kingston upon Hull in Yorkshire, England, in 1889, and was educated at Clifton College near Bristol, where he excelled in rugby union and as a heavyweight boxer. Upon finishing at Clifton in 1907, he was unsuccessful in his application for a place at The Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and two years later he enlisted as a territorial with the 2nd (Northumbrian) Field Brigade, RFA.



43 (Howitzer) Battery, Royal Field Artillery, officers (5) and senior NCOs, either Ireland or France. Seated on the trail are Major Burne (left) and Captain Woodside. Standing behind them are, left to right, Second Lieutenants Macllwaine, Hadden and Hogg.

In 1911, Macllwaine did a year's probation with a regular battery at Aldershot. Then, after successfully completing the "competitive examination of officers of the Special Reserve, Militia, and Territorial Force," in May 1912 he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the "Royal Horse and Royal Artillery" (*London Gazette*, 22 May 1912).

During World War One, Macllwaine served in France with the British 6th Infantry Division between 1914-1915, and in Mesopotamia with the 4th Indian Division between 1916-1918.

The Divisional Artillery included Macllwaine's 43rd (Howitzer) Battery of the 12th (Howitzer) Brigade, RFA. At the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in August 1914, 12 (H) Brigade was stationed in Ireland, where 43 (H) Battery was based at Fethard, a small town in County Tipperary.

On 5 August 1914, 12 (H) Brigade sailed from Queenstown for Liverpool, at which time it joined the 6th Division. 43 and 86 (H) Batteries were shipped to France on 8 September. At Aisne River, south of Soissons, 6th Division joined III Corps to reinforce the hard-pressed British Expeditionary Force (BEF).



Battle of Armentières

In October, Macllwaine's 43 (H) Battery was heavily engaged in the successful Battle of Armentières (see map above). By mid-1915, 12 (H) Brigade had moved into the Ypres Salient near Hooze where, in August, 43 (H) Battery, firing from a range of 6,000 yards accurately hit the German trenches only 100 yards from the British positions.

Later that year, shortly after being promoted to captain, Macllwaine was transferred to serve as staff captain in the Meerut Division of the Indian Army, at the time fighting in France. At the beginning of 1916, the division was deployed to Mesopotamia to join the Indian Expeditionary Force against forces of the Ottoman Empire. During this tour of duty, Macllwaine was awarded the Military Cross.

In August, now with the rank of Acting-Major, Macllwaine contracted typhoid, necessitating hospitalisation in the British Army's Deolali Camp in Maharashtra. This was followed by a period of recuperation in Kashmir, where he met his future wife Joan, daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel John Manners-Smith VC of the British Indian Army.

Upon full recovery, early in 1917 Macllwaine was posted to 'W' Battery, RFA, based in Meerut, and in November he was posted to Baghdad as the new battery commander. During the Euphrates operation, at Basra his battery's 13-pounders were replaced with 18-pounders.





18 Pounder  
(Gerry van Tonder, courtesy Royal Artillery Museum)

In September 1918, Maclwaine married Joan Manners-Smith, and was immediately back in action with the Cavalry Brigade on a major sweep towards the Persian border. In this operation, over a four-day period, Maclwaine's exemplary actions earned him the Distinguished Service Order:

*The London Gazette*, 10 December 1919:  
Capt. (A./Maj.) Alfred Herbert Maclwaine, M.C., "W" By.,  
R.H.A. (MESOPOTAMIA)

**For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty at Huwais, 27-29 October 1918. His battery was continuously in action for three days, and during this strenuous time he directed the fire from an advanced outpost in the front line. Under heavy fire he exposed himself fearlessly to obtain good observation, and contributed largely to repelling all enemy attempts to break through. His tactical handling of his own and another battery was admirable, and his coolness and determination inspired all ranks with confidence.**

The war over, in 1919 Maclwaine found himself back at Aldershot. A year later he was given command of No. 3 Company of cadets. During this posting, Maclwaine's passion for sport resurfaced and he became responsible for rugby and boxing training.

In 1924, he was transferred as adjutant to 5th Medium Brigade on Salisbury Plain, a move that initiated his close relationship with Larkhill. After 15 years' regular army service, Maclwaine took retirement in 1927. With no hesitation, and with Joan in tow, he embarked on a life-changing adventure by emigrating to take up farming in the British colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Maclwaine purchased a farm in the Marandellas area, 40 miles southeast of the capital, Salisbury (now Harare). In honour of his military roots, he named his farm 'Larkhill'.

His characteristic dedication as a soldier translated well into the field of agriculture, and he became chairman of the local farmers' association and sat on the executive council of the country's national farming union. A few years later, he acquired a 200 acre smallholding in the scenic mountains of Rhodesia's Eastern Highlands, where he went on to develop a lake and a hotel (Troutbeck Inn) with trout fishing, golf and holiday attractions.

The ominous ascendancy in the 1930s of Nazi power in Europe was not lost on the Southern Rhodesians, who remained fiercely loyal to the Crown. Following a visit to London by Prime Minister



Maclwaine named his Rhodesian Farm "Larkhill".

Sir Godfrey Huggins, it was announced that a Royal Artillery training team, headed by Captain John Stevens, RA, was on its way to Southern Rhodesia to organise its artillery unit. Included in the package were four 3.7 inch howitzers.

Following the outbreak of war, on 28 September 1939, the 'Light Battery', as the new Southern Rhodesian unit was called, moved into No. 1 Training Camp on full-time service. Weeks of intensive training, including live firing, culminated in a visit by Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Wavell, General Officer Commanding Middle East.



Capt John Stevens RA, was posted to Southern Rhodesia to assist with artillery training. (Gunnery by Tort)

On 13 April 1940, the Rhodesian Artillery left the country on active service. While Captain Stevens prepared to return to England, Captain Ralph Wyrley-Birch MC, RA, assumed command of the Light Battery. In September, Wyrley-Birch and a contingent of gunners left for East Africa to form the 4th (Rhodesian) Anti-tank Battery, and Major Maclwaine assumed command.

Maclwaine's immediate project was for the construction of gunners barracks and a gun park, to replace the hitherto tent accommodation. On 23 October 1940, notification was received from Buckingham Palace that the new facility in Salisbury would be known as King George VI Barracks.

Early in September 1941, the Light Battery started its "pig industry", the men breeding their own pigs to raise funds for the battery. Monthly Battery dances were also held for the same purpose. Later that same month, Maclwaine received this letter from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the 5th Marquess of Salisbury, Viscount Cranborne:

Sir  
I have the honour to request you to inform your Ministers that His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve an alliance between the Southern Rhodesia Light Battery and the

Royal Regiment of Artillery.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient servant,  
Cranborne.



Major Maclwaine at No. 1 Training Camp, Southern Rhodesia.



Maj Maclwaine and Capt Morton at training camp, Southern Rhodesia. (Gunnery by Tort)

Since its founding in 1890, Rhodesia enjoyed a close relationship with the Cecil family of Hatfield House, naming the future capital after the British prime minister of the day, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. In time, two of the capital's suburbs were named Cranborne and Hatfield in honour of the family. Cranborne Barracks was home to the Rhodesian Light Infantry, and in 1978, Lord Richard Cecil, brother of the current Marquess of Salisbury, was shot and killed by an insurgent while, as a journalist, he was covering a live engagement between ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) fighters and Rhodesian security forces.

In September 1942, Maclwaine took possession of the Light Battery's new 25 pounders, acquired from Britain to replace the 3.7 inch howitzers, which were passed on to the territorials.

On 29 April 1944, Maclwaine was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and posted to Nairobi, Kenya, as Liaison Officer to the East African Command. In four years of wartime service as Officer Commanding the Southern Rhodesia Light Battery, Maclwaine steered Rhodesia's artillery capability from a small part time entity to several fully trained and equipped units that saw meritorious action in East and North Africa and Italy.



Rhodesian 25 pdr 1944 Italy

In his military service covering two world wars, Maclwaine was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Order, Military Cross, 1914 'Mons' Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal (with oak leaf), Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-1945, and the French Croix de Guerre (with palm). He was Mentioned in Despatches no fewer than six times. (medal group below)



During the war years, Maclwaine also had other 'interests', which reflected on his patriotism, albeit in a rather unconventional and risky manner. In 1940, many in Southern Rhodesia felt that the country was ill-prepared in the likely event of a German invasion via Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) on its eastern border. As a prominent individual in the farming community,



from his farm, Larkhill, he organised a mass meeting to be held in the nearby town of Marandellas. There he urged men to arm themselves, adopt a simple uniform, and prepare the district's defences.

However, Maclwaine's rhetoric met with mixed feelings, and he failed to get the response for which he was hoping. He was then able to garner support from fellow war veteran and farmer, Cecil Priest. Together, they 'conspired' to draw up a plan for the invasion of Portuguese East Africa to seize Beira, the nearest port to Southern Rhodesia. But Salisbury got wind of this, and Maclwaine and his 'co-conspirator' were warned of dire consequences should they continued to pursue such a Quixotic course.

In 1967, Maclwaine had a further brush with international politics when he visited the UK. This was two years after Southern Rhodesia unilaterally proclaimed its independence from Britain, sparking outrage at Downing Street. The House of Commons Hansard of 18 July 1967 tells the whole story:

*Mr. Biggs-Davison asked the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs why the passport of Colonel A.H. Maclwaine was impounded at London Airport on his arrival for medical treatment.*

*Mr. George Thomas: Major Maclwaine's passport was impounded because it was issued by the illegal regime in Rhodesia, and is not recognised by Her Majesty's Government. Major Maclwaine may apply for a United Kingdom passport valid for six months if he wishes to do so. This procedure is in accordance with the policy announced by the then Commonwealth Secretary to this House on 25th January, 1966.*

A lover of rugby union, Maclwaine played prop for United Services Portsmouth RFC, Yorkshire and England. Winning five caps for the latter in 1912, he took part in four victories from five international appearances.

Playing either side of World War One, he played club rugby



*Maclwaine had a passion for rugby union. Left, England national team, right, Army Rugby Union.*

for Harlequins, and for Yorkshire against the 1908-09 Wallabies. As a Gunner, he represented the Officers of the Army against the Officers of the Royal Navy in 1913 and 1914. He helped set up a Central Army Rugby Referees Society.

After World War One the Army Rugby Union (ARU) turned its attention to the question of referees for army and unit matches. At a General Committee Meeting on 29 November 1921, it was minuted:

*It was agreed that this was a matter of vital importance and,*

*for the furtherance of Rugby on sound lines, it was necessary that not only should a sufficient number of officials within the Army exist but that uniformity should be obtained in the definition of the rules by the formation of a Central Army Rugby Referees Society. A sub-committee, as under, was appointed to take immediate steps for the setting up of such an organisation: Major B.C. Hartley, Army Sport Control Board, Capt. O.G. Philby, RMC Sandhurst, Capt. A.H. Maclwaine, RMA Woolwich, and Major R.W. Ling, ASCB (Secretary).*

Colonel Maclwaine's love for rugby and the Royal Artillery resulted in his donation of the Maclwaine Cup mentioned at the start of this article.



*Colonel Maclwaine, centre, when he handed over the Maclwaine Cup at Larkhill, England, 1962.*



*Maclwaine Cup player's medal.*



Colonel Maclwaine died at Borradaile Trust, Marondera, Zimbabwe, on 6 April 1983, aged 94. He is buried at St Catherines-in-the-Downs, Troutbeck, alongside his wife Joan.

# The Bombing of Besançon

## 16th July 1943

*By Brigadier Jon Cresswell*

*Deputy Commander (Operations), 1st (French) Division, Besançon*

*(for bio see Page 6)*

**80 years ago, the city of Besançon lived through its greatest trauma of the twentieth century – the bombing by allied aviation. This attack by a dozen heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force left 51 bisontins dead and 134 injured. This tragic event is the subject of a detailed investigation by M. François Henriot (2016, Maison Bobillier) as well as numerous articles and websites including an article in this newspaper on the occasion of the conference on the subject at the Hotel Florel on the 75th anniversary. Jon Cresswell is British himself and serves in Besançon as the Operations Deputy with the 1st Division at Quartier Ruty. A historian through education and a gunner by profession, with the support the Royal Air Force Historical Service and a relative of one of the aircrew who lies at rest in St Claude cemetery, he has analysed this tragedy as both a British officer and a (temporary) bisontin.**

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For nearly two years now I have enjoyed discovering the rich culture of Besançon, its architecture, its people and its history. The latter is naturally dominated by the great events of the city and notably its integration into France (twice!), the construction of its defences, its experiences during the Second World War and the liberation together with the story of its most famous citizens. Nevertheless, as is often the case, behind the golden narrative there are dark and hidden episodes. For Besançon this might be the religious massacre of 21st June 1575, the siege by the Austrians in 1814 or the (mini) commune of 1871. It was in deepening my knowledge of the city that I add another tragic and forgotten event, that of the bombardment of Viotte Station and the Chaprais district on the night of 15/16 July 1943, and so 80 years ago this year.

Understanding the reason behind the bombing of Besançon initially appeared complicated. Some sources suggest that Besançon station might have been a secondary target in the case of bad weather, with a further hypothesis that the RAF might be targeting a German general who was on a train in the town. Another theory was that Besançon was a diversion to distract German night fighters with another view being that this was an act of retribution (indeed terrorism) by the British – an explanation offered by propaganda at the time. The facts behind the tragedy are much simpler. A force of 165 bombers were detailed to attack the Peugeot Factory at Sochaux which the invader was

using to manufacture war material, notably engine parts for the Fokker-Wolfe 190. Besançon was the final navigation point on the route to the target and a collision between a Halifax bomber and a German night fighter resulted in the British bomber crashing onto Viotte station with its crew of seven and a full load of bombs on board. The German fighter crashed nearby. The fires caused by this crash were seen by the other bombers in the wave and believing that they were over their target at Montbéliard, they proceeded to attack Besançon with terrible results.

