



SEPTEMBER 2024



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The Larkhill-based team that supplies you Gunner.

Royal Artillery Media and Communications Director: Captain James Billingham RA

Creative Editor: Miss Cheryl Bolla can be reached on: (Mil) 94322 5652 (Civ) 01980 84 5652

Subscriptions Manager: post vacant (Mil) 94322 2204 (Civ) 01980 63 4204

Gunner Rules

Guidance on Submissions

We welcome articles and pictures on all Regimental matters these articles must be submitted through the chain of command, in accordance with the Gunner content framework.

Articles must be written in Microsoft Word. Photographs must be original JPEGs; at the highest resolution; (not embedded in the article).

When using abbreviations in an article, please write the abbreviation in full, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

Articles must be received by the 15th day of the month preceding the magazines publication. Please send to RARHQ-Publications@mod.gov.uk

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GUNNER



SEPTEMBER 2024

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4 Regt RA
Front cover photo taken by
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Mr James Billingham
Royal Artillery Media and Communications Director

Following the conclusion of my eight years of Regular Service in the Royal Artillery in May 2023, I undertook the role of Media and Communications Director at Regimental Headquarters Royal Artillery in Larkhill. The post had been gapped since May 2020 and it was clear a lot of modernisation and engagement was required to bring the Royal Artillery into the modern era in the comms space.

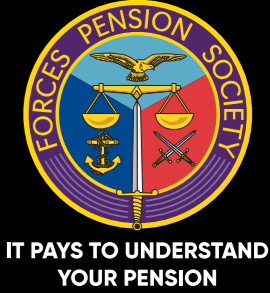
Having previously been the subject of a media consultancy review by Kaija Larke, areas for improvement were identified which set the start point as we moved forward. The creation of a LinkedIn page as well as bringing all of our social media handles in line began the process of professionalising our social media channels, as well as increasing our engagement both pan-Gunners and pan-Army. We invested in some equipment and apps to produce higher quality content as well. Utilising the recently selected #FINDandSTRIKE hashtag, we also undertook several other campaigns, including the particularly popular #RemembRance campaign which we will repeat this year. For the Royal Artillery Gold Cup 2024, we worked alongside The Jockey Club, Sandown Park and RaceDay TV, as well as leading media personalities within the equitation industry, to generate one of the largest covered RA Gold Cups to date. We intend to build on this success in the new year with the 2025 Gunner Reunion.

As I'm sure many of you have seen, we have also been hard at work at the 'user end', with the creation of a new Royal Artillery website (www.thegunners.org.uk) and also our own app 'Gunner Net'. The new website, which previously existed to just support the Royal Artillery Association, is now focussed on supporting the entire Gunner Family: cadets, serving, retired and their families. It features obituaries, recent news and upcoming events and is a resource for all to use. Gunner Net is designed as a one stop shop for the whole Gunner Family, providing ease of access and signposting to the Regimental medical and welfare support network. It also provides signposting to a multitude of charities and supporting agencies for serving and retired personnel if they should require such help. Both of these are now live. They remain ever changing and evolving products and we always welcome input and feedback from our users to improve them as much as we can – these products exist to support you, so your feedback is key so we can better help you.

We are always looking to adapt and modernise and constantly improve in the communications space – we always welcome new ideas so please don't hesitate to get in contact!



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Royal Artillery soldiers reburied in France

“The sun shining down on the green fields of France, The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance, The trenches have vanished long under the plough, no gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now.....”



Gunner Charles Lightfoot (far-left) at a firing camp in Exeter in 1912

Poignant and moving words which beautifully described the scene at the Vendresse British Cemetery near Reims, France on the 12th of June 2024. There, at a small peaceful spot on a hill above the River Aisne, members of 26 Regiment Royal Artillery had the honour of laying two World War II Royal Artillery soldiers to rest. In the presence of members of the soldiers' families, both were buried with full military honours, almost 110 years after they were killed in the opening months of the War.

Discovery

In August 2015, French archaeologists working in caves near Chassemy found an inscription on a cave wall:

15th Sept 1914, Here lies Sjt Smith and 3 Gunners, 29 Battery RFA



Further investigation led to the discovery of human remains as well as pieces of clothing and equipment that confirmed



the partial remains were those of British soldiers. Genealogy and DNA testing confirmed the identity of two soldiers – Serjeant John Smith and Gunner Charles Lightfoot, members of 29 Battery, 42nd Brigade Royal Field Artillery.

The March to The Aisne

The men of 29 Battery were mobilised as part of the British Expeditionary Force on the outbreak of World War I. Stationed in Bulford, they arrived in France on the 19th of August 1914 and began the march towards Mons where they fought in the first major action for the British of the War. Following the Great Retreat towards Paris, the French and British checked the German advance at the Battle of the Marne, and then went on the offensive at the First Battle of the Aisne on the 13th of September.

On that day, the men of 29 Battery marched from Cerseuil and halted North of the village of Braine. They were heavily shelled and afterwards moved position shortly afterwards. The Brigade War Diary make no mention of casualties, but other records show that 29 Battery lost four men between 13 and 14 September. Evidence shows that a gun position was hit by a shell on 13 September, and this killed at least two – Serjeant Smith and Gunner Lightfoot – and the other two men who died that day were Gunner Adams and Gunner Blyth.

The bodies of all four were recovered from the battlefield and hastily buried in a complex of caves and quarries to the South of the gun position. Following the War, like hundreds of thousands of others across France and Belgium, the bodies buried in that cave were recovered, and each reburied as “A Soldier of the Great War – Known

unto God”. In August 2015, the remains of Serjeant Smith and Gunner Lightfoot were found and identified meaning they could be properly laid to rest.



Serjeant John Smith

The Service

26 Regiment was honoured to be asked to provide the burial and firing parties for the reburial ceremony. Under the watchful eye of the Royal Artillery Battery Sergeant Major, WO2 Kinsey and the expert tutelage of WO2 Gates from 14 Regiment RA, soldiers and officers from 55 (The Residency) Headquarters Battery, 132 Battery (The Bengal Rocket Troop) and 176 (Abu Klea) Battery underwent an intense week of rehearsals in Larkhill prior to departing for France.

Further full dress rehearsals followed at the cemetery, with anticipation growing at



the news that members of all four soldiers' families would be in attendance, including the Granddaughter of Gunner Lightfoot. The desire to deliver the absolute best performance possible was palpable across all involved, and the significance and honour of the occasion was felt by everyone.



The coffin being guarded by members of 26 Regiment RA prior to the reburial

On the day of the ceremony, despite the nerves and the obvious emotion involved, everybody taking part delivered an exemplary performance. The aching limbs and calloused hands from the hours of practice were forgotten in one last superlative effort befitting of the importance of the moment. As the coffin was finally lowered into the ground and with the families of those being laid to rest sat in the shade of a leafy silver birch, the only sounds were the birds in the nearby woods and the crack of the firing party's rifles echoing around the hillside.

The service was conducted by Reverend Roger Grafton, Chaplain to 14 Regiment Royal Artillery who said:

"I am so excited to have been asked to take part in this ceremony at Vendresse. Last year I was asked to be involved in the burial of an unknown soldier at the Guard's Cemetery in Lesboeuufs, so to be invited to

take part again so quickly after that is a real honour. I have served with the Royal Artillery for the last 10 years as a chaplain, and one of the Gunners' straplines is "Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner". To be able to lay two of our own to rest today after so many years is a particular privilege."



The burial and firing parties with members of the families of the fallen



Later at a small reception in a local restaurant, the families of Serjeant Smith and Gunner Lightfoot were presented with Union Flags by members of the Regiment and expressed their gratitude and huge appreciation to all those taking part. It was a touching moment at the end of a very moving day.

Exploring the Past

Although limited in duration, being part of this event allowed members of 26 Regiment to conduct a short Battlefield Study. This explored the journey the men of 29 Battery took in August and September 1914, the First Battle of the Aisne, focussing on the stories of the people behind the names and numbers.

What became apparent was there were many similarities between those lying at rest in that small cemetery and those taking part in the reburial. Be it their ages, the roles and ranks they held, where they were stationed, trained, and lived, the details of their lives and their final weeks of August and September 1914 really brought home the importance of remembering those who came before us.



Maj Wiggins delivering the Battlefield Study at Vendresse British Cemetery

In preparation for the burial when conducting research on Serjeant Smith and Gunner Lightfoot, it was discovered that there were three soldiers buried in the same cemetery who belonged to 22 Battery, 34th Brigade RFA – the direct antecedent to the current 55 Battery.

They were the Battery Commander, Maj Hugh Wynter, Lt John Wissman, and Cpl Albert Moore. All three had been killed on the 15th of September 1914, not far from where Sjt Smith and Gnr Lightfoot fought and died. The 34th Brigade War Diary entry for that day reads:

"15th September – 'Same position hit, enemy's fire increased, they undoubtedly had the range and the accuracy – then heavy howitzer firing shell 150-200 rounds. 'A' gun knocked out by direct hit, Commanding Officer (Maj Wynter) killed, also Lt Wissman, a number of casualties amongst the NCO's and men – very heavy destruction amongst horses."

In a final poignant moment, wreaths were laid by the Battery Commander of 55 Battery, Maj Wiggins, for Maj Wynter, Lt Kelway-Cocks for Lt Wissman and Gnr Booth for Cpl Moore.



Wreaths laid in memory of the members of 22 Battery RFA, now 55 (The Residency Headquarters Battery)

by Major C A Wiggins RA and Lieutenant J Kelway-Cocks RA
26th Regiment Royal Artillery

26 Regiment would like to express its gratitude to RA RHQ for the opportunity to take part in such an important and special event. It was an honour and a privilege – one which will live long in the memory of all those who took part.

Thanks as well go to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) for their support, expert guidance and professionalism which allowed us to participate in this event.



Entering into Suspended Animation 1984-2024



Mon 24 Jun 24 saw the culmination of 2 years work to bring together a 3-day event for the veterans of 25 Field Regiment RA in order to commemorate and celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Regiment being placed into suspended animation in April 1984. For those unaware this came about from the Master Gunner's committee choosing the best gun Regiment of its day to stand aside in order to reintroduce 3 RHA back into the Order of Battle.

In order for this to be a fitting tribute to the tenacity and longevity of these aging warriors a very generous benefactor underwrote accommodation in two very smart central Newcastle Hotels (The County and the Vermont) with a deal for those who wished to pay up over a period of two years – thereby giving everyone the

opportunity to enjoy the 3-day event in very comfortable surroundings.

Registration commenced on the evening of Mon 24 Jun in the Bridge Hotel to issue name cards and very smart programmes of events and an opportunity to catch up over some liquid refreshments. Tue 25 Jun 24 the Regiment assembled on the Gateshead Millenium footbridge (just in front the world-famous Tyne Bridge) from which Steve Russell took some amazing drone photos. This was followed by afternoon tea for the ladies in the Vermont Hotel and a Hog Roast for the gentlemen in the Bridge Hotel. Wed 26 Jun members had a free morning then at 1500 hrs we held a very poignant memorial Service in Newcastle's St Nicholas Cathedral. This was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear,



Ms Lucy Winskell OBE representing the King and Major General RM Clements CBE representing the wider Gunner community. The Service was conducted by The Venerable Stephen Robins CB – Chaplain to the Royal Artillery and concelebrated with Canon Peter Dobson from the Cathedral. We were also fortunate to be joined by the standard bearers and standards of 1st Tynemouth Volunteer Artillery RAA Branch, Tyneside Scottish RAA Branch and Tyneside RAA Branch representing the wider local Gunner Community. You can watch the whole service on YouTube by searching for "Newcastle Cathedral YouTube

channel" then scroll down until you see the sunset gun. An edited version can be found at the following link: https://youtu.be/1l0awk9J5pc?si=TU90x1_hbXe0E9Mx (copy and paste this into your internet web browser). That evening the Regiment held a commemoration/celebratory party in the Newcastle Labour Club and a rather good time was had by all.

Feedback from veteran members indicate that the whole 3 days were a resounding success. A real testament to the camaraderie, esprit de corps and love of these ever-deprecating band of brothers.





A Memorable Reunion Weekend



The Artillery Clerks' Association followed up last year's hugely successful 25th Anniversary Reunion with yet another memorable weekend in Larkhill from 21st to 23rd June 2024.

This year, 40 members, partners, and guests gathered for a traditional regimental dinner at the RA WOs' and Sgts' Mess. Attendees travelled to Larkhill from far and wide, including Malta, Germany, France, and even Aberdeen for this occasion.

The Association Chairman welcomed the Guests of Honour, Brigadier Mark Pountain CBE, Colonel Commandant Veterans and Chairman Royal Artillery Association, and the newly appointed Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, WO1 (RASM) James Lightfoot. The Association's affiliated battery, 34 (Seringapatam) Battery, was represented by SSgt Diamond.

Of particular pride and interest to the Association this year was the presence of Mrs Traceylee Cowan and Mrs Janet Brown, widows of two of the Association's most esteemed former members. Both ladies wanted to see for themselves their late husbands' names inscribed in perpetuity

on the Association Silver Centrepiece, a touching moment that resonated deeply with all present.

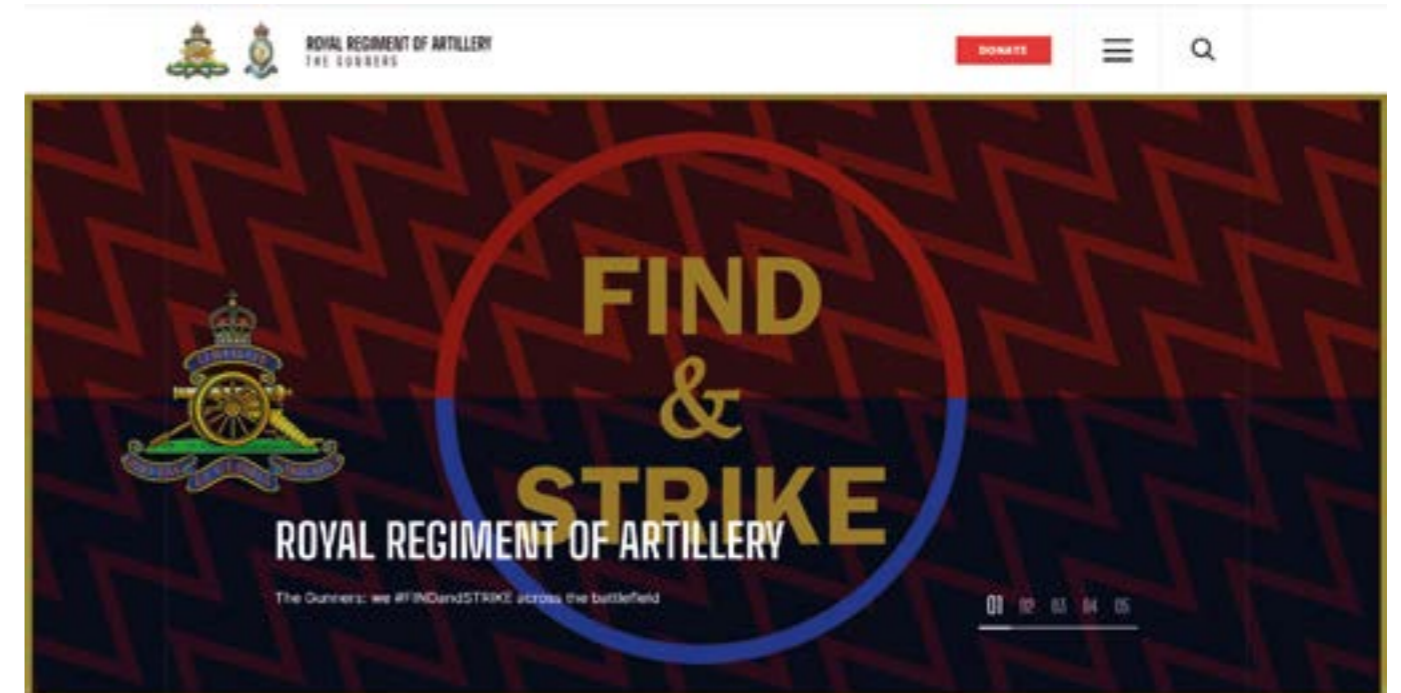
The music during dinner, included the much-appreciated Post Horn Gallop, provided by The Wiltshire Police Band. After dinner, the Loyal Toast, toasts to the Ladies and Absent Friends, thank-yous, and speeches led to the most eagerly anticipated part of the evening around the bar.

The atmosphere was filled with camaraderie as old friends reconnected and new memories were made. The dinner was not only a celebration of our shared service as Artillery Clerks but also an opportunity to support ongoing initiatives. One such initiative, the Malta Heritage Project under the leadership of the Chairman, benefited greatly from the generosity of those in attendance. The appeal raised a handsome sum of £123, contributing to the project's costs.

The weekend was a great success, underscoring the enduring spirit and fellowship. We look forward to many more reunions in the years to come - 2025 will see us gathering again for our 90th Reunion weekend!!



New Gunners Website Launched!



Regimental Headquarters Royal Artillery are pleased to announce the launch of the new Royal Artillery Website: using the existing domain at www.thegunners.org.uk. The new website, which previously existed to just support the Royal Artillery Association, is now focussed on supporting the entire Gunner Family: cadets, serving, retired and their families.

Working alongside Wiltshire based company Giant Peach, the entire website has been redesigned and rebuilt to better service the Gunner Family. We have areas for each regiment of the Royal Artillery with links to social media channels and the British Army website. There is also an updated and modernised RAA Branch Finder for those who've recently left or are looking to reconnect with the Gunner Family later down the line. Our Regimental Engagement Teams are working hard to recruit into the Royal Artillery and we have an area of the website allocated to supporting their efforts and directing potential recruits towards us.