How can we be sure of this explanation? The aircraft logbooks for the night all show that the bombers believed that they had indeed attacked Sochaux and the other three raids that night were against Southern Germany, North Africa and northern Italy. No raid was planned against Besançon which contained no targets of note. The story of that tragic night does not end there. Present that night in Besançon was SOE agent, Harry Réé. On seeing the failure of the bombardment at Sochaux where the bombs also fell on civilian areas killing a further 97 people with only 35 of the 750 bombs dropped hitting the factory, Réé put together a plan for the FFI to neutralise the production capabilities at the Peugeot from the inside. In his published account of the episode (recounted in the book by his son in 2020: A Schoolmaster's War), the British agent reports getting in touch with Rodolphe Peugeot and offering to stop the RAF re-attacking the plant and its workforce in exchange for support for a sabotage attack by the maquis. Peugeot agreed after testing the integrity of Réé though a phrase that he gave the agent to be read out by the BBC. The maquis attacked on 5 November 1943 and crippled production with a series of attacks. In attacking critical points in the system, the FFI neutralised the facility in a far more effective way than aerial bombing would achieve and saved civilian lives.

Accident, chance, and misfortunes of war do not mitigate the tragedy of the event that hit Besançon in the summer of 1943. The city suffered more losses on this night than during the liberation and its street fighting over four days in September the following year. Such is the cruel nature of warfare. Each of the victims had a name, a family, a place in the town and a future which disappeared in an instant. Their names must be honoured and remembered alongside those of the seven young aviators of the RAF who risked and lost their lives to fight the invader. They all paid the ultimate price for the freedom that we enjoy today.



# The Battle for Besançon 1944

## A model of information led, urban manoeuvre

A delegation of commanders and staff from the 3rd (United States) Infantry Division visited Besançon on 24th April 2023, including the Commanding General, Major General Charles Costanza. The division, whose nickname is the *Rock of the Marne* from their solid defensive action of 1918, was the formation that liberated the city of Besançon on 8th September 1944 following a four day battle against determined and skilled German resistance.<sup>1</sup> 88 Marne soldiers fell during the action with a similar number wounded. Losses amongst the *Forces françaises de l'intérieur* were also heavy and serves to illustrate the decisive role that the Maquis played in the battle.

Having landed in Provence on 15th August 1944 as part of the US VI Corps (Maj Gen Lucien Truscott) the division, raced north in pursuit of retreating German forces. Significant actions were fought at Montelimar and Bourg-en-Bresse by the other divisions of the Corps (36th and 45th) and by 4th September, the 3rd Infantry Division was in the lead and closing on the Germans' final blocking position along the river Doubs and centred on the fortified city of Besançon. This position had to be held to cover the withdrawal of all German forces in the south of France through the Belfort Gap. The enemy sought to hold the area until 15th September. Following significant losses in the south the German 19th Army's only coherent combat formation was the 11th Panzer Division, now itself reduced to four all arms battlegroups and this unit prepared to deny the heights to the south of the Doubs.

Divisional reconnaissance and the leading elements of the 7th Infantry Regiment (the Battle Patrol or *le Groupe d'appui à*

*l'engagement blindé* - GAEB in modern parlance) reached the Besançon area (Larnod-Busy-Pugy) on the afternoon of 4th September and met with the resistance who provided up to date information on the enemy's dispositions and strengths. More importantly, they informed the Americans that the bridge at Avanne-Aveney was still in place and patrols immediately deployed forward to seize it and only just beat the arrival of a German engineer demolition team. This was an extraordinary piece of good luck and meant that the Rock of the Marne had much greater freedom of manoeuvre while the German southern defence was already outflanked and the withdrawal route to Belfort under fire from the division's guns. Truscott's original intent was to cross the Doubs as far east as possible to cut off the enemy's withdrawal and to this end the 3rd Algerian Infantry Division (today's 3rd Division) raced its lead elements to secure the crossing at Baume-les-Dames. They successfully secured the crossing but were unable to resist the armoured counter attack of the 11th Panzer the following day during which, the Germans blew the bridge. With the eastern option no longer viable, 3rd (US) Division were ordered to seize Besançon which they set out to do from all sides while blocking external interference.

This hard fought action of four days might easily be overlooked in the extraordinary journey of the Rock of the Marne from the Torch Landings in North Africa to Berchtesgaden, passing through major combat operations in Italy, brutal fighting and environmental conditions in the Vosges over the terrible winter of 1944/45 and no less than five amphibious landings. Yet its success must

not be overlooked. It saw the award of a Congressional Medal of Honour, a Distinguished Service Cross and a Presidential Unit Citation, not to mention a host of silver and bronze stars. Three features stand out which might serve as anchor points for reflection for today's divisional warfighter. The first is the deep battle. Shaped by intelligence, notably delivered by the FFI whose highly effective collection and processing network, the allies had up to date information on the enemy along with guides who knew the area intimately. This delivered detailed and accurate understanding, which underpinned almost surgical urban operations where the collateral damage was far less than that wrought by an accidental bombing raid on the night of 15/16th July 1943.

Allied to the intelligence effort was direct action by the Maquis who sabotaged communications and ambushed German forces. This created not only a physical effect but a psychological one as well. These resistance forces had been augmented by French SAS and OSS (today's CIA) patrols, parachuted in during the previous month and had been the focus of a much deeper campaign of creating and arming resistance networks, which began as early as 1940. Finally, the divisional and brigade all arms reconnaissance forces offer an early vision of how we fight today with reinforced advance guards fighting for information and shaping the enemy in depth to allow the main body to pivot and optimise manoeuvre. Today this is the Armoured Cavalry or Divisional Reconnaissance Battlegroup.

The Marne Division was one of the US Army's most experienced combat formations and would go on to confirm this over the final year of the war. No other unit had so many gallantry awards conferred upon it. Led with compassionate yet ruthless determination by its commanding general, John O'Daniel (known as Iron Mike from his courage and wounds in the Great War), the battle hardened and battle tested divisional combat system combined speed and firepower with trust and empowerment of subordinate commanders who understood their CG's intent and his approach to risk. This was of particular importance in terms of maintaining tempo with signals and logistics stretched to their limits enabling the division to exploit the emerging opportunities offered by the resistance. Finally, the battle offers an important example on manoeuvre warfare in the urban environment with all arms battalion tactical groupings operate independently while informed and protected by corps and divisional level manoeuvre outside the conurbation (which was instrumental in defending against a counter-attack from Dole). They were also able to exploit the centralised fires of the Divisional Artillery Group, itself was reinforced by 155mm from Corps. Fast moving, penetration attacks cleared and secured the key terrain, exploiting the additional power from the FFI (at battalion strength) and the overwhelming support of the local population. If the Germans succeeded in withdrawing significant forces to the frontier, they did so at heavy cost and their aim of holding the Doubs until 15th September was unachievable. Even as the clearance operation continued, Iron Mike exploited north with two thirds of his combat power towards Vesoul on the evening of 7th September leaving just one regimental combat team to secure Besançon alongside the Maquis. This they achieved by the following afternoon.

So, how did the Battle for Besançon play out? The Germans aimed to deny the southern bank of the Doubs and its heights to protect the N73 from Dijon to Belfort and delay the advancing allies through screens, raids, ambushes and strong blocking positions on key junctions. Having lost the race for the Avanne Bridge, the 11th Panzer division deployed a strong patrol into Beure to defend the junction of the Route de Lyon and the road coming

in from the south from Arguel. This combat lasted the day and cost the lives of some twenty GIs. Meanwhile, the Marne Division enveloped the heights of Besançon to the south (Montfaucon) and to the West (Chateau Farine). The 6th September saw the 11th Panzer withdraw from Beure and defend the western approach into the city at St Ferjeux before withdrawing to the east and leaving the final defence of the city to the 159nd Infantry Division. This significantly understrength formation, whose Commanding General was shot dead at a US roadblock, centred its defence on the strong point of Vauban's 17th century citadel at the neck of the Doubs loop with its surrounding forts, and the northern sector of the city and road to Vesoul. With St Ferjeux and Ecole Valentin in allied hands along with the crest line to the south, the division attacked at first light on 7th September with three Battalion Combat Teams from the east, west and south.

The 7th Infantry Regiment deployed a battalion to take the high ground to the west of the city (Fort de Chaudanne) and then move into Battant to secure the bridge which the Germans blew in the early afternoon. Another battalion of the 7th Infantry fought across the top of the city and secured Palente to the east thus blocking the exit to Belfort and denying reinforcement from this direction. Lacking sufficient combat power to penetrate further into the city along the Route de Belfort, a fourth battalion combat team was sent in to fight through to Viotte and then secure the Route de Vesoul. Meanwhile in the south east, the clearance of the area of Nancray, Morre, Montfaucon by the 15th Infantry brought a Distinguished Service Cross to their Commanding Officer. The defining action of the day, however, was the frontal assault by the 1st Battalion of the 30th Infantry Regiment with three rifle companies and a group of eight tanks against Vauban's Citadel from the south. Launching from the Chapelle des Buis, the Battalion under Captain Chaney secured the two southern outer forts (Tousey and Trois Chatels) before engaging the garrison of the Citadelle itself, with supporting fire from 7th Infantry on Chaudanne. A combination of firepower, aggression, momentum and the psychological pressure of being surrounded, led the German garrison commander to honour the rules of war and once it was clear that the assault would breach the Citadelle, he duly capitulated. On entering the Citadelle, the German defenders were paraded with their weapons stacked neatly before them and their commanding officer formally surrendered. While this was taking place, the Corps engineers had already bridged the Doubs at Battant, the road was open and the pursuit was on again.

And so, closes the remarkable story of the Battle for Besançon, liberated by the Rock of the Marne after four years of occupation, a bastion of resistance and a model of how deep, shaping operations create the conditions of decisive manoeuvre. 10,000 troops fought for the city over four days and the price was not negligible, especially for the FFI who acquitted themselves to action with courage and honour. The 3rd Infantry Division moved north and later into the Vosges where greater challenges awaited them. It was a pleasure for the 1st Division to welcome the Rock of the Marne back to Besançon and study the battle. It is a staff ride that offers much food for thought for the challenges of today against a capable and determined enemy in difficult terrain where the commander's risk – reward rational is tested to its limit and where an operational culture of trust and empowerment develops a tempo that seizes and maintains the initiative.

1. The German defence was impressive against overwhelming odds. They succeeded in delaying the allies with a determination and discipline at great cost.

2. With the 3rd French Division on the right of VI Corps, it is satisfying to note that today's 1st Division was on the left. The objection of the 1re division blindée was Dijon where the allies linked up with Paton's Third Army.

# THE AIR OBSERVATION POST: D-DAY, NORMANDY AND THE BIG ONE

By Major Peter Hope



Major (Retired) Peter Hope served in the Royal Artillery from 1964 to 1986 in every branch then available. He was an Army pilot, commando and parachutist. He was educated at Stowe, Sandhurst, Staff College, Camberley and St John's College, Cambridge (Master of Philosophy). On leaving the Regular Army he joined The Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, serving until 2000. He has had articles published in *The British Army Review*, *Royal Artillery Journal*, *The Blue Beret* (UN Force in Cyprus newspaper) and *The Western Morning News*. He won the Duncan Medal Essay prize in 1978. He is married to Pamela, who he met at the St Valentine's Day Dance at Headley Court in 1976, has three children and five grandchildren, all girls. A keen Eton Fives, Squash and Hockey player in his younger days, he represented Cambridge at Eton Fives against Oxford in 1985. He has had a pilot's licence since 1962. Since 1990 he has been Principal of Buckmaster and Company.

Such was the success of the Air Observation Post (AOP) during exercises in Britain, the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and Italy that the planners for the invasion of Normandy put a high priority on airborne observation of artillery. The first idea was to launch the Auster aircraft from an aircraft carrier and this was practised using HMS Argus and HMS Ravager and the 16-inch guns of HMS Rodney. This worked well as the wind over the deck and the speed of the ship meant that landings were almost vertical. However, in the end no aircraft carriers were allocated to the fleet off Normandy.

The next idea was to land a recon party on D-Day, find a suitable Air Landing Ground (ALG) and fly the aircraft over 60 miles of sea to the selected field. 652 Squadron had the honour of being the lead squadron. Three possible ALGs were selected from vertical photographs of the area around Sword Beach and Captains Ian Neilson and Alan Keen with four drivers, signallers and RAF technicians together with one three tonner with fuel and spares and a motorcycle were embarked on a Landing Craft (Tank) on 4th June 1944. They set off during the evening of the 5th and they landed on Sword beach at 4 pm on 6th June. Ian Neilson then set off on his motorbike to see the proposed ALGs. The first two were

no good but the third at Plumetot was completely satisfactory being largely clear of obstructions and shielded by the Perier Ridge from enemy observation. A message was sent back to HQRA 3 (BR) Division, under whose command they operated and the squadron in England was alerted. D plus one was spent clearing the ALG and by the end of the day it was fully useable.

At 8.15 in the morning of D plus 2 the first 5 aircraft safely arrived. They were escorted by a Supermarine Walrus of the Fleet Air Arm to provide navigation and to discourage the fleet from firing at them. That afternoon Ian Neilson made the first sortie, having alerted the local light anti-aircraft regiment (commanded by Lt Col Charles Bazely DSO, formerly CO of 651 Squadron, the first squadron to engage the enemy during operations in North Africa). Flying continued both engaging targets and providing photographic coverage.

The AOP build up continued with 662 Squadron arriving on 8th, 659 on 13th, 658 on 18th and 653 on 27th June. 660 and 661 Squadrons arrived early in July, making a total of seven squadrons, one per corps and one at Army level to support the AGRAs, a total of 84 aircraft. They were later joined by three Canadian squadrons and 657 Squadron transferred from Italy. They arrived in Holland early in 1945.



Supermarine Walrus I, serial number K5783, from the first production batch. The aircraft served with the Royal New Zealand Navy cruisers HMNZS Achilles and HMNZS Leander.

Now for the Big One. On 17th July Major Andrew Lyell took off at 4.00pm to look at the village of St Martin because it was



A Walrus lands on a Royal Navy carrier in the Indian Ocean, after rescuing under fire a pilot shot down while attacking Japanese positions on the Nicobar Islands.

obvious that a counter attack could be launched from there down to the open country to the west in the neighbourhood of the road that runs from St Martin to Esquay. Visibility was poor and there



Auster Mark 9

was no sign of the enemy. Things were different in nearby Maltot, just behind the front line, which was heavily defended by anti-aircraft guns. Then great clouds of dust appeared in St Martin and bushes he had seen earlier seem to have moved. He reported this to HQRA 12 Corps who allocated him 4 rounds gunfire from the artillery of 12th, 30th and 2nd Canadian Corps, some five, or six hundred guns of field, medium and heavy artillery. This is probably the largest concentration of artillery ever controlled by one man. The whole of St Martin disappeared in an enormous cloud of smoke and dust. He then moved the concentration 400 yards to the West and ordered a repeat.



Auster under camouflage.

How effective was the AOP? Sir Max Hastings in his fine book *Overlord* says little about the AOP but the commander of the German 10th SS Panzer Division in his *Lessons from the Normandy Front* said: "The greatest nuisance of all are the slow flying artillery spotters which work with utter calmness over our positions, just out of reach, and direct artillery fire on our forward positions." The AOP continued to provide close support, counter battery fire as well as photographic coverage and liaison flying for the rest of the campaign and the remainder of the war.



# The Birth of The Artillery Arms Race

By Colonel J Michael Phillips BA MSocSc MA



Colonel Michael Phillips was commissioned into the Regiment into 1967 and retired in 1999. He then became Regimental Historical Secretary and the Curator of the Museum of Artillery, during which time he achieved National Designation for the Royal Artillery Collections. A museum professional, he subsequently led Brooklands Museum (cars and planes) and the Archives and Museum of Bethlem Royal Hospital (founded 1247). He has since been Chairman of the Rural Life Centre and the London Bus Museum, and Deputy Chairman of the Royal Marines Museum. He worked with Dennis Rollo to achieve the Honour Title **Arcot 1751** for 36 Battery, and was awarded the Neville Walford Medal for furthering the understanding of German and Belgian artillery. He is Programme Secretary for the Royal Artillery Historical Society.

## Armaments become a Private Industry

We are accustomed to regard the naval race of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries as the first arms race, but it was in fact second to the artillery race of 1855-1900. The artillery arms race was not based on international military rivalry but on private commercial competition for markets. Arms manufacturers exhibited alongside each other at the same international exhibitions, as the catalogues for mid-19th Century demonstrate. Each arms manufacturer kept a keen eye on the developments by his competitors.

Were a date needed for the start of the artillery arms race it would be 1855, when following successful trials General Mourin,

the French artillery general who had masterminded the 1855 Paris Exhibition, ordered three hundred 12 pdrs from Krupp. The Essen works was ready to deliver but the French firm of Schneider (which had been making heavy guns for two years at the new factory at Le Creusot) and its allies lobbied the French Government to cancel the order. Krupp then proposed to set up a factory in France and secured French financial backing, but again Schneider scotched the scheme by getting Krupp's patents barred.<sup>1</sup> By 1860 the three competing industrialists who would dominate artillery production until the end of the century were in place: Armstrong, Krupp and Schneider.

## The Entrepreneurs - Armstrong



William Armstrong 1810-1900

William George Armstrong, 1st Baron Armstrong, CB FRS was an English engineer and industrialist, an eminent scientist, inventor and philanthropist. In 1847 the firm of W. G. Armstrong & Company bought 5.5 acres of land alongside the river at Elswick, near Newcastle, and began to build a factory there. In 1854, during the Crimean War, Armstrong read about the difficulties the British Army experienced in manoeuvring its heavy field guns. He decided

to design a lighter, more mobile field gun, with greater range and accuracy. He built a breech-loading gun with a strong, rifled barrel made from wrought iron wrapped around a steel inner lining, designed to fire a shell rather than a ball. In 1855 he had a five-pounder ready for inspection by a government committee. The gun proved successful in trials, but the committee thought a higher calibre gun was needed, so Armstrong built an 18-pounder on the same design, which was declared to be superior to all its rivals. Armstrong became employed as Engineer of Rifled Ordnance to the War Department. To avoid any conflict of interests were his own company to manufacture armaments, Armstrong created a separate company, called Elswick Ordnance Company, in which he had no financial involvement. In his new position Armstrong worked to bring the old Woolwich Arsenal up to date so that it could build guns designed at Elswick.



Armstrong artillery works at Elswick

However, just when it looked as if the new gun was about to become a great success, a great deal of opposition arose, both inside the army and from rival arms manufacturers, particularly Joseph Whitworth of Manchester. In 1862 the government decided to stop ordering the new gun and return to muzzle loaders. Also, because of a drop in demand, future orders for guns would be supplied from Woolwich, leaving Elswick without new business. Compensation

was eventually agreed with the government for the loss of business to the company, which went on legitimately to sell its products to foreign powers.

In 1864 the two companies, W. G. Armstrong & Company and Elswick Ordnance Company merged. Armstrong had resigned from his employment with the War Office, so there was no longer a conflict of interest. The company turned its attention to naval guns. In 1882 Armstrong's company merged with Mitchell's to form Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Co. Ltd. and in 1884 a shipyard opened at Elswick to specialise in warship production. The first battleship produced at Elswick was HMS *Victoria*, launched in 1887. An important customer of the Elswick yard was Japan. It was claimed that every Japanese naval gun used in the Battle of Tsushima in 1905 had been provided by Elswick. Elswick was the only factory in the world that could build a battleship and arm it completely. In 1897 the company merged with Joseph Whitworth, and became Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co Ltd.

## The Entrepreneurs - Krupp

William Armstrong's German competitor was Alfried Krupp. Taking full charge of his father's firm at the age of 14, Alfried designed and developed new machines, won new customers, extended his firm's purchases of raw materials, and secured funds to finance the expansion of his works. Not himself a technical innovator, he had a detailed knowledge



Alfried Krupp 1812-1887

of the processes and a nose for recognising potential new developments. He was an outstanding commercial salesman, often spending months away from Essen to procure orders. In 1848 he became the sole owner of the Krupp works. It was with the advent of railways that the rise of the firm really began. In 1852 Alfried Krupp manufactured the first seamless steel railway tyre. He was also the first to introduce the Bessemer and open-hearth steelmaking processes to Europe (1862 and 1869).

To prove the quality of his steel, Alfried Krupp turned to making cannon.<sup>2</sup> Initially he could not sell his guns in Prussia, and the first orders came from Egypt (1856), Belgium (1861), and Russia (1863). His cast-steel rifled 6 pdr field gun was more or less adopted by 1860, but it was his 14-inch cannon displayed at his stall in the 1867 Paris exhibition which caught everyone's attention.<sup>3</sup> Very early on in his gun-making business Alfried cultivated the Prussian military. His most useful contact was General Bernhard von Voigts-Rhetz, not only an ADC to the Prince Regent (later to be King Wilhelm I) but later Director of the General War Department in Berlin. Through him he was able to meet the Prince Regent, and Wilhelm visited the Krupp Gusstahlfabrik for two exhaustive tours. Less well-known was Alfried's determination to secure

2. His first cannon was a 3 pdr gun, produced in 1847, three years after the initial order from Berlin in 1844. It had an inner tube of cast steel inside an outer one of cast iron. It remained in Spandau Arsenal until used for trials in June 1849. After firing 100 rounds the gun was deliberately burst to test the strength of its material. The Committee expressed doubts on uniformity of quality and on cost, and Krupp was informed by the War Ministry that unless the costs could be reduced there could be no further tests. Menne, Blood and Steel. 63.

3. Geoffrey Best, War and Society in Revolutionary Europe 1770-1870. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998. 300.

1. Bernard Menne, Blood and Steel – The Rise of the House of Krupp. (Original published 1938). Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK Ltd, 2013. 89.

orders for naval guns for Prussia's new ironclads. Despite coming off second in a trial against British competitors, he secured in 1868 an order for 41 heavy naval guns.<sup>4</sup>

Although Prussian gun technology developed almost exclusively through Krupp, Krupp's gun technology was open to, and in competition with, a wider market. Each arms manufacturer kept a keen eye on the developments by his competitors. This was not however an age of industrial espionage: arms manufacturers were as keen to invite visitors from other nations in the same way that armies invited observers from other nations to view their operational training and annual manoeuvres. For example, in 1855 following the testing in Prussia of the Krupp 12 pdr cast-steel muzzle loader, the gun was sent to Woolwich for examination by the British Ordnance Select Committee.<sup>5</sup> The Committee, which lasted until 1869, had been established to replace both the Master General of the Ordnance and the Ordnance Board after the disasters of the Crimean War, and it was replicated by other nations.<sup>6</sup> Where Alfred Krupp differed was his consistent pursuit of patents to secure monopolies. By contrast, William Armstrong gave his patents to the British Government.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to grasp this point because it signalled the start of the European arms race. For the first time there were international conflicts where the success depended on, or more often defeat was blamed on, the difference in armaments. While this became higher profile in the naval arms race of the first decade of the next century, the foundations were laid in land armaments during 1860-1875. Battles may or may not have been won by technology: but had the Prussians lost the Franco-German War they would almost certainly excused it by the superiority of the Chassepot and the mitrailleuse. Though Krupp happily sold guns to anyone, it was not until the Austro-Prussian War that he came under scrutiny for supplying the enemies of Prussia, when Krupp was arming both sides.<sup>8</sup> The international arms sales of Krupp were to endanger Germany's neutrality in the Russo-Japanese War when the German Admiralty escaped international censure only by formally classifying Krupp's submarines and torpedo craft for Russia as 'pleasure yachts'.<sup>9</sup>

### The Entrepreneurs - Schneider-Creusot

The French competitor to Armstrong and Krupp was Schneider-Creusot. In 1821, at the age of nineteen, Adolphe Schneider entered the Seillière bank. In 1830 Schneider was the bank's agent with the French expeditionary force to Algiers, for which the bank was providing supplies. Schneider met the army's needs from Spanish suppliers, who were cheaper than the French. Schneider formed a relationship with the owners of the Le Creusot ironworks, which went bankrupt and was sold at auction in 1835. Schneider obtained financing and acquired the works at Le Creusot at a premium of one million francs. Adolphe brought

in his brother Eugène to run the works while he managed finance and sales.

In 1838 the works built the first French railway locomotive, and since then Le Creusot supplied almost all locomotives in France. Schneider entered politics in 1840, when he was elected to the municipal council of Creusot. Adolphe Schneider died on 3 August 1845 from a fall from his horse. His brother replaced him in the Chamber of Deputies. After his brother Adolphe died Eugène Schneider became the sole director of Le Creusot and soon was a powerful industrialist. Schneider obtained a monopoly in supplying arms to the French government, supplied the materials for government-encouraged railway construction. The industrial empire of Schneider et Cie, based on metallurgy and armament manufacturing, prospered with the development of railways, iron ships and artillery. At one time the Schneider-Creusot iron works were the world's largest.



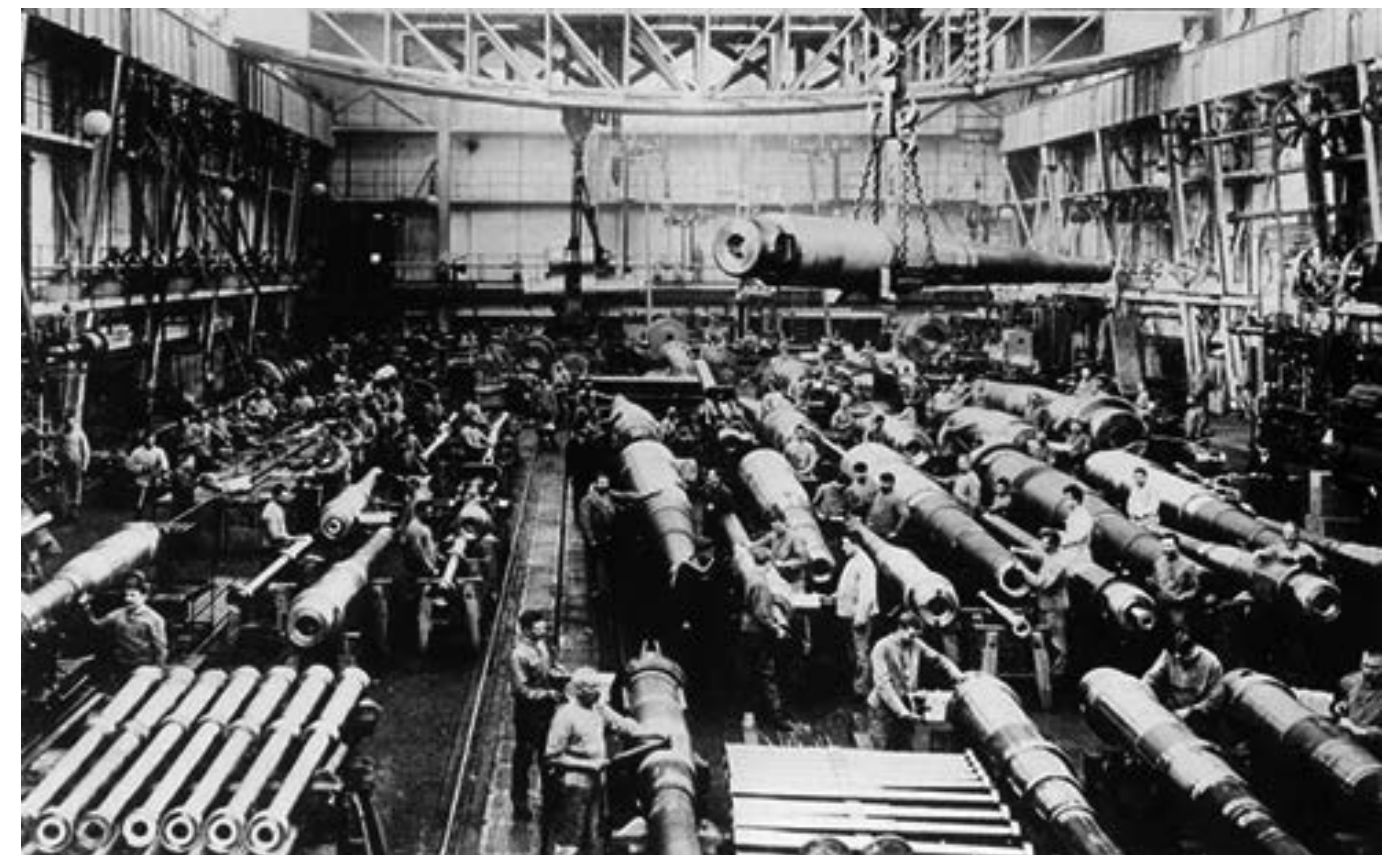
Eugene Schneider 1805-1875

Eugène Schneider supported the coup d'état of 2 December 1851 that launched the Second French Empire. He was President of the Corps Législatif from 2 April 1867 to 4 September 1870. Eugène Schneider died on 27 November 1875 in Paris. His son Henri Schneider took over control of the Le Creusot foundry.