In terms of modernising how we do business, we have moved all RHQ RA events

to an online system provided by Ticket Tailor: this currently includes the upcoming Alanbrooke Lunch and seating for the Remembrance Service at Hyde Park Corner. Not only does this ease the logistical burden on RHQ, it is now the norm for any modern business which the Royal Artillery prides itself on being. There will also be news updates posted on the website alongside a Last Post section, which will allow obituaries to be posted and messages left for their families and loved ones. The Gunner and the Royal Artillery Journal will remain available as electronic copies, alongside some favourites such as the Gunner Lottery too.

As with many of our current projects, the new website does not exist alone – it is designed to support and strengthen other areas, such as Gunner Net, Social Media, Gunner and the RAA Newsletter. These are all designed to serve the Gunner Family and, as always, we welcome any feedback or ideas on ways these could be improved to best support the intended user-you!



Life in Tampin



In 1960 my father, Major RD Anderson [Andy], was the IG to Western Command and based in Chester. In June of 1960 he collected my sister and me from school and announced that we were moving to a place called Tampin in Malaya. We both cheered with delight and then asked, "where is Malaya?" He was posted as the BC of 12 Minden Battery, equipped with 5.5 guns. We sailed from Southampton on the 3 August 1960 on the troop ship Oxfordshire with the whole Regiment and their families. It was a real adventure and we arrived in Singapore 6 weeks later. The men went straight to Tampin, and after a short stay in Singapore the families moved up in locally hired buses. As we got off the returning families got on and returned to Singapore to catch the Oxfordshire.

The school had 4 classrooms and a small church next door. The main welfare facility was the MI Room which was manned by the Regimental doctor and there were no beds, so if anyone fell ill they had to be moved to Seremban, about 40 miles away. What I remember most about the MI room was that one wall was covered in shelves that displayed large bottles with dead snakes in them. The idea was that if you were bitten, and many were, you could point to the bottle that contained the same snake and the doctor would know what antidote to give you. This was all fine providing you were not unconscious by the time they got you to the MI room!

There were no dental facilities and when I had raging toothache I was sent into Tampin where the drill was run from the dentist's son on a fixed bicycle. My lasting



memory was of the 'dentist' getting very irate with his young son because he wasn't peddling fast enough! It was basic but it worked, and I was very grateful for the treatment.

We were still in the time of the Malayan Emergency, so we had soldiers patrolling around the quarters and were collected for school in a Bedford 3 tonner with an armed escort. The Regiment was constantly preparing and deploying within the local States and also attending firing camps at Asahan ranges. I was lucky enough to join my father on the ranges when they were live firing the guns. They had an Officers' Mess and a Sergeants' Mess on the gun position, and both had draught beer! The command post was a converted 3 tonner which had sides that lifted and produced a full view of the gun position and also acted as sunscreens. It was all very spacious and civilised and nothing like what I was to experience inside a 432 with 3 signallers, a TARA Sergeant, and a FACE Operator a few years later.

What is interesting with today's children is that in Tampin we had nothing. There was no TV, no radio, no telephone, no youth club, no McDonald's and certainly no electronic games. We had to make our own fun throughout the days and the evenings. We did have parties and there was a very active drama club which constantly put on productions which we loved to attend. We had the cinema and the films changed every 3 days so that was a real treat each week unless, it was an X rated film. I always remember that two members of the fire picket had reserved seats in the Cinema, and they

were in uniform and officially on duty to keep order if the soldiers got out of hand. That must have been a popular duty.

Both the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes were men only and each had a ladies room where we would sit around with our mothers after church or a curry lunch. The latter was usually produced by the local Indian contractor and was a splendid affair. We were also fortunate to be invited by the rubber planters from Dunlop to join their Club which was about a 30 minute drive from Tampin. There was one tennis court and a lovely swimming pool which we all adored. The club house had a simple bar and a snooker room into which children were not allowed. The social life was very good and after work nearly all the officers and their families descended on the Club. My mother was a good tennis player, played every day and was the person to beat.

Our school was 3 wooden buildings with one side open and a covered walkway between huts. This was needed as when the monsoon came the rain was really heavy and if you were caught outside you were soaked in a matter of seconds. It did not really matter as the monsoon rain came and went very quickly so you would dry off very quickly. I can fondly remember the smell of the undergrowth after it had rained, and everything looked new and clean. Around all the barracks and quarters were monsoon drains. These were usually concrete drains about 18 inches deep and they quickly moved the huge amounts of water into a central tank which was kept for supplying the tender in case of fire. When I say tender,



it was a trailer on wooden wheels with some standpipes and hoses and not a lot else. The soldiers appointed as fire picket would parade in the evening and the orderly officer would phone through a make-believe fire and then time the fire picket for their arrival at the scene. It was often a wonderful comedy as soldiers in hob nail boots were trying to hang onto an out of control two wheeled cart with hoses trailing along and others detailed off to pick up whatever had flown off at the corner and catch them up!

The cinema was our favoured place. The two soldiers on duty kept the audience in check and stood by to reprimand anyone who did not stand for the national anthem. They suffered in the heat in uniform but it was not the heat that I remember most, rather the cigarette smoke. Almost everyone smoked and the projector would highlight the smoke and it was like a London fog. As was normal in those days there was only one projector so when the spool had ended the lights went up and there was a pause while the new spool was fitted. This usually brought about boos and shouting and foul language which of course was forbidden, especially as there were always kids present. The picket was supposed to stop this and throw anyone out who indulged in bad language. This however normally created a fight and we as kids would cheer and shout encouragement. It was as much fun as the film! The poor soldier would be dragged off to the guard room for a night in the cells to cool off.

The teachers at our school were young ladies who were part of BFES [British Forces Education Service] and

had volunteered for overseas service. They were given 'officer status' and lived in an annex attached to the officers' mess. They were the same as wives in that they were not allowed into the main part of the Mess but had to stick to the ladies' ante room, and there were many romances and several weddings resulting from this close connection. The social life on the 'patch' [the area where officers lived] was always very active and the conversation at one party would normally be about the party the previous night.

Food was always interesting as most of what we ate in the UK was not available in Malaya. There was a lot of fresh fruit in Tampin market and I would often go with Mena, our amah, and visit the many stalls selling a wonderful variety of things that I had never seen before. She would take a fruit off the stall, break it open and offer me whatever it was. In most cases it was wonderful but there were always a few surprises. One fruit that I never got to grips with was durian. It had the worst smell in the world, but I am told it tastes wonderful. I never got that far!

The market was a place where you grew up quickly, the animal cruelty was terrible. The point was that with no refrigeration, meat and fish had to be kept fresh and the only way to do that was to keep them alive. One could walk the Sunday roast home. Mena, would slaughter chickens on our back doorstep as if she was shelling peas. All the innards would go to the local dogs who seemed to know that a meal was about to be served up. When one dog grabbed a part, another would try and steal it and a fight would ensue. Mena would interject with a firm foot and peace would be restored.



My favourite item was to buy a 'katty' [a pound in weight] of beansprouts which Mena would very lightly fry and add a bit of soy sauce. The small package would be wrapped in a banana leaf and tied up with a nice little carrying handle for me to take home. There were also very tasty tomatoes and melons as well as avocados and rambutans. This part of the market was much more civilised, and Mena seemed to know all the stall holders.

At the time I was very blond, and the Chinese love blond children. In their culture it is a sign of good luck to pat a blond child on the head, which I hated! When we were in a crowded street people would just come up to you and bash you on the head. As you looked up another would assault you. I quickly learnt to duck and dive and avoid their advances. Mena's Chinese friends would ask if they could pat my head and I always told her that they could not. What was really strange about my hair colour was that after a while my hair started turning green! This was due to the chlorine in the swimming pool water and as we swam every day it turned green. Luckily, green was not so good for the Chinese, so they left me alone.

Sometimes we would shop in Tampin which had a few typically Chinese type shops. The hardware shop spread out into the road and sold cheap material and towels of every type. There was also everything that has ever been made of plastic hanging from a flimsy wooden frame. It was open twenty four hours a day, seven days a week and fifty two weeks a year. It was run by a wonderfully well educated guy called Heng who had

inherited the stall from his parents. He was a typically good Chinese businessman, and you could never leave without buying something.

The jewellers shop was also very typical with a huge metal and wire fence between you and the goods. There were a number of small squares cut out of the wire and any item you wished to look at would be handed through the hole. Any thought of making a run for it would be thwarted by the very imposing Sikh standing in the exit! The man who ran the shop had a young son who I was to meet many years later running the shop which had not changed at all. He had been away to University in the States but had returned to take over the business on his father's retirement. When he saw me enter the shop he immediately opened the large metal gate and both Angie and I were invited in. In the back was a well-appointed Chinese house and to my absolute amazement he had a collection of Nazi grandfather clocks. Probably about 5 or 6 if my memory serves me well. What an amazing thing to collect in Malaya.

He was extremely proud of his house, and I said I could remember a young lad running around behind the wire fence when I was a kid. He then said that times were hard, and he could not make the money that his Father made but again he had a great advantage in that he ran a brothel upstairs which catered for British soldiers. I was speechless! My Mother tells a great story about how she was sent into Tampin with the Regimental Sergeant Major to close a brothel. The problem with this particular one was that all the 'workers' were white women, most of



whom were wives of soldiers, making a lot of money on the side. Mother has dined out on that story for many years!

At the end of the main street was and still is a 'garage' run by Mr Mon Kee. It is not as we know a garage as it is an open fronted shop and all the repairs are done in the street. In our time Mr Mon Kee looked after our car and did all the servicing and repairs. He would collect the car and return it after the work had been done.

One of the things I loved to do in Malaya was to disappear into the jungle behind our house. It was not hot and steamy as people seem to imagine but was a wonderful place full of streams and ponds and wonderful plants. There were plenty of tracks which were formed by animals and by sitting still for about 10 minutes by the waters edge the whole jungle life would carry on its business. There were centipedes a foot long, small rodents and huge butterflies of all colours. If you could say still for longer periods even more life would magically appear but sadly the ants or termites would find you and that meant it was time to move on.

Our best animal friends were the chit chats. These are small lizards that run around on your inside walls and ate mosquitos and flies. Every room in the house had about two or three and that was their 'patch.' They devoured other insects, and we loved them for it. One of the strange things about chit chats is that if you touch them they eject their tails. This is so other predatory creatures would not bother to pursue them if they had already got a nice meal! Within a few weeks they would grow a new tail and life would be back to normal!

Not everything was friendly! Scorpions were a regular visitor and as they had to crawl into the house we would put some special powder across the thresholds, and they supposedly would not cross it. However, they always seemed to find a way in so every morning you would have to shake your shoes out and check any clothing left on a chair. A scorpion bite is extremely painful and can kill in the young and old. We would always kill a scorpion if we came across one which seems a bit harsh now. The easiest way to kill them was to put lighter fuel around them and light it and they would sting themselves to death. Otherwise, you just squashed them.

We had a lot of snakes to deal with but mostly they were gone before you were anywhere near them. Another unpopular insect was large biting ants. These usually cover certain shrubs but if you brush past they get onto you and bite! They can really hurt. I once saw a guy use biting ants to stitch an open wound. He pulled the wound together and placed an ant across the cut. Once the ant had bitten him he broke its head off and the claws remained in place! Instant stiches in the field.

The heat of the day could be intense, and we were supposed to rest in the middle of the day. The Regiment worked from very early in the morning to about 12.30 when all activity ceased for the day. At home I only ever wore shorts and flip flops. The soldiers wore khaki shorts, socks and boots but the officers and senior ranks always wore khaki tops. When we arrived at school the Batteries would be on parade and we always loved to see the new soldiers just arrived from UK as they were so white!



I consider myself very lucky to have experienced 3 years in Malaya in a total regimental environment. We knew everyone and what each battery was doing and who was posted in and who was leaving. Our newspapers were normally a month old and we shared them around the 'patch'. There was no radio, so music was LPs [long playing records] played on very basic gramophones. We had to take great care of them as they would warp in the heat and that was the end of them.

We were all very happy. Soldiering was very organised but very professional. Gun crews were like families and stayed together. They were also very competitive both in the field and in barracks, and when the guns were turned out for a parade they were immaculate.

If the Regiment was playing sport against another Regiment, which was not often, all the men and their families were expected to support the team. They were special occasions and there would be hot dog buns and cold drinks stands and mess tents with easy chairs for tea afterwards. It was all very British and very civilized.

After 3 years it was all to end and the Regiment moved back to the UK and Barnard Castle. Could there be a greater contrast from the heat of the tropics to the frozen north of England! It was at this point that many of the personnel changed and a way of life, known by thousands of British servicemen and their families came, to an end.





Airborne Gunners Under Canopy in Belize - Ex MAYAN WARRIOR 24



Community outreach with First Love Church - Belize City

7 Para RHA had the rare opportunity to deploy a re-rolled composite Coy to the jungles of Belize on Ex MAYAN WARRIOR 24, something they haven't done since 2007. Swapping their Light Guns and Artillery doctrine for dismounted close combat and Close Country Tropical Environment (CCTE) tactics.

"Learning to live and survive in the jungle is just the first step in operating in a CCTE, where everything from the animals to the weather is against you. Letting your body adapt and get used to it is the first challenge." Sgt Siggins (G Bty). Upon arrival, the Coy was immediately enveloped by the jungle's intense heat and humidity. Acclimatisation and the initial training phase were critical, setting the foundation for the rigours ahead. Flora and fauna lessons, tactical actions drills and briefs on HLS marking, Parang handling and HF radio theory were all part of the intense RSOI package held in Price Barracks.

Having deployed into the jungle, time on the Basic Phase was spent learning to build shelters from the abundant foliage, fashion tools and traps from natural resources and identify both edible and poisonous plants. Fire-making is another essential skill, often practiced under the relentless rainfall that characterises the region. In sections, spending 48 hours with nothing but a jerry can, a parang and the clothes on their back, the Airborne Gunners built shelters to sleep, killed and cooked their own food and started fires for warmth and protection.

"The jungle is neutral, only with the proper training will soldiers be able to operate successfully" Sgt Hamanta (2RGR). Jungle warfare presents unique tactical challenges. Visibility is limited, communication is hindered by the dense vegetation, and the terrain and climate are unrelenting. The CCTE can be a more difficult adversary than the enemy and the basics are essential. Navigation, patrolling, contact drills and



bushcraft were all honed under the canopy. Cleaving their way through the secondary jungle, it was common to take up to 4 hours to cover a mere 500 meters, with compass bearing and pace counters the only viable method. 'Mayan Coy' got to grips with offensive action in a CCTE. Assaulting up rivers, through caves and lying in ambush for 13 hours on the jungle floor.

"Everything is tested in the jungle', from the most junior Gunner to the Coy Commander, everyone must master the basics. I have been on many exercises at home and abroad, however the jungle is by far the most testing of them all." Capt Deeny (N Bty). Live Fire Tactical Training in a CCTE is a true test of marksmanship and soldiering. Working up from individual lanes to section level contact drills, the Airborne Gunners showcased their ability and skill.

Culminating in an arduous FTX, Mayan Coy deployed recce before inserting through thick, humid jungle to conduct a Deliberate Attack and seize an enemy stronghold. Defending the position meant digging in and siting claymores, low wire entanglement and sentry positions. Continuous probing attacks saw the Coy fight night and day. After a busy week of offensive and defensive actions, battling the enemy, climate and the degradation of their bodies, the final attack saw a complex planning cycle and the Coy manoeuvre to destroy a heavily defended position on high ground. Accompanying those from 7 Para RHA on the exercise were 8 soldiers from the Kosovan Security Force (KSF) led by Lt Selimi. The Kosovans brought a wealth of knowledge and remarkable energy, imparting their expertise and providing new perspectives to develop interoperable training methods through shared endeavour.

After 31 days straight under canopy the Coy had earned a well-deserved break. Crossing the border to Guatemala to visit the ancient ruins of Tikal or scattering to one of the islands which Belize is famous for, they changed their MTP for Hawaiian shirts and their jungle boots for flip flops. Enjoying the white sands and crystal-clear water they spent 3 days topping up their tan and relaxing before heading home.

'Train hard, fight easy' is a cliché that is often thrown around, however, the level of soldiering required by all participants throughout this exercise was unrivalled. From the most junior Gunner to senior Jungle Warfare Instructors (who were critical to the safe conduct and training throughout). Overall, the exercise provided an excellent opportunity to evaluate all elements of the Coy, from leadership and management at all levels, through to the stress testing of the full spectrum of G1-9. Conceptually, Ex MW developed sub-unit level understanding of force projection at reach, as well as risk management and integrating external enablers. Physically, the CCTE in Belize provided a unique training opportunity to focus on 'back to basics', develop new DCC skills and conduct LFTT with reduced PPE. Morally, Ex MW enhanced team cohesion, supported community engagement initiatives and exploited retention positive activities through AT and R&R.

Upon completion of Ex MW, Mayan Coy realigned to their original sub-units as the Regiment deployed to Germany on Ex CYPHER STRIKE, a TL DELTA Regimental exercise to ensure VHF readiness as part of 16X.

by 2Lt Ed Holland RA
Troop Comd

G Parachute Bty RHA (Mercer's Troop), 7th Para RHA



Press Release



August 2024

Progress made on reducing Veterans' Unclaimed Pensions!

Last year's campaign launched by the Forces Pension Society and supported by the Office for Veterans' Affairs working with the MoD, has begun to show tangible results.

The latest AFPS Annual Report published in July, reveals a reduction in the number of Veterans' unclaimed pensions. This year's report records 14,797 unclaimed pensions (17,139 in 2023), a 14% improvement.

However, it remains a cause for great concern that there are still almost 15,000 pension benefits that remain unclaimed and thousands of entitled Veterans could be missing out. These are the details:

- Anyone serving after April 1975, now aged 60 or over, could have an Armed Forces Pension if they served for two years or more.
- The pension is not paid automatically and Veterans must apply to Veterans UK using AFPS Form 8 or call 0800 085 3600 for information.