### Finance



Krupp artillery works at Essen



Krupp artillery works at Essen

Artillery and ordnance were during the latter part of the 19th Century the most expensive class of military capital expenditure, until overtaken by naval construction at the end of the century. The availability of funding had its impact on the arms race. Burgeoning industrialisation brought with it not only greater tax yields for governments but also more complex instruments of advance financing for development. Britain, France, and Prussia / Germany were the most advanced countries industrially and thus better able to afford a higher frequency of artillery / ordnance purchases than the lesser developed economies of Austria and Italy. Less prosperous countries retained older ordnance for longer. Government loans reflected the political apprehension of hostilities, and thus Britain, involved in small-scale wars against technologically less mature forces, let industrialists fend for themselves, encouraging competition to generate lower prices while Krupp, being for many years the sole supplier, regularly sought and obtained credits from the Prussian and later German government. Prussian / German artillery benefitted from the windfalls of the reparations of the defeated in 1866 and 1871. Conversely, Krupp was hardest hit by the recession of the early 1870s. In every country, governments used the real or perceived threat of invasion to persuade legislatures to grant additional funds, even Britain, protected by its navy, for the Palmerston Forts.

### The Entrepreneur giants depart

With the deaths of William Armstrong in 1900, Eugene Schneider in 1875 and his son Henri Schneider in 1898, and Alfred Krupp in 1887 and his son Friedrich Krupp in 1902 the initiators of the artillery arms race left the stage. Governments would henceforth become more insistent on setting specifications, demanding and overseeing development, and demanding secrecy for the technical details of their products. In the case of the Soixante Quinze secrecy was maintained even after the cannon entered service with the French Army.

William Armstrong was knighted, appointed a Companion of the Bath, and ennobled as Baron Armstrong of Craggside. His statue was unveiled in the middle of Newcastle in 1906. He was a major contributor to the expansion of Newcastle. Eugène Schneider passed on the vast Schneider-Creusot concern to his two sons. His statue is to be found in the town of Le Creusot, but his most prominent memorial is that his is one of the seventy-two names on the Eiffel Tower. On his death Alfred Krupp was the richest man in Europe, wealth generated solely by his own efforts. Krupp was the lifeblood of Essen. His statue was unveiled in Essen in 1889. His personal memorial is the vast palace he built out of Essen at Bredene, the Villa Hügel, which now contains the Krupp Archives.

4. Peter Batty, *The House of Krupp*. London; Secker and Warburg, 1966. 80. This prospect brought Alfred to return in a hurry from his 3-year absence in Nice. Upon Armstrong guns winning the trials, Alfred, then in St Petersburg, arranged for the Tsar to send a recommendation to King Wilhelm, who then overruled the War Ministry without awaiting the results of a second trial. Menne, *Blood and Steel*. 85-86.

5. Capt C W Younghusband RA FRS, *An Account of some Experiments made by Direction of the Ordnance Select Committee. Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution Vol I*. Woolwich: Royal Artillery Institution, 1858. 349-350.

6. Brig J C Groom CBE, *Arrows to Atom Bombs - A History of the Ordnance Board. Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Historical Society 18 April 2018*. Larkhill: Royal Artillery Institution, 39.

7. David Dougan, *The Great Gun-Maker. The Story of Lord Armstrong*. Newcastle: Northern Heritage Services, 2015. 48.

8. Roon to Alfred Krupp 9 April 1866: 'I venture to ask whether you are willing, out of patriotic regard to present political conditions, to undertake not to supply any guns to Austria without the consent of the King's Government'. For the subsequent negotiation see William Manchester, *The Arms of Krupp 1587-1968*. London: Michael Joseph, 1969. 120-121

9. Bernard Menne, *Blood and Steel - The Rise of the House of Krupp*. (Original published 1938). Milton Keynes: Lightning Source UK Ltd, 2013. 264-265.

10. 40 million Thalers from Austria in 1866. Jonathan Steinberg, *Bismarck. A Life*. Oxford: University Press, 2011. 290. 5 billion gold Francs from France in 1871-73, plus 200 million francs as indemnity for the Germans expelled from France at the beginning of the War. Alfred, Count von Waldersee, trans. Frederic Whyte. *A Field-Marshal's Memoirs*. London: Hutchinson & Co, 1924. 110. The latter was completed in September 1873 ahead of schedule.



# OLIVER'S ARMY

## The Creation, Utilization and Legacy of The New Model Army<sup>1</sup>

By *Nicolas J Lipscombe*



Colonel Nick Lipscombe was born in 1958 and commissioned into the Gunners in 1980. He saw service in every discipline within the RA and then went on to spend the second half of his 34 year service in various NATO appointments. He was awarded the US Bronze Star in 2006 for his work in Iraq.

He is now an accomplished historian, author, lecturer, and battlefield guide. His works include the *Peninsular War Atlas and Concise History* (selected by the *Daily Telegraph* as their *History Book of the Year*), *Wellington's Guns*, *Wellington Invades France*, the official *Waterloo 200 Bicentenary compendium*, *Wellington's Eastern Front* and most recently, *The English Civil War: An Atlas and Concise History of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms 1639–51*, which was selected in 2021 as the runner-up for the prestigious *Templar Medal*. He is a long term tutor at the University of Oxford and an active member of numerous historical societies. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2016.

Colonel Nick Lipscombe was awarded the Alfred Burne Memorial Medal for his book *Wellington's Guns*. General Jonathan Bailey drew the audience's attention to Nick's book on the English Civil War during the presentation at the Shrapnel Lectures in October 2023.

***Oliver's army is here to stay  
Oliver's army are on their way  
And I would rather be anywhere else  
But here today***

Elvis Costello, singer & songwriter, 1979

By the end of 1644, and two years into the first English Civil war, the situation had reached a military impasse. The Royalist advantages of 1643 had been overturned by a Parliamentary alliance with the Scottish Presbyterians and the creation of two new and large armies; one led by the MP William Waller in the west, and the other led by the Earl

of Manchester in the east. Despite a series of Parliamentary victories in early 1644, growing divisions among their generals, and a series of strategic errors by their war counsellors, allowed the initiative to slide back in the King's favour. The high recriminations that followed led Parliament to conduct a radical reorganization of its forces. The new army that emerged from that process was very different from any army the nation had witnessed before.

The Battle of Marston Moor in July 1644 was of enormous military significance in the first English Civil War. But the forces of Parliament, beset by internal differences, failed to capitalize on their victory over the forces of the King. The disaster that befell Essex at Lostwithiel in September that year, and the opportunity



Fig 1 - New Model Army Pikemen © Nicolas Lipscombe

squandered at the second Battle of Newbury the following month, led to a bitter power struggle within the Parliamentary political and military hierarchy. In Parliament, support polarized for either the war party or the peace group, at the expense of the middle parties. The peace group was more resolute than ever to secure a negotiated settlement with the King, while the war party was equally determined to fight to a military conclusion, which, they considered was within their immediate grasp. In order to achieve military closure, the war party saw the irrevocable need to separate the political and military functions in the prosecution of armed conflict. The conclusion, more by blessing than design, could not have turned out better for the war party. In December 1644, the introduction in the Commons of the Self-denying Ordinance, separated the political and military roles, thereby creating a new, central army led purely by military men.

By January 1645, with a negotiated settlement as far away as ever, the Ordinance provided a solution to the deadlock between Parliament's two houses. Self-denial cut the Gordian knot. It provided the wherewithal to end the internecine divisions; it generated a renewed impetus towards the end game and it provided the nucleus of a new and decisive fighting force. Thomas Carlyle recalled that 'Parliament had its New-Model Army, and soon saw an entirely new epoch in its affairs.'

### Part 1:

#### ***Oliver's Army are on their way - The creation of the New Model Army***

Two years into the war, the strengths and weaknesses of the Parliamentary cause were the reverse of those of the King. The Royalists had a unified command and administrative system, while Parliament had individual regional army commands and a series of overlapping committees.

Furthermore, Parliament's alliance with Scotland, and the duly formed Committee of Both Kingdoms, had already developed cracks.<sup>2</sup> Reliance on county militias and regional forces further complicated national military planning and execution. Despite these drawbacks, Parliament held two trump cards. Firstly, the cities and counties under their regulation were far wealthier than those in Royalist controlled areas. Secondly, Parliament's control

of the navy gave them a lead in the prosecution of the war in Britain and Ireland and, equally importantly, it enabled them to interdict foreign support to the Royalist cause. These benefits provided the Parliamentarians something that was denied to the King – namely, time. During the first two years of the war it was John Pym (the de facto Leader of the House of Commons) who made best use of that time, but he had died in December 1643. The reorganization of the Parliamentary administration in the wake of Pym's death, and the new alliance with Scotland, resulted in the establishment of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, in which middle parties were more strongly represented. Neither fish nor fowl, they lacked a cohesive strategic vision and/or concept and were predisposed to vacillate between a mediated vis-à-vis a military solution.

The unsatisfactory conclusion to the fighting season in October 1644, reopened old wounds and resulted in open hostility between Parliament's military commanders. Oliver Cromwell and



Fig 2 - Oliver Cromwell

William Waller launched an attack on the Earl of Manchester's conduct, and suitability for continued command. Cromwell repeatedly referring to events at (the siege of) York and Marston Moor.<sup>3</sup> Manchester had no real defence to speak of. His comments following the debacle at the second Battle of Newbury now came back to haunt him. 'If we beat the King ninety-nine times, he would be King still, and his posterity, and we subjects still; but if he beat us but once, we should be hanged and our posterity undone.'<sup>4</sup> The Earl of Essex, who had largely escaped blame from Cromwell (but not Waller), tried to shift the finger of blame

2. The Committee of Both Kingdoms developed from the Committee of Safety in February 1644, in order to jointly conduct the war effort after the Scots joined forces with Parliament.  
3. Calendar of State Papers Domestic (CSPD): Charles I, 23 volumes, (London, HMSO, 1888). Series of depositions illustrative of the charges brought by Lieut.-Gen. Cromwell against the Earl of Manchester, submitted to the examination of the Committee formerly appointed for the Lord General Essex's army, dated 25 Nov 44 to 6 Jan 45.3.  
4. Bruce, J., *The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell, an episode of the Civil War p. LXX* (Camden Society, 1875). *My italics.*

1. This article first appeared in the *British Army Review* Volumes 178 and 179 titled *Cromwell's New Model Army*.



on Cromwell for trying to drive a wedge between Parliament's Scottish allies. He had pre-empted Cromwell's accusations and, in the wake of Newbury, had convened a meeting with the Scottish Commissioners.

Bulstrode Whitelocke had been present and recalled the words of the Lord Chancellor of Scotland that "*Ye ken vara weel that Lieutenant-General Cromwell is nae freend of oors; and since the advance of our army into England, he hath used all underhand and cunning means to take off from our honour and merit of this kingdom.*"<sup>5</sup> At a time when three other men were being tried under similar pretences, it was a dangerous accusation that could be considered treasonable.<sup>6</sup> But following the loss of his army at Lostwithiel, Essex did not have a strong platform.

The Self-denying Ordinance offered both an olive branch and an opportunity. It was quickly accepted by the Commons but the Lords were less enthusiastic. By removing all Members of Parliament from military positions, many of the ennobled officers would be forced to hang up their swords; a move that was perceived to be a dereliction of their honourable duty and customary service to the nation. It was, therefore, to be a long and difficult fight to drive the bill into law. In early January the Lords (initially) threw out the Self-denying Ordinance, but this did not deter Parliament from continuing their work and on 21 January they voted by 101 votes to 69 to make Thomas Fairfax the new commander-in-chief. The brave and popular Philip Skippon was named as his major general (chief of staff), but the post of lieutenant general of horse was, pointedly, left vacant. Indeed, Cromwell understood that his political position, and his ongoing very personal and highly public disagreement with Manchester, effectively ruled out his nomination - at this stage.



Fig 3 - General Thomas Fairfax

Ironically, it was Cromwell's spat with Manchester that was to provide the pedal with which to surge ahead with the establishment of Parliament's new army. For when the Lords threw out the Self-denying Ordinance, and then overruled the subsequent nomination of Fairfax as the new army's commander, they did so because they wanted one of their own - namely the Earl of Manchester - to have the post. Therefore, on 15 January, the two committees charged with the investigation of the accusations laid at Manchester's feet, suggested that the Lord's investigation of a member of the Commons, namely Cromwell. That tit-for-tat inquiry, however, commenced without the permission of the House of Commons and, as such, breached Parliamentary privilege (a categoric 'no-no' in the Palace of Westminster in the 1640s). Furthermore, they were happy for both sides to state their positions and for Manchester to be able to conduct his defence. With little prospect of a negotiated settlement with the King, the Lords were backed into a corner. On 15 February the Lords passed the bill for the New Model Army, although resolving the detail was to be a more protracted affair. It was with no little irony that the Scots looked on realising that the Self-denying Ordinance had eliminated the same politico-military problems with which they too were blighted.

On 31 December 1644, Parliament had debated and agreed that the new army would, according to the State Papers, 'be 16,000 foot, 8,000 horse, and 1,500 dragoons. That a foot regiment consist of 1,200 men. That a regiment of horse consist of 600 men. The pay to be according to the last establishment of the Lord General's army.'<sup>7</sup> Financing the force was the first challenge, finding sufficient numbers from the remnants of the armies of Essex, Manchester and Waller was the second.

By the time the bill became law, the numbers for the infantry and cavalry had been revised down to 14,000 and 6,000 respectively.<sup>8</sup> Elevating the new army to a war footing was going to take time and it was resolved to raise another 8,500 in London and the eastern and southern counties to meet these manpower requirements.

The New Model did not, however, immediately replace the plethora of other forces fighting for Parliament. In early 1645 these included the Scottish army under Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven (21,000) the Northern Association under Sydenham Poyntz (10,000) and the (disbanded elements) of the Western Association under Edward Massie (approximately 8,000), plus a number of smaller bodies of troops spread nationwide. Charles Firth, in his exhaustive work on Cromwell's Army, estimates that there were at least 60,000 or 70,000 soldiers, excluding the Scots, earning Parliament's 'shilling'.<sup>9</sup> Gradually, however, over the next couple of years, these forces would be incorporated into the ranks of the New Model Army.

In theory at least, the New Model Army was a national force not constrained by regional affiliation or county directives. This was absolutely crucial to enable the Committee of Both Kingdoms to plan strategically and fight a national campaign. However, in the first few months of 1645, the Self-denying Ordinance had not yet been fully passed into law and the armies of Essex, Manchester and Waller were, in effect, still existing. This created all sorts of problems for recruitment of the new force. Firth calculated that

by March 1645 the available foot soldiers from Waller's, Essex's and Manchester's armies came to a mere 3,500 and that an additional 8,500 had to be recruited to fill the gap.<sup>10</sup> Ian Gentles, in his work on the New Model is less pessimistic, suggesting that the new army's infantry stood at over 7,000, but he concedes that another 7,000 foot and 1,000 dragoons still needed to be raised.<sup>11</sup> This lack of immediate numbers made impressment and county quotas a prerequisite; something that ran entirely contrary to the aim and *modus operandi* of the new force. There was still a significant shortfall of 3,000 to 4,000 men when the army deployed for the first time in May 1645. More crucially perhaps, the impressment significantly reduced the mobility and morale of the new force, for many men deserted and returned home.

The new army was to have twelve regiments of infantry, eleven regiments of cavalry and a regiment of dragoons. Each infantry regiment of 1,200 men had ten companies (of irregular size); the cavalry regiments six troops of 100 men and the dragoon regiment of 1,000 men divided into ten troops. Attached to each regiment were the key staff, including a provost-marshal, a surgeon, a clerk and a chaplain. The infantry had, in addition, a drum-major and a quartermaster. Each troop, or company, had its own standard as

well as musicians; with drummers and trumpeters also acting as messengers in addition to their musical role.

The amount of artillery was not specified and there was a simple explanation for this. Artillery at this time, and indeed up to 1855, was under the auspices of the Board of Ordnance and the direction of the Master General of Ordnance. However, Parliament would, undoubtedly, have directed the Board to provide both guns and trained gunners to its armies and the New Model in particular. According to the New Model's lieutenant-general of the ordnance, Lieutenant General Thomas Hammond, the artillery train consisted of four demi-culverins, four long sakers and twenty ordinary sakers. The accuracy of this is unclear as the train was supplied with two demi-culverin and eight sakers in April 1645, with another saker and three drakes being subsequently sent up to Windsor for the army.<sup>12</sup>

Fairfax, was required to produce a list of officers (from colonel to captain) to serve in the infantry, dragoons and cavalry. Steered no doubt by Cromwell, Fairfax was prepared to break apart regiments and pick those officers he saw as the most militarily capable. As early as 1643 Cromwell had written to the Parliamentary politician Sir William Spring making it



Fig 4 - A Demi Culverin

5. Whitlocke, R. H. (ed.), *Memoirs, Biographical and Historical, of Bulstrode Whitelocke, Lord Commissioner of the Great Seal, and Ambassador at the Court of Sweden, at the Period of The Commonwealth* (London, 1860) p. 199.

6. Wanklyn, M., *The Warrior Generals, Winning the British Civil Wars* (Yale University Press, 2010) p. 140 - Alexander Carew and John Hotham senior and junior.

7. Calendar of State Papers Domestic (CSPD): Charles I, 23 volumes, (London, HMSO, 1888), dated 31 December 1644.

8. *Ibid*, dated 9 January 1645.

9. Firth, C. H., *Cromwell's Army: a history of the English soldier during the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Protectorate* (London, 1902) p. 34.

10. Firth, *op. cit.* p. 35.

11. Gentles, I., *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1992) p. 32.

12. National Archives SP28/145 f.60r - Artillery Train for New Model Army.



clear that he would 'rather have a plain russet coated Captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than which you call a *Gentleman* and is nothing else'.<sup>13</sup> It is no surprise that experienced military commanders considered ability and obedience as far more important officer qualities over social standing in the selection process.

The House of Commons debated the names at great length, but ultimately accepted the vast majority of Fairfax's proposals. The Lords, however, removed, relegated or reassigned as many as a third of his suggestions.<sup>14</sup> Patronage and preferment had played a pivotal role in officer selection and the Lords were not about to sweep aside deep-seated historical precedence and regimental practice. Most of the proposed changes may well have been politically motivated but they were dressed up as preserving the seniority of the individual or the integrity of regiments.

Religious considerations were also taken into account, although independency was viewed very differently to fundamentalism. Mark Kishlansky concluded that Colonels Rainsborough and Okey, Major Richard Cromwell and Captains Bush and Rainsborough were all excluded because of their extreme religious beliefs.<sup>15</sup> All Parliamentary officers at the time, and especially those selected for the new army, were expected to take the Solemn League and Covenant, but it was widely accepted that they could not be expected to adhere to a church that had yet to be established.<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding the Lords' exclusions, the merging of officers from three armies meant that the selectors were spoilt for choice. Once merged a number of officers became surplus to requirements and were discharged. Such a policy was not without drawbacks. Samuel Luke, one of the officers discharged from Essex's army, recalled with a degree of bitterness perhaps, that in the new army "*many officers were hard to tell from the ordinary soldiers*".<sup>17</sup> A number of sergeants and corporals, who were short of the mark, were also discharged or persuaded to take a demotion and serve as common soldiers. The deliberate exclusion and/or resignation of many Scottish officers, was significant too, marking the start of a diminished role for Scotland in English (Parliamentarian) military affairs.

The enormous task of outfitting the new army began as soon as the mechanism to fund it was in place. In February 1645 a new monthly assessment was levied (replacing the old 'excise') on the seventeen counties under Parliament's control.<sup>18</sup> This totalled just over £50,000, with pay accounting for the lion's share and the balance of about £8,000 to be spent on arms, ammunition and supplies. Men were expected to feed and clothe themselves out of their pay. Dress was standardised and led to the creation of the British army's distinctive redcoat, which was to be their unmistakable hallmark for the next two hundred and fifty years. Pay ranged from eight pence for a foot soldier, one shilling and

sixpence for a dragoon and two shillings for a cavalry trooper, to thirty shillings a day for a colonel.<sup>19</sup>

## Part 2:

### *Only takes one itchy trigger - The New Model Army as a Fighting Force*

The approach of the new campaigning season and the Royalist opening salvos, forced Parliament to cut short their debate and allow the New Model to cut its teeth and get on with the job in hand. By the Spring of 1645, the Committee of Both Kingdoms had three strategic objectives. The relief of Taunton, the renewal of the siege of Chester and the defence against a possible Royalist attack in the Eastern counties. The Committee decided to dispatch the New Model Army to the southwest. Recruiting was far from complete and Joshua Sprigge, the chaplain to Fairfax's new army noted rather dryly, that the officers 'were better Christians than soldiers, and wiser in faith than fighting'.<sup>20</sup>

That may be so but many of the newly appointed officers were seen behaving badly in London, instead of reporting for duty at Windsor. Furthermore, many of the regiments were in a state of mutiny and disinclined to accept Fairfax's authority over them. The army's baptism, therefore, was not tidy.

The Scots were allocated the task of assisting William Brereton besiege Chester but with James Graham's (the Marquis of Montrose) extraordinary Royalist successes in Scotland the previous year, they were disinclined to move south. William Brereton was left on his own against Chester and the Committee of Both Kingdoms, concerned that the King's army now had free rein in the centre of the country, ordered Fairfax to split the new army. He was to leave 5,000 horse and foot to continue towards Taunton, while he was to proceed to Oxford with the balance. The Committee concluded that such a move would dissuade the King from attacking the Eastern counties (and the rump of the Eastern Association army left there) for fear of losing his capital. It would also provide badly needed time to enable the new army to fill its ranks. It was a reasonable plan, and might have worked, had it not been for the King's indecision about his own strategy and Prince Rupert's counsel. Rupert, conscious of the new army's teething pains, had dismissed it as a cohesive fighting force. Days later Rupert arrived, unopposed, at the gates of Leicester and, after a fierce fight, captured the key Parliamentary city.

Devoid of alternatives, the untried army was sent north to counter Rupert's force and the two armies met on 14 June just north of the Northamptonshire village of Naseby. Fairfax's army numbered about 13,500 while that of the King about a third less at 10,000.<sup>21</sup> It was, to use a well-worn military phrase, 'a close-run

thing'. The New Model won a muddled but decisive victory, which marked a watershed in the war. It was not only a turning point in the military outcome of the first English Civil War, but a defining moment in the command and control of Parliament's armies. In the run up to Naseby, the Committee of Both Kingdoms at the centre, had continued to demonstrate the familiar ineptitude and indecisiveness that had plagued military planning and execution in 1644. To be fair, they had been somewhat constrained by the intransigence of the Scottish military and political commanders.



Fig 5 - King Charles and Prince Rupert at Naseby

By contrast, the Fairfax's Council of War which deployed on the ground with the army, had proved more adroit. In the aftermath of the battle it was, not surprisingly perhaps, given greater powers and a degree of autonomy. A number of MPs, concerned at such direct and devolved military control of such a large armed body, introduced a Common's motion in an attempt to restore the prevailing authority of the Committee of Both Kingdoms. But lacking support, the motion was easily blocked.<sup>22</sup> Fairfax now had far greater control over operational decision making for the New Model Army and an increased influence over Parliament's strategic military policy. The Council of War took on a more permanent character.

Fairfax marched back towards Somerset to 'mop-up' the West Country. He defeated the last major Royalist army under George Goring at Langport in July. It was the last large-pitched engagement of the war but a number of Royalist garrisons and fortifications remained. It soon became clear that if the war was to be brought to a swift conclusion, the New Model Army would need to be broken down into a number of smaller detachments in order to capture these many dispersed strongholds. This division, while militarily expedient, served to reduce the effectiveness of the Council of War and the old problem of precedence of command resurfaced. Even before the end of 1645, there were growing concerns about New Model Army's role in the nation once the fighting was over. It was described by some as an

'independent army', with a reputation for religious radicalism.<sup>23</sup> Not the best precursor to a lasting and peaceful settlement.



Fig 6 - New Model Army Musketeers © Nicolas Lipscombe

## Part 3:

### *But there's no danger, it's a professional career - The Politicisation of the New Model Army*

In early 1646, the King (for politically motivated reasons) surrendered to the Scots. The Parliamentary politicians sought to establish an acceptable settlement with the monarch. By February 1647 the Scottish army had been paid off and had quit English soil. The provincial forces (other than Poyntz's Northern army) had been disbanded, leaving the New Model Army intact and expensive. After four years of war, the nation's coffers were empty and the levels of taxation unacceptably high. However, there could be no diminution of dues without the complete or partial disbandment of the army. This was an explosive topic. The process of that disbandment became entwined with the ongoing struggle within Parliament. In the Spring of 1647, Denzil Holles and Philip Stapleton (both officers who had served under Essex) held sway in Westminster, and they were determined to disband the New Model Army, lock, stock and barrel.

A number of regiments, whose commanders were sympathetic to the Presbyterian cause, were earmarked for service (out of the way) in Ireland, while the rest were to be disbanded and dispersed.<sup>24</sup>

The army, not surprisingly, reacted with hostility. They felt they had earned a right to a say in the settlement of the Kingdom and they wanted assurances from Parliament on the settlement of arrears of pay and indemnity from prosecution for past acts.<sup>25</sup> The pot was beginning to simmer.

Fairfax ordered the New Model to stay clear of London, but he was well aware that he lacked the necessary political credentials and clout, and quickly yielded political direction and control of the army to Cromwell. Cromwell moved with speed and decisiveness,

13. Carlyle, T., Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, two volumes, (London, 1907) dated September 1643, vol. I, p. 147.