Commenting on these latest figures, Forces Pension Society CEO, Maj Gen Neil Marshall said:

"It's clear that our call-to-action to a wide community including the Office for Veterans' Affairs has made a real difference. But we won't be satisfied until we reduce the outstanding number of unclaimed pensions substantially."

"Many of these pensions involve significant sums of money which could make a serious contribution to the quality of many lives. So, if you know a Veteran who might not have claimed their entitlement, please visit the Veterans' Gateway website without delay."

"For our part, the Forces Pension Society will maintain its focus on the issue until we see many more pensions in the hands of those who earned them."

The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that serves as a watchdog for the whole military community. If you would like to know more about our work and how we can help you make the most of your personal pension worth, visit forcespensionsociety.org



King's Birthday Honours List

The Royal Regiment wishes to congratulate the following:

Chief of General Staff Commendation

Major D E Mortimer RA
 Major R J L McArthur RA
 Captain D T Meheran RA
 Warrant Officer Class Two G J Bingley
 Bombardier I M A Moorby

Meritorious Service Medal

Warrant Officer Class One Gemma Rachel Begley
 Warrant Officer Class One Gary Anthony Hyatt
 Warrant Officer Class One Daniel Jones
 Warrant Officer Class Two (now Warrant Officer Class One)
 David James McGee
 Warrant Officer Class Two Saimoni Bebenisala Qarau

Commander Field Army Commendation

Major G J Treasure RA
 Captain R D Walton RA
 Lieutenant R O J Powell RA
 Lieutenant J A C Riley RA
 Sergeant D Hepburn
 Acting Sergeant J D Greatrix
 Lance Bombardier J M Adams

Commander SJC(UK) Commendation

Major I W S Chanter RA
 Lieutenant H L D Fox RA



Sister act delivers before rain ruins finale



Photo credit: Soldier magazine

Late afternoon downpours scuppered the prospect of an exciting final in the Women's Inter-Services Twenty20 Cricket Championships as the Army retained their title without a ball being bowled.

With both the soldiers and Royal Air Force recording big wins over the Royal Navy earlier in the day, the tournament was due to be decided in a winner-takes-all clash that was washed out by the rain.

The defending champions started the competition as firm favourites and underlined that billing with a mammoth batting effort against the Senior Service.

Skipper Capt Connie Cant RA was the chief destroyer as she smashed an unbeaten 125 from 70 deliveries in an innings that included 16 fours and 2 sixes.

She was ably supported by sister LCpl Georgie Cant Int Corps, who blasted her way to 62 before being caught at mid-off to end an opening stand of 176.

The arrival of SSgt Amanda Potgieter REME ensured that the momentum was maintained - the right-hander finding the boundary with ease to post 52 not out as the Army reached 270-1.

In reply, the Navy struggled from the outset and at 36-2 after ten overs found themselves way behind the required run rate. The tempo improved slightly at the back end but a total of 88-6 saw them slump to a 182-run defeat.

Cfn Shema Wright REME was the pick of the bowlers with figures of 2-7 from four overs, while Cpl Abbie Sullivan QARANC claimed 2-15.

Earlier in the day, half-centuries from Cpl Emilee Steel and AS1 Molly Rebanks helped the RAF post 197-5 against the Senior Service, who were then restricted to 98-4. The Army's superior run rate saw them pip the light blues to the trophy.

"It would have been a really good game," skipper Cant said as she reflected



on the disappointment of missing out on the final. "It would have been exciting to go up against an RAF team that has really improved in standard."

"Against the Navy, everything went perfectly with the bat but there were some areas to improve on in our bowling. But it was a pretty good performance."

The Army and UK Armed Forces teams were playing against the Southern Vipers

development squad as this issue went to press and Cant was relishing the prospect of facing some of the top young talent in the country.

"It is an opportunity for us to stretch ourselves," she said.

"You can run the risk of stagnating; we have good players, but there is a chance they can be excellent players."



Photo credit: Soldier magazine



Warriors All - #FINDandSTRIKE





RA Development Tour and Trg Camp - St Andrews Scotland 14-19 July 2024



Match photo between the RA Golf Development Squad and 105 Regt RA at Mortonhall Golf Club in Edinburgh

The intent of the Royal Artillery Golf Training Camp was to deploy to Scotland and conduct matchplay practice on challenging links courses in order to develop low handicap RA players for the Army Inter Corps Championships, Corps League and our annual match against the Engineers.

The opportunity was also taken to play against a combined 105 Regt RA and Army Golf Association (Scotland) Team at the excellent Mortonhall Golf Club near Edinburgh. This closely fought contest went down to the last match with the Royal Artillery Development Squad claiming a narrow victory.

Having moved further North across the River Forth to the Kingdom of Fife, the RA Squad utilised the 3-day unlimited golf passes offered by St Andrews Links Trust to undertake an intensive period of training. Each session was drawn by blind

ballot to maximise integration across the squad, with matchplay and individual stableford played and overall league tables used to track results throughout the 3 days.

The first day saw the squad tackle two Championship Courses at St Andrews, the New Course in the morning and the Jubilee Course in the afternoon. The oldest 'new' course in the world, was built by the Keeper of the Green, Tom Morris in 1895 and is ranked in the top 50 courses in the UK. Whilst the RA golf squad enjoyed relatively benign conditions in the morning, the afternoon was a different story as the heavens opened on the Jubilee Course testing all players ability to maintain their golf in challenging conditions. At the end of day 1, Sgt Matty Myers led the way in the overall Stableford and WO2 Bally Ballantyne claimed two wins from two matches to lead the matchplay.



Day 2 we awoke to a new dawn and a beautiful summer's day in St Andrews. We started the day with a guided tour of the recently refurbished Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. As the Secretary and Chief Executive was away at Royal Troon preparing for the Open Championship, we were afforded the rare privilege to tour his office and balcony, witnessing what can only be described as the best view in golf. The squad then moved onto tackle the beautiful setting of the Castle Course; the newest addition to St Andrews Links, the Castle Course opened in 2008 becoming the seventh course at the Home of Golf. Having been warned by almost every local, including the starter, about how difficult the Castle Course was the RA golf squad had a collective air of impending doom about us. It was therefore a great result to see so many of the squad scoring over 30 stableford points, with four sharing the win on 34 points and Maj Charlie O'Shea drawing level with Sgt Matty Myers in the overall competition. Collectively the experience of playing the Castle Course was appreciated by all of the squad, it is definitely one of the best courses many of us had played. Having grabbed a quick refreshment, the properly committed members of the RA squad then zoomed across town to tackle the Eden Course; built in 1914 by Harry S Colt with superb use of natural boundaries and severe bunkers, it is often described as the 'town's favourite course'. With some dedicated squad members still playing their last few holes post 22:00 hrs it had been a long but rewarding day!

Such was the popularity of the Castle Course, on day 3 it was decided that we should tackle it again that morning. The weather was kind to us and the wind stayed relatively calm enabling some excellent scoring with Sgt Matty Myres winning the day and week with an outstanding score of 46 points, narrowly holding off Maj Charlie O'Shea whose 42 points including a superb hole-in-one on the Castle's iconic 17th hole. In the matchplay league, Sgt Matty Myres held off Bdr Cam Phillips by the narrowest of margins to win the overall prize. The majority of the squad then moved on to play either the New or Eden Courses in the afternoon, finishing just in time for a RA golf squad final dinner and prize giving to mark the end of what had been a wonderful week.

With contacts established with 105 Regt RA, plans are already afoot to run another RA golf Trg Camp in 2025. Potentially to go further up the East Coast of Scotland where yet more superb links courses await our discovery. More details to follow and sign up will be via the RAGS website - RAGS - Royal Artillery Golfing Society - Royal Artillery Golfing Society



Sgt Matty Myres successfully wins his match at Mortonhall Golf Club against 105 Regt RA



1-5 July, Box End Park, Bedford



LBdr Abbie Robinson landing a wake to wake

After success at the Royal Artillery Wakeboard and Water Ski Championships, Capt Tom Chinnery, Capt John O'Connor, Gnr Josh Perkins, LBdr Abbie Robinson, Sgt Andrew Adamson and Mason were selected to represent the Royal Artillery at the Army Championships.

The week saw intensive training starting at 8am and finishing at 8pm across all three disciplines with the competition on the Thursday and Friday.

The competition saw over 50 competitors from 9 Corps, all winners of their respective Corp championships.

The Royal Artillery achieved great success at this years competition winning 3/6 competitions. Capt Chinnery won the Male Waterskiing competition and LBdr Abbie Robinson won the Ladies Cable and Boat wakeboard competition.

The Royal Artillery will be running their Corp level competition next year

26-30 May 2025. If you are interested in attending please contact Chris Figures on christopher.figures903@mod.gov.uk. The personal contribution to the week training is usually circa £60



Left to right: Capt Tom Chinnery, Capt John O'Connor, LBdr Josh Perkins, LBdr Abbie Robinson, Sgt Andrew Adamson and LBdr James Mason

Competition Disciplines

There are three distinct disciplines within the championships which you can compete in. People can specialise or compete in all competitions.

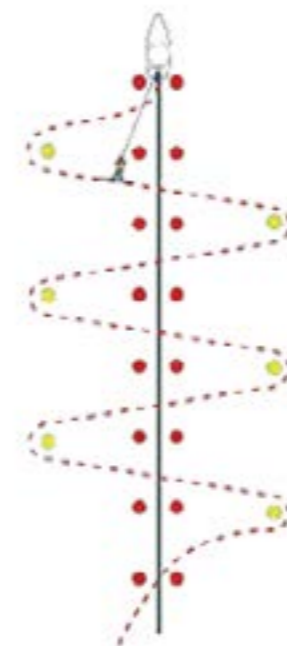


Slalom Water Ski

The object of Slalom Skiing is to ski a course of 6 buoys between going through starting and exiting gates. Once run, the speed is increased up to a maximum of 34 or 36 mph and the rope is shortened. A boat travels straight through a set of 26 buoys. The skier is being pulled by a rope attached to the boat and has to enter the course through the first pair of buoys (entrance buoys), go to the outside of all 6 buoys, and then exit the course through the last pair of buoys (exit buoys). There are predetermined speeds and rope lengths. With each speed and rope length, a credit of 6 buoys is scored.



Capt Tom Chinnery completing a Slalom course at 24mph



Cable Wakeboard

The aim of the cable wakeboard is to complete one circuit of the cable whilst making use of as many features and performing tricks off and on the feature. The complexity of each trick is scored and the sum of all the tricks is your final score. The rider with the highest score at the end is deemed the winner.



LBdr Abbie Robinson landing a backflip

Boat Wakeboard

The aim of the cable wakeboard is to complete two passes off the lake. During these passes of the lake the rider is to perform as many tricks as possible whilst passing over the wake (the wave created by the boat). There are no features to jump you must use the wake. The rider who manages to achieve the most amount of tricks achieves the highest score.

**Date for the diary
Royal Artillery Wakeboard
and Waterski Championships
26-30 May 2025**



National Memorial Arboretum 2024



Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance

This RA Service of Remembrance was on Sat 13 Jul, a date that for the first year, we would share with the 5RA annual NMA Pilgrimage. 5RA PPMA would be stepping off after our morning service post lunch, so the two events dovetailed perfectly.

This year's service had a Normandy 80 focus and would also mark the official unveiling of the new RAA statue in the Gunner Garden. The statue commemorating 100 years of the RAA was commissioned several years ago and there will be a dedicated article on its production and installation in November's edition of Gunner.

In addition to the service focus, and the extra elements in the garden, we were also lucky to have not only the Master Gunner St James's Park - Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL attending this year, but also the new Colonel Commandant of Wales and West Midlands - Col Stephen Thomas CBE who along with Col Charlie Harmer ADC (Regt Col) and Col Matthew Carter (Regt Sec) formed the

inspection party for the Standard Bearers' parade which announced the beginning of this year's proceedings. We were fortunate to have a grand total of 22 Standards on parade. I would like to take this opportunity to formally give thanks to all our Standard Bearers who throughout the year represent the Gunners, and their Branches at, parades, events and most importantly ensuring we mark our fallen Gunners last parade, supporting families during memorial services and funerals. They were joined on parade this year by 9 of our Chelsea In-Pensioners, the support and numbers of both groups attending this year was incredible, and it is hugely appreciated. I would at this point also like to acknowledge the amazing support from across the serving Regiment and our Branches as we numbered just shy of 400 at this year's event, which was almost a 40% increase on last year.

Parade and inspection over, it was time to move into the ASPECT centre to join both the Lancashire Artillery Volunteer Band, who



had been entertaining the congregation with a musical set and the Honorary Chaplain of the Royal Artillery, The Venerable Stephen Robbins CB who would deliver a very emotive service. This year not only remembering our more recent departures, but in this the 80th year since the D-Day operation of June 6th 1944, we also specifically remember the operation that would become the largest amphibious invasion in military history. We remembered those that took part, along with the 29,924 members of the Royal Artillery that lost their lives during the whole of Second World War, many of them falling on the beaches and in the bocage of Northern France 80 years ago.

Once the Service was complete the whole congregation moved to the Royal Artillery Garden for the formal act of remembrance and wreath laying. This year there was a slight pause and as the Standards positioned themselves, everyone congregated around the shrouded statue. The Regt Sec, Col Matthew Carter proceeded to deliver a citation covering the background to the statue including how it was financed with the collective story of the Burgess legacy and the story of Mr Burgess who was the only child of Lt Col James Burgess, who as a Sergeant during WWII who was awarded the Military Medal, will also be covered in the statue article in November's edition of Gunner. Once the citation was complete the Master Gunner unveiled the statue to a hugely positive response from all those gathered.

The proceedings then returned to the normal and main focus of the day's event; the formal act of remembrance triggered by the WO1 RASM Lightfoot J was followed by the wreath laying. This was once again led by the Master Gunner St James's Park with the Col Cmdt Wales & W Midlands and it was wonderful to

see so many others taking the opportunity to partake in the wreath laying ceremony.

Post service there was an opportunity to retire back to the ASPECT Centre or the main concourse for some refreshments and to relax and enjoy the now traditional performance by the Lancashire Artillery Volunteer Band on 'Heroes Square'.

It was at this stage with groups and gatherings starting to do their own thing, 5RA Pilgrimage preparing to set off on their annual act of remembrance and those with reduced timelines and distance to travel, starting to depart that this year's event started to draw to a close.

Huge thanks as always to the team at the NMA, including the garden and statue teams, the attendance of all our serving and veteran Gunners either independently or as part of their Regiments and Branches, to the Standard Bearers and the Chelsea Pensioners who both added colour and flair to the occasion and finally the Lancashire Artillery Volunteer Band who demonstrated why they were and continue to be worthy recipients and current holders of the RA Association Cup, their support is appreciated enormously.

I look forward to seeing you next year. Whilst I was disappointed at not being able to take part in the 5RA pilgrimage this year, I was able to still join them later that afternoon for their follow on social at the RBL Alrewas, the team at the RBL have supported this event for many years and I can confirm that sharing the day only resulted in positives, with members of each group having the opportunity to support each event. 5RA PPMA were of huge support during the planning phase and so to the committee for 5RA Pilgrimage event thank you.

"We'll meet again" date Saturday 5th July...



Northern Ireland Region Committee

At the Autumn meeting of the RAA Northern Ireland Regional Committee, we were delighted to welcome the Regimental Secretary Colonel Matthew Carter and the RAA Secretary, Major Dickie Davies. The President of the Northern Ireland Region, Raymond Kennedy, and Chair of the Committee, Trevor Hollinger, conducted the meeting which was held in Belfast. Amongst the normal business, Colonel Carter mapped out future plans for maintaining the aims of the Association while adding new opportunities for Gunners, past and present, to associate and help one another. After the formal meeting, the afternoon continued with lunch, allowing a wider group of members to meet our visitors. An enthusiastic discussion of ideas for future initiatives continued deep into the afternoon, until the last safe moment for our guests to depart for 'Georgie Best' airport. The Region is most grateful for the time taken by Colonel Matthew and Dickie to come and spend time in the Province, and we look forward to welcoming them, and other members of the Gunner family, back to see our Branches in action in the future.



**The Artillery Clerks' Association
A Memorable Reunion Weekend**

The Artillery Clerks' Association followed up last year's hugely successful 25th Anniversary Reunion with yet another memorable weekend in Larkhill from 21st to 23rd June 2024.

This year, 40 members, partners, and guests gathered for a traditional regimental dinner at The Royal Artillery Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Attendees travelled to Larkhill from far and wide, including Malta, Germany, France, and even Aberdeen for this occasion.

The Association Chairman welcomed the Guests of Honour, Brigadier Mark Pountain CBE, Royal Artillery Colonel Commandant for Veterans, and the newly appointed Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, WO1 (RASM) James Lightfoot. The Association's affiliated battery, 34 (Seringapatam) Battery, was represented by Staff Sergeant Diamond.

Of particular pride and interest to the Association this year was the presence of Mrs Traceylee Cowan and Mrs Janet Brown, widows of two of the Association's most esteemed former members. Both ladies wanted to see for themselves their late husbands' names inscribed in perpetuity on the Association Silver Centrepiece, a touching moment that resonated deeply with all present.

The music during dinner, which included the much-appreciated Post Horn Gallop, was provided by The Wiltshire Police Band. After dinner, the Loyal Toast, toasts to the ladies and absent friends, thank-you's, and speeches led to the most eagerly anticipated part of the evening around the bar.

The atmosphere was filled with camaraderie as old friends reconnected and new memories were made. The dinner was not only a celebration of our shared service as Artillery Clerks but also an opportunity to support ongoing initiatives. One such initiative, the Malta Heritage Project under the leadership of the Chairman, benefited greatly from the generosity of those in attendance. The appeal during the dinner raised a handsome sum of £123, contributing to the project's costs as it moves into its planning phase for May 2025.