14. Gentles, op. cit. pp. 36-37.

15. Kishlansky, M. A., The Rise of the New Model Army (Cambridge University Press, 1979) p. 43.

16. Kishlansky, Ibid, p. 40. The Solemn League and Covenant was a military league and a religious covenant which became a prerequisite for holding any command or (any) office under Parliament.

17. Rogers, H. C. B., Battles and Generals of the Civil wars 1642-1651 (London, 1968) p. 208.

18. The system was, as ever, fraught with problems and money shortages were commonplace and normally resulted in arrears of pay.

19. Gentles, op. cit. p. 47.

20. Sprigge, J., Anglia Rediviva; England's recovery being the history of the motions, actions, and successes of the army under the immediate conduct of his excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, KT, Captain-General of all the Parliament's forces in England (London, 1647 - this edition Oxford, 1854) p. 46.

21. The numbers on both sides at Naseby are contentious and have tended to be overstated. I am grateful to Martin Marix Evans who drew my attention to an article by David Blackmore, Counting the New Model Army (English Civil War Times No. 58, Partizan Press, 2003). Martin sums up the problems with, and possible solutions for, the numbers in his books Naseby, English Civil War (co-written) and Triumph of the New Model Army.

22. Gentles, op. cit. p. 61.

23. Gentles, op. cit. p. 140.

24. About 8,400 foot were destined for Ireland (along with 1,200 dragoons and 3,000 horse) leaving about 6,000 foot to be disbanded.

25. They also wanted volunteers exempted from future service; that widows and orphans of soldiers killed in action/service to receive a pension; and that soldiers be compensated for their material and/or financial losses and enough money be set aside for the short-term quartering of soldiers on disbandment.



cognizant that Holles had begun to muster a counter army from soldiers in the outlying garrisons and some loyal Presbyterians in the New Model. By the end of May 1647 matters were running out of control.

Amidst rumours that Parliament was attempting to seize the artillery at Oxford for use by this new force, the reaction was swift. While waiting to be embarked at Portsmouth (for service in Ireland), Rainsborough's regiment mutinied and set off for Oxford. A few days later Fairfax's own regiment mutinied and Cromwell ordered Cornet George Joyce (a junior officer in Fairfax's horse) to ride to Oxford in order to assist Rainsborough's men in safeguarding the artillery. From there Joyce was to take a body of 500 horse and to secure the King, who was being held at Holmby House. Cromwell had undoubtedly crossed a red line, but he was more than aware that the Presbyterians were openly preparing the London militia and, more alarmingly, had commenced negotiations with the French ambassadors and Scottish commissioners to 'bring another army into England'.<sup>26</sup>

Fairfax called for a General Council of the Army at the end of May. They drew up the Solemn Engagement (of the Army), which stipulated that the army would not disband until satisfactory arrangements had been put in place. A general rendezvous, for the wider army officer corps, was organised to take place at Newmarket. On 4-5 June, they gave their wholehearted assent to the Solemn Engagement. Five days later, in order to reinforce the point, the New Model Army marched south towards London, stopping at Royston, forty miles north of the capital. Two days later, with no indication of conciliation from Westminster, they continued south prompting panic in the city.

The Militia Committee ordered the London trained bands to mobilize on pain of death (only the Westminster regiment appeared in any strength) and shops were ordered closed. The New Model Army stopped short again, and Parliament requested a statement outlining all the army's demands and grievances. It resulted in the Declaration of the Army, which was the first attempt by the commanders of the New Model Army to set out political objectives. It was in the hands of Parliament's commissioners by 15 June and made worrying reading.

In short, the Declaration warned that erring members of Parliament should be brought to book, as well as erring kings; dangerous and explosive rhetoric. Its authorship was unmistakably Ireton's, and it was promptly followed by a charge, made in the name of the army, against eleven members of the House (including Holles and Stapleton). The House was powerless and, in a bid to buy time, agreed to look into both the declaration and the charges against some of its members. By July, Holles was losing his grip on matters. On 16 July, a number of Presbyterian members asked for leave of absence and effectively abandoned the struggle. Three days later, Fairfax was given overall command of all the forces in England and Wales.<sup>27</sup> On 29 July the New Model Army marched to London and, having received confirmation from the city's authorities that the gates would be opened, they entered the city a week later. The Lord Mayor and Alderman welcomed Fairfax at Hyde Park and the army passed through and on to their new quarters at Croydon. In theory at least, Parliament and the army were again one voice.

The army understandably saw itself as the champion of the people. It was a perception that had developed in mid 1647 when the army's grievances were echoed by a group of civilian writers and activists collectively known as the Levellers. The most influential Leveller was John Lilburne, a former Parliamentarian soldier, who in 1645 after refusing to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, had resigned his commission. The Levellers position was outlined in 'A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens', published by William Walwyn and Richard Overton in July 1646. It called for the dissolution of the present House of Commons, the abolition of the House of Lords, religious toleration, equality before the law and an ending of trade monopolies.

The central theme was revolutionary, purporting that an entirely new form of government, answerable to the people, should be constituted from the turmoil of the Civil War. The legitimate authority of Parliament's members was 'inferior' to 'theirs who chose them'.<sup>28</sup> It struck a chord with many of the officers in the army and on 28 October, the Council of the Army met at Putney to discuss '*The Case of the Armie and the Agreement of the People*'. The problem, from Cromwell's perspective was that the Putney Debates, as they became known, threatened not just Parliament but also the unity of the New Model Army itself. In November, a mutiny by two regiments in Hertfordshire was ruthlessly suppressed. Private Richard Arnold was executed by firing squad in order to set an uncompromising example.

The politicization of the New Model and how and why it merged as a political force, is a topic that remains subject to considerable debate among historians to this day. Parliament's failure to reach a settlement with Charles (the Newcastle propositions), the increasingly fractious relationship with the Scots and the intractable nature of the religious debate, diluted effective executive control and led to a wider power struggle for political power. The 1646 Remonstrance 'bred the first scab' on relations between Parliament and the army. Within nine months, the New Model Army had become a political player, not because of a radical composition within its ranks, but because of genuine, material grievances (arrears, wartime indemnity and sufferers' recompense) and Parliament's dogmatic rejection of their right of reply on the matter. However, the influence of the Leveller movement outside the capital was limited. Their success was, in the main, enabled and advanced, by the clear divisions between Parliament and the army. As such, the significance of the Leveller intervention in the New Model Army has probably been overplayed by historians.

The King too was actively engaged in exploiting those divisions. Charles's negotiation and 'Engagement' with the Scots, and his apparent complicity and willingness to allow a foreign invasion of English soil, was understandably too much for the army commanders and many MPs. The King could no longer be trusted and had forfeited his right to be regarded as 'anointed by God'. In January 1648, they pushed through Parliament a 'Vote of No Addresses', thereby ceasing all further negotiation with the monarch. This led to a considerable backlash in the provinces, with enraged gentry organizing local petitions calling for renewed attempts at reconciliation with the King and the disbandment of the army. By the Spring of 1648, the smouldering anger in the

provinces was about to reignite the civil struggle, reinforcing the limited impact and inspiration of the New Model Army outside the capital. These disturbances soon turned violent in Kent, Essex and South Wales. The New Model Army was deployed under Fairfax to Kent and Essex, while Cromwell set off to resolve matters in Wales. In July the Scottish army crossed into England and Cromwell headed north and defeated them in Lancashire. Militarily, the Second English Civil War was of little significance, but the subsequent events had considerable political significance to the New Model Army and its commanders.

In September 1648, once the New Model Army had restored what can best be described as 'enforced tranquillity', Parliament decided to rescind its vote of No Addresses and attempted to re-open negotiations with the King. The General Council of the Army responded with anger and issued 'The Remonstrance', outlining their determination to abandon any further treaty negotiations with King and their avowed intention of bringing him to trial as an enemy of the people. On 28 November, the General Council of the Army resolved to march into London. With Parliament still refusing to discuss The Remonstrance, and apparently intent on implementing the Treaty of Newport, the army commanders felt that they were left with no choice.<sup>29</sup> On 6 December, Colonel Thomas Pride and his New Model soldiers stood outside the entrance to St Stephen's Chapel and, as the House Commons convened that morning, they arrested 45 Members and excluded a further 186 whom the Army thought were unlikely to support its goal of pursuing and punishing the King. The army's intervention in politics was complete and the road was now open for the King's trial and the subsequent regicide.

#### Part 4:

##### *Oliver's army is here to stay – The legacy of the New Model Army.*

Within two weeks of the King's execution (30 January 1649) the Rump Parliament had, out of the vacuum, created the English Council of State. A month later the Council dispatched Cromwell with a large element of the New Model Army to Ireland. Cromwell's exploits, particularly at Drogheda, are yet another bloody chapter in the history of the two nations.<sup>30</sup> In May the following year, Cromwell left Ireton to sweep up matters in Ireland and he returned to England. His arrival (rather too conveniently for some) coincided with Fairfax's resignation as the Army commander. Following his instigation as the new Commander-in-Chief, he set off north to remove the threat of a second Scottish invasion. By July 1651, the Scots had been all but defeated. However, Charles II, who had been crowned King of the Scots at Scone on 1 January that year, had other ideas and escaped

with a large force led by William Hamilton, the second Duke, and headed south. Leaving General George Monck and 6,000 men to sweep up north of the border, Cromwell pursued the Scottish Engager Army and decisively defeated them at Worcester. The third and final English Civil War was over and on 12 September 1651, Cromwell arrived back in London to a hero's welcome.

The three British Kingdoms were now united into a single Commonwealth but the business of how to fill the constitutional vacuum soon led to widespread civil and military disillusionment. The army's disenchantment with the Rump Parliament, brought into being by the army in 1648, set in almost immediately. From late 1652 relations deteriorated rapidly. Blair Worden, in his excellent work on the English Civil Wars, concludes that there were two reasons for this.<sup>31</sup> Firstly, following the passage of the Navigation Acts in 1651, the Rump was entirely preoccupied with the naval war against the Dutch.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, they felt no less keenly that any other previous administration, that the army was a mere servant of Parliament. Such sentiments fanned the flames of mutual discontent. Eighteen months later, Cromwell marched New Model soldiers into the chamber, forced the Members out and dismissed Parliament. In Worden's words, 'the army having in 1649 destroyed one of the two sides in the civil war, had now dispatched the other'.<sup>33</sup> The second military coup was complete.

Later in 1653, as Lord General of the army and the nearest thing to legitimate power, Cromwell was installed as the nation's Lord Protector.

On 3 September 1658, the eighth anniversary of Cromwell's great victory at Dunbar, Old Ironsides died and was succeeded by his second son, Richard. A power struggle began almost immediately and came to a head the following April, when the ruling Army Council stripped Richard of supreme command of the armed forces and appointed General Charles Fleetwood to command of the army. However, Fleetwood was unable to resist the wider army demands for a return of the Commonwealth and he was ultimately obliged to reinstate the Rump Parliament, which Oliver Cromwell had dismissed in 1653.

The re-established Commonwealth Parliament was determined to break the power of the army Grandees and imposed new restrictions on Fleetwood's authority. General John Lambert now emerged as the dominant figure among the army leaders. But when he proposed reforms to regulate the power of the House of Commons, MPs demanded Lambert's dismissal. In October 1659, Lambert responded by marching troops to Westminster and expelling Parliament. For the third time in just over a decade, the army had executed a military coup d'état. As Worden concluded 'the army, knowing no way forward, went backward'.<sup>34</sup>

The army commanders had, however, misjudged the situation both within the country and within its own ranks. Expulsion of Parliament proved deeply unpopular. General

26. Rushworth, Historical collections. Containing the principal matters which happened from the meeting of the Parliament, November the 3rd 1640. to the end of the year 1644 (London, 1692), vol II, part VI, p. 517.

27. Gardiner, S. R., The History of the Great Civil War, four volumes (London, 1901), vol. III, p. 327.

28. Worden, B., The English Civil Wars 1640-1660 (London, 2009), p. 94.

29. The Treaty of Newport was a failed treaty between Parliament and the King, intended to bring an end to the hostilities of the English Civil War.

30. Two recent works by Tom Reilly Reilly, T., Cromwell, An Honourable Enemy ~ the untold story of the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland (Kerry, 1999) and Philip McKeiver, A New History of Cromwell's Irish Campaign (Didsbury, 2007), question many of the long-held views and accuracy of the claims about the atrocity.

31. Worden, op. cit. p. 123.

32. The Navigation Acts were a long series of English laws that developed, promoted, and regulated English ships, shipping, trade, and commerce between other countries and with its own colonies.

33. Worden, op. cit. p. 123.

34. Worden, op. cit. p. 147. Dunkirk had been ceded to England following the Treaty of Paris with France in 1657 when the Anglo-French military alliance defeated the Spanish in the Netherlands. In October 1662, Charles sold Dunkirk to Louis XIV for 5 million livres.



Monck, commander of the New Model Army stationed in Scotland, declared his support for Parliament and threatened to march south to uphold its authority. Lambert marched north with a force to confront Monck, but Lambert's men lacked the resolve to fight their brothers in arms and on 1 January 1660, at Parliament's invitation, Monck marched south from Coldstream on the Scottish border with a force of 5,000 foot and 2,000 horse. The last remnants of Lambert's army disintegrated before his advance. As he moved south, in order to forestall any possibility of a united and bloody opposition, Monck insisted that all the regiments stationed in London should be dispersed to garrisons around the country. This was achieved and on 3 February 1660, Monck's army entered and occupied London.