The weekend was a great success, underscoring the enduring spirit and fellowship of the Artillery Clerks' Association, and shared experience of service to the Royal Regiment. We look forward to many more reunions in the years to come—2025 will see us gathering again for our 90th Reunion weekend!!



**20th Anniversary British German
Partnership Celebrations**

On the 6th April 2024, the RAA North Germany Branch and the Bundeswehr Reservisten Kameradschaft Celle, celebrated 20 years of their close and strong Alliance.

The celebrations took the form of a relaxed Formal Dinner with the Honorary Chaplain Venerable Stephen Robbins CB, calling for a quiet moment in respect of passed members and comrades of the community. Main speeches were given by the RAA Chairman Brigadier Mark Pountain CBE and Oberstleutnant Moritz Stones representing, Immelmann Kaserne's Kommandeur Oberst Jörn Rohmann.

Appreciation Certificates were presented by the RAA Chairman to the Hosting Bundeswehr Regiment, Immelmann Kaserne and Cofounder of the Partnership, d.R. Ralf König-Sothmann.

Presentations and thank-you's were also made and said by Michael Bridgeman the North Germany Branch Chairman (Cofounder) and Andreas Schneiderei, the erste Vorsitzende R.K.Celle.

The event was very well attended including Veterans Germany Branch Members and Celle's local Dignitaries.



**Aigburth-Merseyside Branch
Blackie The War Horse 1905-1942**

Members of the Aigburth-Merseyside Branch and its Standard Bearer's attended the unveiling of a memorial Sculpture to the one of the very few War horses of the over one and a half million, who served in World War One to return home. Blackie was the mount of Lieutenant Leonard Comer Wall of the 55th West Lancashire Divisions A Battery 275th Brigade Royal Field Artillery.

Blackie was one of the many horses purchased from Local farms in the Merseyside area and would have joined thousands of horses from the country and overseas (130,000 from Canada alone) at the veterinary yards at the rear of Ormskirk Station. The army spent over £67 Million in total.

The 17-year-old Leonard Wall was commissioned on 29th August 1914 as a 2nd Lieutenant and he, along with Blackie and Driver Frank Williams as groom, were posted to the Western front on the 9th September. Wall was born in West Kirby, Wirral in 1896 and attended Clifton College, Bristol. Lieutenant Wall composed a number of poems during his active service on the Front. One of his poems known as 'The Rose of Lancaster', which was written in Flanders in April 1917, included the line 'We win or die who wear the Rose of Lancaster'. The line was adopted later in 1917 as the Motto of the 55th West Lancashire Division and encircles the divisional sign.

On June 8th 1917, one week after his promotion with 'A' Battery, 275th (West Lancashire) Lt Wall was hit by shrapnel from an exploding shell aimed at a nearby gun emplacement. He was riding Blackie. They were providing artillery support to the infantry and tank advance. Lt Wall died later that next day at the age of 20. He is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge in the Belgian

Blackie sustained severe shrapnel injuries but recovered and remained in service on the front for the rest of the war. By the end of the war he had taken part in the battles of Arras, Somme, Ypres and Cambrai. In Lt Wall's will he requested that if he did not survive the war that his faithful horse, Blackie, be buried with his medals and decorations.



After the war, Lt Wall's Mother, Kate Earle, bought Blackie from the Army and returned him to England. He was lent to the Territorial Army Riding School in Liverpool until he was pensioned off. Blackie was known to have led Liverpool's May Day Horse Parade, along with another ex War-Horse known as 'Billy', and was adorned with his master's medals. He lived to be 37 years old and had become blind. Blackie died in 1942. He still had shrapnel scars.

2nd Lieutenant's (Driver) Francis "Frank" Wilkinson was Blackie's Groom. He was killed In Action on June 8, 1917 at the age of 23 and is also buried at Lijssenthoek.

Blackies grave was in the derelict site of the old RSPCA Headquarters in Halewood and was lovingly cared for by local members of the public and ex-employees. The site was sold on to Local Builders Miller Holmes. Part of the sale of land required the maintenance of Blackies Grave. They not only kept to this condition but also engaged local sculpture Simon O'Rourke to produce the memorial from a fallen tree that once adorned the site. The sculpture now sits in wild flower meadow surrounded by shrubs and trees.

275th Brigade Royal Field Artillery. Where the predecessors of 208 Bty 103 Regt Army Reserve. The Battery was represented by WO2 BSM Dave Frost. Later this year, the theatre group of the now famous War Horse, will take part in a more formal ceremony. The presence of the association standards and BSM Frost maintained the link with our Heritage that's so dear to our promise to the fallen and their chargers.



Canterbury Branch

Canterbury Branch support many events throughout the year and they recently took part in a ceremony

in Folkstone to commemorate the 10th Anniversary Inauguration Ceremony and the 110th Anniversary of the beginning of World War I. Eight members of the Branch attended: including 3 Branch Standards on parade, veterans, cadets and the local community. A wreath was laid to remember all those who marched down the Avenue of Remembrance to the docks, to their destination on the front lines in France and Belgium. We will always remember their sacrifice.



RAA Battery Grants including intro already in magazine

On Wednesday 28th February 2024, members of 31 (Headquarters) Battery, 47 Regiment RA celebrated the Battery's 269th birthday. The Battery was formed on 1st March 1755 in Woolwich.

A full day of events started with all rank across the Battery attending breakfast in the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess. All members of the Battery were presented with Maltese Pins and Battery History presented by Gnr Lyons, the most junior member of the Battery. The afternoon consisted of fun activities for everyone to engage in and enjoy. This was an opportunity for members to relax and interact in a social environment with humorous awards presented in the evening.



The Amphibious Bombardment Association (ABA) reunion is an event which occurs every two years to celebrate the partnership between Amphibious Observation and Naval Gunfire and has been maintained by 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery since 1962. This year was especially significant due to the Bty relocating from Hamworthy Barracks, Poole to The Royal Citadel, Plymouth during summer 23 and signifying the first time the Battery has been co-located with the remainder of 29 Commando Regiment RA.

Coinciding with Armed Forces Day, a significant annual event for Plymouth, the surrounding areas of the Citadel bustled with marching, music and air demonstrations from a Swordfish and Wasp. The historic bi-plane and helicopter, set the scene for a memorable reunion. Around 90 serving and non-serving members were welcomed into the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess for drinks and an update on current Battery life. This was followed by prayers at the Battery memorial and a historical tour that familiarised all with our new home. An introduction to the new history room preceded the evening's BBQ on Queen Anne's Battery; the Plymouth sun shone throughout!

148 Battery would like to thank all ABA members and the RAA for their support in making this year's reunion a truly memorable one.



Members of 11 (Sphinx) Battery participated in Exercise SPHINX SPIRIT from 15-18 July, with kind financial support from the Royal Artillery Association. The trip took place in the Exeter area at Haldon Forest Park and Fernworthy Forest.

11 Battery is due to deploy on simultaneous overseas commitments in October, Op STIFFTAIL and the Falkland Islands. The Battery has also

benefitted from the arrival of over 20 service personnel from the MRAD Uplift programme. This event has helped bring the Battery together and allowed service personnel to get to know each other outside of work and gain respite from a string of courses and preparation.

It was a very enjoyable week and allowed members of the Battery to escape the busy build up to deployment and get to know each other in a relaxed setting. 11 Battery would like to thank the Royal Artillery Association for their generous financial support which allowed the week to go ahead.



The 27th of May is a day to be remembered, as we should recall the legacy of bravery and sacrifices made by the soldiers who fought during the Battle of Bois des Buttes in 1918. The heroic actions of the Battery lead to the it being awarded the Croix de Guerre, the highest French Military Award at the time. This year, the Battery celebrated the birthday in true style, bringing back both past and present members of the Battery for a day of festivities and reflection.

Due to deployment 5 (Gibraltar 1779-1783) Battery celebrated this day slightly later on the 8th June. The day was filled with fun activities for all past and present members of the Battery.





RACF SUPPORT TO THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

To date in 2024 we have helped our Gunner family by providing £350,000 towards essential needs.

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

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

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

Thank You's

"I would like to thank you and RBL for battling my corner for me. Could you please pass on my thanks to the Regiment for me. It's all much appreciated, I have never asked for help in my entire life and it's nice to know there are still decent people who will help in the hour of need."

RA Historical Society 2024 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
Wednesday 25 September	Summer Webinar	Siege of Arcot 1751 and Battle of Plassey 1757	36 (Arcot 1751) Battery and 9 (Plassey) Battery	Friday 20 September	Nil
Friday 25 October 1045 hrs to 1600 hrs	Shrapnel Day Lectures, Morning Coffee and Buffet Lunch Newcome Hall, Larkhill SP4 8QT	Addiscombe: The East India Company Officer Academy	Ms Kate Birbeck	Friday 11 October	£10
		The Armies of the East India Company	Dr Rosie Lewellyn-Jones		
		The Indian Campaigns of Lord Roberts VC	Dr Rodney Atwood		
		The Indian Artillery in the Great War	Dr Spencer Jones		
Tuesday 26 November at 1930 hrs	Winter Webinar	The Indian Army and the Bangladesh Liberation War	Col Michael Phillips	Friday 22 November	Nil

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

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

1ST REGIMENT ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2024



Saturday 7th September 2024
The Orchard Hotel & Restaurant
Beeston Lane
Nottingham
NG7 2RJ

Tickets: £25 Per Person
(1st Trust have offset 30%)

All those that wish to attend are to Contact Mr Shaun Wilmot on 07790 024787 or via Facebook or email shaun_wilmot@hotmail.com

Payments made to the following:

Reference – YOURNAME
Account for 1RHA Reunion Dinner
Account number 45634092
Sort code 60-07-28

RSVP Monday 26th August 2024

Throughout the day there will be the Regimental PRI Shop, Veterans charity and an equipment stand.