Although Monck overtly proclaimed his support for the Commonwealth Parliament, he secretly entered into negotiations with representatives of Charles Stuart during March 1660, resulting in the formulation of Charles' manifesto the Declaration of Breda. Parliament voted to dissolve itself on 16 March 1660 and to call new elections. On 25 April 1660, the new Parliament duly assembled and restoration of the Stuart monarch became inevitable. When the restored King landed at Dover on 25 May, Monck was the first to greet him as he came ashore. The entourage wound its way through Kent towards the capital and at Blackheath 30,000 men of the New Model Army were on parade. For some of the older fighters it must have been a difficult initiation. Amidst some ceremony they now swore allegiance as soldiers of the King. The significance of this gathering has tended to be overlooked. The event marked the birth of the British army and is commemorated annually at the Founder's Day parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

On Charles II's return in May 1660, three British armies were in existence. The core of the New Model Army was in and around London, with a Brigade in Dunkirk; the Cromwellian garrisons remained in Ireland; and Charles II's army of exiled Royalists and Irish were (largely) in the southern Netherlands. Parliament,

cognisant of the threat armed bodies posed, was determined to remove all of these standing armies. Unsurprisingly, the new King viewed the New Model Army with the deepest suspicion and set about dismantling it. By the end of 1660, with the exception of Monck's foot and horse regiments, this had been achieved at a huge cost of nearly one million pounds (about £80 million today). But the King needed protection and there was the matter of the necessity for coastal garrisons. By January of the following year, following another uprising by the Fifth Monarchists, Parliament was convinced of the need for four regiments to be retained. By the Royal Warrant of 26 January 1661, the British Army officially came into being. The regiments consisted of the King's Regiment of Horse Guards from the King's exiled Royalist horse (known later as the Life Guards); The King's Regiment of Horse, formed from Cromwell's old Life Guard of Horse (later known as the Royal Horse Guards or 'Blues'); the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards, formed from Lord Wentworth's exiled Royalist Foot Guards (known after Waterloo as the Grenadier Guards); and, Monck's own Regiment of Guards (known after his death as the Coldstream Guards).


The New Model Army was no more Oliver Cromwell's army than the Royal Navy, during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, was Nelson's navy. But in each case, the DNA of these men ran richly through the bodies of their respective fighting forces.

The political changes brought about by the New Model Army were no less notable than their feats upon the field of battle. Oliver's army was the driving force behind the revolutionary movement in 1648-49. It was the mainspring for Restoration and it formed the nucleus of the new standing army and the future British army. But the army's intervention in British politics has cast a long shadow. During the army's maturity, a deep-seated constitutional antipathy and political prejudice perpetuated, while for most of its existence it has endured public hostility, and is still to this day, perceived as a potential threat to civil liberty. Nevertheless, Oliver's army has undoubtedly come a long way.



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35. Mallinson, A., *The Making of the British Army, From the English Civil War to the War of Terror* (London, 2009) pp. 27-28.

36. Chandler, D., and Beckett, I., (eds), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford, 1994) p. 48.

37. *The Fifth Monarchists, or Fifth Monarchy Men, were an extreme Puritan sect active from 1649 to 1660 during the Commonwealth and early Restoration.*

38. Chandler and Beckett, op. cit. pp. 47-48 and Mallinson, op. cit. p. 30.



# Book Reviews



*From Hell, With Love - The untold story of a love that survived the horrors of the infamous Burma Railway*

Edited by Nigel Johnson-Hill

Published by Marion Hughes, 2023

Hardback, pp 224

ISBN 9781914414633

I confess that, having read John Tulloch's outstandingly researched book, *The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945* I was wary of even again reading any book which had prisoners of the Japanese as its subject. *From Hell with Love* has just such a subject. Both books are the stuff of nightmares and yet both are very different. *The Borneo Graveyard* has its origin in a rumour that slowly, and methodically was proven to be fact. *From Hell with Love* is an individual's contemporaneous account. Clifton Johnson-Hill wrote a diary which he managed to keep hidden from the Japanese throughout his imprisonment. It was written in tiny, crowded letters in an exercise book using a pencil. His son, Nigel Johnson-Hill was aware that his father had been a prisoner in Burma, and that his mother had been separated from him just before the fall of Singapore. However, it was only after the death of both

of his parents that the true horrors of that experience emerged. Nigel's sister-in-law managed to turn the almost illegible and faded handwriting into readable copy and this book, published without amendments, is the result.

The 'Editor', Nigel Johnson-Hill, first sets his Father's diary and his Mother's story in context by 'Setting the Scene' for the reader by giving a brief history of the British in Malaya, the rise of Japan and its military ambitions, its entry into the Second World War and the fall of Singapore. He then introduces his Father, Clifton, born in 1906 to middle-class parents in St Leonards-on-sea. Educated at Rugby School until the age of 16 when he rejected University for adventure in commerce in the Far East. After a somewhat bumpy start, 1936 found Clifton living in Singapore and the Area Representative for Gallahers, the tobacco company and enjoying the social and sporting life of a young and prosperous colonialist. It was on a trip to Hong Kong that he met the love interest of this tale.

'Pooh' as she was known was Joyce Winne Booth, born in 1909 in Hendon. She had gone to Hong Kong as the wife of a Royal Navy lieutenant. Whilst her husband

was at sea, their two-year-old son died of dysentery. The already shaky marriage did not survive this tragedy. It was while in Hong Kong and before her divorce that Pooh and Clifton met and began their romance. She accompanied Clifton on his travels around the world, being cited for adultery in her divorce in February 1938 before marrying him in August 1938 in Kuala Lumpur. In June 1939 their son Brian was borne in Singapore. With war clouds massing in Europe, life in the Far East continued to be "one long part y" with the attractive Pooh a popular celebrity. In mid-1941 Pooh became pregnant with their second son and with Japan making menacing threats it was decided that a safer place was now required. On 26 November, Pooh, Brian and unborn baby sailed for Sydney in Australia.

Without further introduction, the Diary starts, CHANGI PoW CAMP, 23 April 1942. Thursday. The first diary entry is a look back at the time from the departure of his family to the surrender of Singapore. Clifton was commissioned into the RA and manned various locations with his battery as the noose slowly tightened around the defenders. His account of Singapore's fall ends abruptly but it is known that he was not captured until 22 February 1942. There are no further entries until 20 June 1942. From here the diary entries run almost uninterrupted until 27 December 1942 when entries stop for eight weeks. The early entries will surprise the reader on how well informed the prisoners were of events like the Battle of Midway and the Russian victory at Kharkov. Also, that they could buy extra rations, have access to books and enjoy sport and some homemade entertainment. On 20 July he was appointed keeper of the Chickens. The production of eggs now becomes a dominant theme. Things are slowly deteriorating in Changi with first the heat and then the rain and the inevitable disease but there does not appear to be the brutality yet that so characterise the Japanese of this period. The Hell started on 24 October when he is loaded onto a railway waggon on route for Siam. Appalling conditions, forced marches and back breaking work are now the themes of the diary entries.

At this point the editor gives an account of his Mother in Australia. She had managed to send Clifton news of her safe arrival which he received 23 April 1943. He would not receive any news again until October 1943. Their son Alan was borne in Melbourne in April 1942.

Clifton's diary starts again on 19 February 1943 at Tongchan PoW

Camp. The diary details daily life on the construction of the infamous Burma Railway. As would be expected, it brings to life the personal experience of deprivation, starvation, sickness, brutality and death. The fascination of this account, if that is the right word, is that the reader gets to know at first hand the writer, his friends, thoughts and experiences. An added bonus is the period illustrations that adorn almost every page. Sketches, photographs, maps, and cartoons...some by Ronald Searl who later illustrated such magnificent works as the Nigel Molesworth books. It ends with the defeat of the Japanese, the reunification of the family and their return to England. This is a love story set in one of the most horrific periods of recent history. It is a tale of hope and survival. The original diary is now safely lodged in the Imperial War Museum. I commend this unique and excellently presented book, but a word of warning, the subject matter does not lend itself to a lie-by-the-pool summer holiday read.

By Lieutenant Colonel  
Andrew Gillespie



*The Keys of Death and Hell*

By Charles Cordell

Published by Myrmidon Books on 4 June 2024

Paperback, pp 307

ISBN: 978-1910183335

**T**he *Keys of Hell and Death* is Charles Cordell's second book; set in the First English Civil War, it is a page-turner but also convincing historical fiction. It follows on from his debut novel 'God's Vindictive Wrath' which was reviewed in the Spring 2023 edition of the RA Journal, and featured in an interview-based article published in the September 2022 edition of Gunner magazine. There is enough reference back to the first book of what is planned to be a series, to rapidly remind the reader of who is who, but this book stands very well on its own merits.

The book's background of the English Civil Wars saw the culmination of the effects of the European Renaissance on what had been a mediaeval society. Huge advances in art, literature, theology, political theory and warfare led to armed clashes between conservatives and progressives. Little-understood phenomena such as monetary inflation and population growth placed enormous stresses on the political and economic framework of the Kingdom. Existing and time-worn structures of church and state failed to cope with the strain of change as the two groups fought for their version of the solution, with the radical early Seventeenth Century changes in military tactics and organisation making for larger, more mobile armies and the rise of sieges and skirmishes over pitched battles.

History does not repeat itself, but it is remarkable that, in the Brexit Referendum of 2016, English regional voting patterns mirrored support for the King or Parliament in the Civil Wars. The more rural and conservative West and North voted leave and declared for the King, while the more urban, mercantile and liberal South and East voted remain and declared for Parliament. Echoes in the book of current events in Ukraine and Gaza should not be a surprise: war among a civil population; the majority of combatants very recently drawn from that population; and the continual questions of 'how long will this last?' and 'how will my family, business, or farm survive without me?'

Cordell has improved on his first book by fleshing out more fully the natures and motivations of the two main protagonists, the Reeve brothers, and introducing a wider cast of characters including foreigners and non-combatants. The religious and political background of the period is dropped in as little glimpses, revealing the mindset of the two brothers

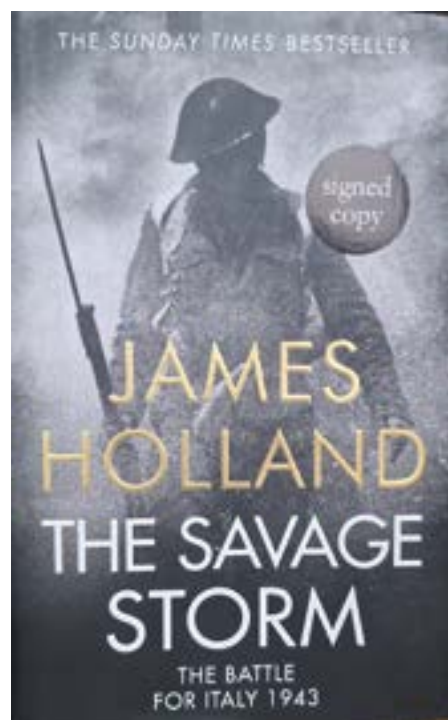
in particular, which to an extent fall into the '1066 and All That' tropes of 'right but repulsive' and 'wrong but romantic'. The hard and marginal lives of the majority of the population, even in the peacetime early 1640s, are sympathetically handled, as are the exigencies of war when members of both sides are forced to take from the poor what little they have.

The book has the excitement of three major West Country engagements, with the Battles of Lansdown Hill near Bath, Roundway Down near Devizes (RA Historical society members may remember a tour of the battlefield in May 2018, led by Colonel Nick Lipscombe) and the Siege of Bristol. However, the well-researched period detail and credible small-group dynamics among the citizen-soldiers keep it from being simply a good adventure story. As well as being an enjoyable and easily digestible history lesson, it throws up moral questions for the modern reader. While to a modern eye the non-Conformist religious zealotry of some Parliamentarians is at times hard to take seriously, the dilemmas of family divisions created by 'this war without an enemy' reveal the uniquely terrible nature of a civil war.

In summary, an excellent second novel from Charles Cordell, a more than worthy successor to *God's Vindictive Wrath*, and a pertinent history lesson wrapped up in an enthralling storyline, with much of relevance to our current age of uncertainty.

By Lieutenant Colonel  
Peter Thompson





*The Savage Storm*  
*The Battle for Italy 1943*  
 By James Holland  
 Published by Bantam  
 Hardback, pp565  
 ISBN 9781787636682

James Holland was a co-founder of the Chalke Valley History Festival in 2011, which has become the UK's leading history festival attended by 55,000 history buffs in 2023. He is also the author of numerous best-selling histories, most recently *Brothers in Arms* the story of the Sherwood Rangers war from D Day to VE Day and *Normandy '44*, D Day and the Battle for France.

*The Savage Storm* is an enormously well-researched and detailed account of the desperate campaign in Italy from the victory in Sicily in August 1943 until the approach to the Gustav Line in December 1943, before the much more widely remembered battle of Monte Casino that took place from January to May in 1944. The Allies expected to drive the Axis forces north and be in Rome by Christmas, but the anticipated victory became one of the most brutal campaigns of the war. Shipping and materiel were already being held back for the Normandy landings and the shortages experienced by the US 5th Army under General Mark Clark and the British or 'DUKES' (Dominions, UK and Empire) 8th Army under General Sir Bernard Montgomery slowed progress

considerably. In addition, the extreme terrain favoured the defence, and the ferocious heat experienced in September was eventually replaced by relentless rain, limiting the Allies air superiority and increasing the reliance on artillery. In the words of Generalmajor Baade, an old hand from the Afrikakorps days, the scale of Allied artillery and air power had been truly overwhelming. Baade reckoned it surpassed anything he had witnessed in North Africa. 'With Montgomery,' Kesselring told Lemelsen, commanding 15 Panzergrenadier-Division, 'you can count on that.'

*The Savage Storm* left a deep impression on me. I was horrified by the number of casualties on both sides, by the difficulties of the terrain, the terrible weather conditions and the devastation of historic towns and villages. Hollands paints a vivid picture of the struggle: the Germans ordered by Hitler to hold the Allies despite enormous losses, and the Allies struggling to bring up reinforcements and materiel with very limited naval resources whilst fighting the rugged terrain, churned up roads, destroyed bridges and extensive mining. Behind these problems, he describes the arguments over strategy within the German High Command and the Allied Leadership. In this latter case, the relationship between Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt, together with the tensions created by plans for Operation OVERLORD are all covered with objectivity and no nationalistic bias.

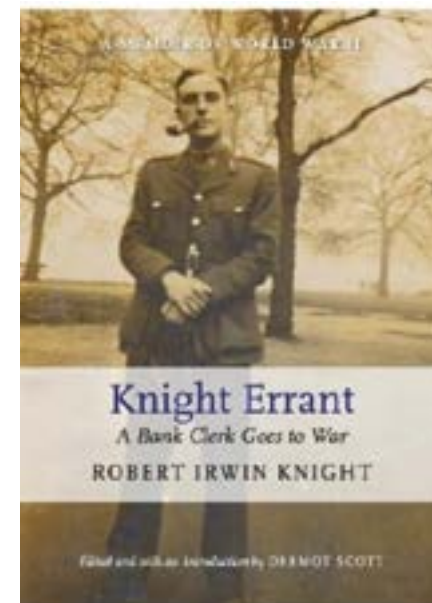
I also followed with great interest the negotiations leading to the Italian armistice at the beginning of September and the shameful part played by King Vittorio Emanuel and Marshall Badoglio, the Italian prime minister. I had not appreciated that Harold Macmillan played such a key role as British Resident Minister of State in the Mediterranean. He had a preference for the 'younger, more dynamic' General Alexander over General Wilson, whom he considered too old at 62, and too set in the Middle East mire for the C-in-C role. For his part, Alexander 'was entirely sanguine' to remain as Army Group commander. The GIGS, General Sir Alan Brooke, was incensed, recording in his diary that Macmillan had no understanding about the function of the Supreme Commander. 'Why must the PM consult everybody, except those who can give advice!' Meanwhile, Eisenhower wanted Alexander as his land commander for OVERLORD, whilst Brooke preferred Montgomery.

In addition to the land battle, the air war is described from both a strategic and from the individual airman's point of view. In August 1943 the Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean amounted to a staggering 4,570 aircraft from Northwest African Air Forces, Malta Air Command and Middle East Air Command. The Luftwaffe, heavily outnumbered, had lost 6,000 aircraft in that theatre alone. Because of these losses and the lack of fuel, fighter pilots were reaching the front with perhaps 120 hours in their logbooks. Allied pilots, by contrast, were reaching squadrons with as much as 350 hours under their belts. Luftwaffe pilots training was also restricted by the cloudy skies of Europe whereas the Allied pilots had the advantage of (mostly) clear Mediterranean weather.

By the end of 1943 the 5th Army was approaching the Gustav Line, south of Rome. The casualty figures stood at 29,716 dead, wounded and missing since the landing at Salerno, the equivalent of two entire divisions, and more than three division's worth of infantry. Eighth Army, north of Ortona on the Adriatic Coast, had lost 6,543 men in December alone and as similar figure to Fifth Army since September. The German 10 Armeekorps lost 13,362 men in December. Holland points out that by the beginning of 1944, the Italian campaign still had fifteen very long months to run until the German forces in Italy were the first to surrender unconditionally on 2 May 1945. Only by looking at the bloody, brutal battle of those first months, and the descent into the awful attrition does the rest of this long war make sense whilst emphasising the deadly power of artillery to overcome defensive superiority.

There are comprehensive maps at the front of the book, with annotated topographic terrain photographs, a list of the major personalities and their headshots and numerous photographs throughout the text. The appendices include a timeline of events, the order of battle for the Allied and Axis Armies as well as comprehensive notes, selected sources and an excellent index.

### By Major Malcolm Dix



*Knight Errant*  
*A Bank Clerk Goes to War*  
 By Robert Irwin Knight  
 Edited by Dermot Scott  
 Published by Blackwell's  
 Paperback, pp 116  
 ISBN 9781399966061

Written by the author Robert Irwin Knight some 40 years after the Second World War, his intention was to produce a short memoir that recorded the part that he played in the war. His intended audience were his nephews and nieces. Subsequently, some 20 years after his death, his family decided on a wider circulation which was edited by Dermot Scott and published in its current form in 2023.

The memoir, just 116 pages, is a very well written and strangely compelling read. The author, who post war, attended Trinity College Dublin gaining a First in modern languages, became a much respected and well remembered English teacher at Banbridge Academy in County Down and eventually its Vice Principal. This academic background shines through in his writing, as does his humour, powers of observation and his ability to describe events that occurred and individuals he served with or came across.

The memoir covers four distinct stages of his war service in first, 8 HAA (Belfast) Regt RA (SR) (Supplementary Reserve) formed in Belfast just prior to the outbreak of war, and later in 60 HAA (County of London) Regt RA (TA). In the First section of his memoir, he describes his 'Joining Up' in May 1939 until his deployment to France in December 1939 having risen from Gnr to an inexperienced SNCO in that brief period. In the Second

part, he covers the Phoney War, the 'Retreat' and his evacuation from France. The Third part covers his war in England, his training and commissioning as an officer, the Anti-Aircraft battle he was involved in, along with the subsequent training and preparation for the invasion of Europe. The Fourth and final section covers the invasion of Normandy his unit's fight through France, Belgium, Brussels, the Netherlands, Nijmegen and the Rhine, and then the immediate occupation of Germany on cessation of hostilities.

In his opening section 'Joining Up' there are some uncanny parallels to the world situation today. It was the Munich crisis in September 1938 and Chamberlain's 'peace with honour / peace in our time' speech, that set in motion his decision to voluntarily join the Army in May 1939 along with his two brothers, one RA and the other Infantry (both survived the war). That, and "experiencing a feeling of shame that my country had been forced to act so dishonourably" in abandoning the Czech people. There was no hesitation on his or other Ulstermen's part joining in large numbers (unlike the recent survey indicating that a mere 9% of today's fighting age men and women were prepared to join up now to rebuild the Army or other Forces in the face of the current and similar threat). A further memory in his initial service was the lack of weapons. His regiment was issued with a single 3 inch AA Gun and some basic predictors for training and his Bty were loaned just 5 rifles by his RHQ and these for the sole purpose of the Bty guard paying compliments to an inspecting officer before being withdrawn back into RHQ. A similar lack of equipment may be reflected under today's scenario. However, more humorous activities and trials are well remembered and recorded.

His recollections of being in France, initially during the more peaceful period of the 'Phoney War' with the chances to savour the delights of the French towns, followed by the sudden arrival of German armour (not seen until 500 yards away), the reality of war brought home by their first casualties, the endless streams of pitiful refugees and his Bty's escape to Dunkirk and eventual evacuation by a RN destroyer are factually told and well described. The confusion of the withdrawal across France to Dunkirk and the inference that his Regt was no longer a cohesive body with any existing chain of command nor administrative or fighting organisation, is factually described.

Having reached England, he describes the reception of the survivors, the shunting of them through the rail system and their eventual arrival at tented camps set up in Larkhill. Eventually the mass of RA

'survivors' are almost left to their own devices to locate the kernel of their former Regts and to make their way back to them wherever they be in the country. His memoir continues to record events from 1940-1944 which includes humorous accounts of his training and commissioning as a subaltern, his posting subsequently to 60 HAA (City of London) Regt RA (TA) and its anti-aircraft deployments across England from Coventry, Glasgow and London during the Blitz; again are all very well described. His unit's preparations for the invasion of Normandy (not that he knew that location at the time) are also covered.

Finally, the memoir covers the landing of his Regt in Normandy on D+16 and its involvement in the fighting around Caen where, due to local Allied air superiority over the area, his Regt's 3.7 inch AA Guns were used in the direct fire role, augmenting field artillery numbers. His unit continued to support operations up towards Brussels, Antwerp, Nijmegen (where again his 3.7s were used in the direct fire role), then onward eventually through Arnhem, Apeldoorn and ending the war in Osnabruck. With a degree perhaps of relish, he describes the immediate period of occupation post hostilities and a feeling that victory, in no small measure, overrode the shameful defeats experienced by him in 1940. Despite this and despite his task to exercise authority over the civil population and the strict 'non-fraternisation' orders he was under, he tempered this order with an understanding that in some cases, help was needed for civilians, and this he arranges. The closing section then covers his demobilisation and return to civilian life and the start of a career in Academia.

This memoir is not written by a senior officer of renown or by a professional soldier, nor one who fought in any key battle, nor one who conducted himself, by his own declaration, with gallantry in any particular action. Neither does it set out to argue the pros or cons of any particular tactical action. It is, though, a very readable account of a man who voluntarily joins the Army pre-hostilities, aware of the threat to the nation. He, like tens of thousands, makes up the bulk of the Army with little or no control over his personal destiny but, who does his duty to the best of his ability. His keen observations of his fellow volunteers and the comradeship he encounters shines throughout and the whole, makes for a very pleasant read.

### By Major Bob Begbie



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Nigel,

I was just reading and enjoying the RA Journal Autumn 23.

A smashing read and very well published.

I am very grateful that I still receive such a quality journal.

I hope you are well and thriving.

All the very best,

James

Brigadier James P Cook OBE PhD | Head Personnel Strategy

Army Headquarters

### Editor's Note:

This letter was an email. Brigadier James Cook was a talented fly half and played for the Gunners when I was Chairman RARFC. Currently he is Chairman of the ARU (Army Rugby Union) and Council Member representing the Army Rugby Union & Board Member of the RFU (Rugby Football Union).

# Letters and Submissions

The correspondence page of any professional journal is extremely important allowing, as it does, readers to air their views, comment on articles and correct any mistakes. The Editor therefore invites letters and emails from readers. A guide on the submission of letters and articles is given below.

## Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes correspondence from readers on articles or book reviews and other matters arising from discussions in The Journal of the Royal Artillery.

Please mark all letters for the attention of the Editor, and send either by email to: RARHQ-RAJ@artycen.ra.mod.uk or by post to: The Journal of the Royal Artillery, RHQ RA, Royal Artillery Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury SP4 8QT.

Letters should be no more than 700 words.

Publication in the Journal is at the discretion of the Editor. Offensive or anonymous letters will not be considered.

## Submissions

The Editor invites the submission of unpublished manuscripts on all topics related to national and international defence and to the organisation, application and future development of artillery in all its forms, and military history with an artillery slant. Published articles will become the copyright of the RAI.

Guidelines for submissions are:

- ✘ Articles should be the author's original work. Where the work of other authors is quoted this must be clearly stipulated either within the text or as an endnote.
- ✘ Articles should be relevant to the Journal's defence and artillery focus.
- ✘ Submissions should be between 2,000 and 6,000 words and should be fully referenced by endnotes. Responsibility for factual accuracy lies with the author.

- ✘ Pictures, tables or artwork should be supplied separately in high-resolution (minimum 300dpi) and not embedded in the text. Authors must ensure they have permission to use any supplied imagery. If asked, the Editor may be able to help with copyright issues.
- ✘ Submissions should be sent electronically by email as Microsoft Word files. Please include a brief biography and contact details and send to: RARHQ-RAJ@artycen.ra.mod.uk
- ✘ If accepted for publication articles will be edited to meet the Journal's house style. The Editor reserves the right to make alterations for space and clarity.
- ✘ Anonymous articles will be accepted under a pen name, but the author must disclose his or her identity, in confidence, to the Editor.
- ✘ Authors are not paid. However, they will receive complimentary copies of the issue in which they are published.

## Book Reviews

The Editor welcomes the submission of unpublished reviews of important or useful new books on all aspects of defence and artillery. Reviews should be submitted in line with the guidelines for articles above and should be between 700 to 1,000 words. Wherever possible a high resolution picture of the book's cover should be submitted, as should details of the publisher and where it can be purchased. If you would like to suggest yourself as a reviewer for a newly published book please contact the Editor. Book reviewers are not paid, but where appropriate will be allowed to keep the copy of any book they are sent.

# Royal Artillery Historical Society 2024 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
Wednesday 24 April 2024 1045 hrs	April Lecture Day  Newcome Hall, Larkhill SP4 8QT  RA Mess: Lunch and AGM	A Head Ache and a Heart Ache: the Indian Army at Partition  The Experiences of a Gunner War and Military Artist  Annual General Meeting	Lt Col Mike Tickner  Mr David Rowlands  Secretary	Wednesday 10 April	To be Notified
Date to be notified	Summer Visit, RMA Sandhurst	RMA Sandhurst, the RMA Woolwich Heritage, and the Indian Army Collection	Dr Sebastian Puncher and Richard Anderson	To be Notified	To be Notified
Date to be notified	Summer Webinar	Seige of Arcot 1751 and Battle of Plassey 1757	36 (Arcot 1751) Battery and 9 (Plassey) Battery	To be Notified	Nil
Friday 27 to Sunday 29 September	History Field Tour, Portsmouth	Defending Portsmouth	Col Tim Ventham  Prospectus available from Secretary	See Prospectus	See Prospectus
Friday 25 October	Shrapnel Day Lectures and Buffet Lunch Newcome Hall, Larkhill SP4 8QT	Addiscombe: The East India Company Officer Academy  The Armies of the East India Company  The Indian Campaigns of Lord Roberts VC  The Indian Artillery in the Great War	Ms Kate Birbeck  Dr Rosie Lewellyn-Jones  Dr Rodney Atwood  Dr Spencer Jones	Friday 11 October	To be Notified
Tuesday 26 November at 1930 hrs	Winter Webinar	The Indian Army and the Bangladesh Liberation War	Col Michael Phillips	Friday 22 November	Nil

Please book places with the RA Historical Society Secretary by the closing date shown:  
Lt Col R S (Dick) Clayton, 10 Harnwood Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 8DD

E Mail: [richard.clayton312@gmail.com](mailto:richard.clayton312@gmail.com)