1830 Hrs – Pre-Drinks
1930 Hrs – Sit Down (3 course meal)
Entertainment provided by the South Notts Hussars Band including the famous Post Horn Gallop
Regimental update from CO 1RHA
2300 Hrs – Last orders
2359 Hrs – Event closes

Dress – Jacket & Regt'l/Bty Tie, Long Dress



A menu can be found at <https://nottinghamvenues.com>

1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery First Trust Charity

The First Trust charity's aim is to promote the efficiency of 1RHA, and which can be called upon to provide assistance to all past or present personnel, irrespective of cap badge, who are serving with the Regiment.

You only pay £4 per month which comes straight out of your pay. If you're a member of the charity you can apply for the following grants:

- Welfare
- Sports
- AT
- Events

Examples of previous grants given:

- Travel assistance for family members in hospital.
- Equipment for children with medical conditions.
- Assistance, due to faint smelting health.
- Travel costs for compassionate leave travel and outside of the UK.

SCAN ME

To apply for Membership click on the link





Date	Event	Location
18 Sep	RACF Welfare Committee	Larkhill
02 Oct	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
09 Oct	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
16 Oct	Charities F&GP Committee	Larkhill
25 Oct	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
06 Nov	Charities F&GP Committee	Larkhill
07 Nov	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
10 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park Corner
28 Nov	RA Sports Awards Dinner	Larkhill
01 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill Garrison Church
01 Dec	St Barbara's Day Lunch	Larkhill
12 Dec	Master Gunner's Committee	Larkhill
2025		
Feb	RA Gold Cup	Sandown
06 Mar	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
09 Mar	RA Boxing Finals	Larkhill
12 Mar	RAA NEC Meeting	Larkhill
13 Mar	Master Gunner's Committee	TBC
27 Mar	RACF Welfare Committee	TBC
20 Apr	Gunner Sunday	Royal Hospital Chelsea
9 May	Gunner 25	Larkhill tbc
9 May	Spring Dinner	Larkhill tbc
16-18 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
17 May	RAA NEC Meeting	Blackpool



LAST POST

Notification of Death:

- Ray Hards 16 June 2024
- Fred (Budgie) Bird 7 August 2024
- Eric Archer 16 August 2024
- Craig Underwood 19 August 2024
- Major Colin S Boxall-Hunt 22 August 2024
- Derek Titch Holroyd August 2024
- Leslie Dines August 2024



CLOUGHLEY - Colonel Brian Cloughley died on 27th Jun in France. A lowland Scot, Brian joined 6th Field in the early 1960s following the death of some subalterns in a car crash on the way back from Luneberg. Other ranks would remember him as someone who would give them a lift in his large Mercedes to and from Munster Lager. When the regiment disbanded, Brian joined the Australian Army and spent some time in Vietnam. He also wrote a book on the history of the Pakistan army. In recent years Brian posted a monthly blog commenting on various issues and amusing anecdotes.

JANG - Jonasa Jang 13 Oct 1939 - 12 Jul 2024 sadly passed away on 12th July 2024. Beloved dad, granddad, brother, uncle, friend and soldier. It is with such heavy hearts that Tony, Joanna and Maria, along with all of his extensive family across the world and his friends say goodbye to him. Whether you knew him as an island boy, a cheeky young man, a proud soldier and member of the 212 club, a loyal and committed friend, or just as the 'party boy', you will no doubt remember Jonasa by his generous heart, his love of life and his huge smile. This is how he would want to be remembered.

JENKINS - Major (Retd) Ron Jenkins late 3 RHA & AAC. Passed away, suddenly on 26th June 2024. He will be sadly missed by his wife Antoinette and family.

MAKIN - Colonel Alexander Ian Scott Makin TD DL died peacefully at home on 7th Jul 2024. Devoted husband to Nona (deceased) and much loved father to Kirsteen and Nick. Will be sadly missed by all his grandchildren, great grandchildren and all who knew him.

PENDER - Lieutenant Colonel William Lyall, Retd, aged 82, died peacefully at home on 24th August. Much loved husband to Lynne, father to Jonathan and Alexandra, father-in-law to Justin and Bubba to Tilly and Toby.

REAVILL - Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Derek Reavill, died peacefully in the Salisbury Hospice on 12th July 2024 with his family by his side. Widower of Christine Reavill and much loved father of Melanie, Adam and Tania. He will be sadly missed by his grandchildren, his partner Marijo and all those who knew him. Derek served with 17 Training Regiment, 33 Parachute Field Regiment, 18 Depot Regiment, 50 Missile Regiment, as Battery Commander 52 (Niagara) Battery in 45 Medium Regiment and as the Second in Command of 25 Field Regiment. He completed operational tours in the Arabian Peninsula, Cyprus, Near East, Northern Ireland and South Arabia, including operations in Jordan, Yemen, and as GPO in the Suez Crisis.

Subscription Price List

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

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

To addresses in the rest of the world:
 The Gunner - £49
 The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £17
 The Gunner and The Journal of the Royal Artillery - £66

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DO YOU NEED OUR HELP?



Since its inception in 2010, the Aaron Lewis Foundation, fuelled by the spirit of volunteerism, has dedicated itself to uplifting the lives of serving personnel, veterans, Regiments and Service Associations across the UK.

Our mission is propelled by a simple yet profound promise: to leave no one behind. From essential equipment to life-enhancing resources, we've answered the call of those in need, transforming lives one project at a time. Whether it's aiding with mobility through wheelchairs, enhancing training with hand weights, or empowering through education with 1st Aid courses, we adapt to the unique needs of our heroes, often collaborating with fellow charities to fulfil our commitment.

Are you, or someone you know, in need of support?

The Aaron Lewis Foundation is ready to help, guided by a few key principles:

- We assist serving personnel, veterans, or initiatives that directly benefit them, such as equipment for sports teams or community projects.
- Our assistance focuses on providing physical items that have an immediate impact on recipients' lives, as opposed to a pool of funds.
- We prioritise requests that address needs not met by MOD or statutory provisions, including match-funding request.

To explore how we might support you or your cause, please contact us at info@aaronlewisfoundation.org.uk for an application form.

About the Aaron Lewis Foundation

Lieutenant Aaron Lewis, of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, was killed in action in Afghanistan on December 15th, 2008. He was just 26 and on his first operational deployment.

Aaron wanted to make a difference in the world, bringing help to those in need. It was that belief which gave him the courage, hope and enthusiasm to deploy to Afghanistan.

Two years after his death, the Aaron Lewis Foundation was established by his family and friends to continue to make a difference in his memory. With unity and teamwork at its core, Aaron's family, friends and former service colleagues work together to raise funds for causes close to Aaron's heart, providing access to sport and wellbeing for all, while at the same time furthering his legacy.

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Email: 5RA-473Bty-Ops-Team@mod.gov.uk Tel: 07773 978878

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ARMY BE THE BEST

Plenty are capable, fewer are willing. ARE YOU WILLING?

The 4/5 (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles) Battalion, The Royal Scots were converted to Royal Artillery at the start of World War II, and served as 52 Searchlight Regiment and later as 130 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. 4/5 Royal Scots are an example of many other infantry and yeomanry units that were moved into the RA in World War II.

4/5 Royal Scots, (as 52 S/L Regiment) was engaged in the first air raid of the war against the Luftwaffe attacking the naval base at Rosyth. Later their area of responsibility changed to the east coast prior to moving south of the border. As 130 LAA Regiment, they served in Kent's 'Hellfire Corner' where they were part of the defences against the V1 Flying Bombs, or 'Doodlebugs' and destroyed 35 of them.

These Colours are 100 years old, and are suffering from age and light damage. We are raising £7000 to have the colours professionally conserved to preserve this unique piece of military history for the Royal Artillery and for Scotland. Many of our Grandparents and Great Grandparents served in anti-aircraft in World War II and it is an important legacy to preserve. Every and any contribution towards this effort will be gratefully accepted. No contribution is too little, "every mickle mak's a muckle", as the old saying goes.

REGIMENTAL REUNION SAT 27 SEP 25

PRESTONFIELD HOUSE EDINBURGH

- **ARRIVAL RECEPTION 1930 HRS**
- **AUCTION & RAFFLE 2200 HRS**
- **DINING - THREE COURSES 2000 HRS**
- **VENUE CLOSES 0100 HRS**
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