



JANUARY 2025



**CENTURY OF MIDDLE
EASTERN FIREPOWER**

ST BARBARA'S DAY

ROYAL ARTILLERY SHOOT

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Gunner Rules

Guidance on Submissions

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

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

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

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

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GUNNER



JANUARY 2025

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Archer training in Sweden, Guns & Ammunition
Image taken by Training Innovation Centre, Larkhill

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

2024 has been quite a year and one where the Royal Regiment has continued to contribute to the successes of this Nation in many different ways.

The United Kingdom has a new Government and a Defence Review under way; when that reports it will take lessons from current conflicts across the world that highlight once again the importance of the many capabilities Gunners bring to the battlefield when wars are being fought. Air Defence, for too long a neglected component, is high on the priority list for investment, as are long range and suppressive fires as well as remotely piloted air systems (drones in simple terms!), large and small. That gives me optimism for the future of the Regiment. 'Find and Strike' is the reality of warfighting.

While that is going on, persons across the Royal Artillery continue more than to play their role on operations and within other commitments. We have an enduring presence in Estonia, Poland, the Middle East, the South Atlantic and in Cyprus as well as individuals deployed elsewhere. The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery has led, magnificently, our part in State ceremonial occasions and Regiments have performed gun salutes with style and precision. I thank and congratulate all those who are or have been on operations and who are involved in these various tasks, though I recognise they demand separation and I am especially grateful to our families for their resilience and forbearance.

Changes to our inventory continue apace with ARCHER and TAIPAN already exercised in demanding conditions and now ready to deploy on operations in 2025; the fact that AJAX and BOXER are due to arrive shortly is also good. The recent announcement that WATCHKEEPER will be taken out of service provides an opportunity for the introduction of a new generation of drones. The current shortage of 155mm platforms is a concern, though the announcement earlier this year that

Britain will purchase the BOXER-based RCH 155 gives some encouragement for the future.

People remain the heart of the Royal Regiment and the fact is that we remain short of men and women to fill our establishments. The Regiment is investing significant resources both in its Inflow Campaign and also by trying to improve the breadth of 'the offer' to those serving and their families. That includes funds being spent on sport, welfare, being passed direct to commanding officers and being invested in many other aspects of Gunner life. Regimental gatherings remain important and I urge as many of you as possible – serving and retired, to come to the Royal Artillery Gold Cup at Sandown in February, to our annual Remembrance commemoration at Hyde Park Corner on Remembrance Sunday and to the Royal Artillery Association Assembly in Blackpool in May. Furthermore, we have sought to improve communications across our Regimental family – though there is more to do, through a revamp of our Website and the launch of GunnerNet.

With regard to heritage, 2024 included the 80th anniversaries of D Day, the Battle of Kohima and Operation Market Garden; members of the Regiment paid due respects to our forebears as we will do at the anniversaries of VE and VJ Days next year. We also continue to get closer to an affordable and sustainable solution that will allow us to get much more of our historic collection on display once again; I will provide more detail on this in the 2025.

That is but a brief snapshot of all that has been achieved and is occurring across the Royal Regiment of Artillery. While there is much to be optimistic about, I am very conscious of the demands we are placing on all of you; I thank you for your professionalism, commitment and friendship and to your partners and families for dealing with the pressures that come with military life. I wish you all a Very Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year.



Colonel R C Harmer ADC Regimental Colonel

It falls to me to write the editorial for this edition of The Gunner, a publication I remember being a key part of the messaging that made me want to join the Royal Regiment more than 20 years ago. It has been a stalwart element of our communications 'arsenal' for much longer than that, with the first edition being published back in 1919. I'll start with communications because it is an area run by RHQ RA, and specifically given to me as a task to fix, and one that we have never really got completely right. I won't suggest for a moment that we now have, but I do know and can say with certainty that we are in a far better place than we were. The Gunner, being refreshed, standardised and improved as I write this, is of course a key part, but the DOWNREP, our social media footprint across the various platforms you'll expect and of course the RA Journal all play their part. The RA Journal itself will now see change also, with a shift back towards charting the rebirth of our regiment in tactical and technical terms. The Gunner Net is the final piece of our comms jigsaw and is indeed the one that has had the most challenging start. Now well beyond 'IOC', please ensure you download and explore it via the QR codes below. Originally intended to give our most vulnerable a route to help and support, it is now a platform offering so much more. Please play your part in helping it to continue to grow.

I have had the immense privilege of being your Regimental Colonel for what has been a tempestuous two-and-a-half years. In amongst reviewing, refreshing or rewriting all the policies that face our people, their careers and promotions, we in RHQ RA have sought to get after and improve our inflow. The numbers we have joining the Gunners are nowhere near where they should be, but the fact that the Army is identifying the Royal Regiment as the capbadge to follow in terms of what we are doing to fix it, should be taken as a compliment. This encompasses all of our Regular regiments (our Reserves do it routinely

already) playing their part in engaging across their geographical patches, including with cadets and at public service colleges, to sending only our very best instructors, all of whom are now boarded volunteers, to Basic Training establishments. The collection of marginal gains these initiatives aimed to achieve are already transforming into more Gunners beginning Basic Training now than at the same time last year. Separately, the Gurkha Artillery proposition is not just significant in terms of growing our overall workforce to meet the increasing demand for artillery. It also promises a hugely exciting new chapter, not just for us but also the Brigade of Gurkhas.

In terms of my own personal highlights, there have been too many to report on here. That said, the privilege of leading our detachment (and by being on the right, the other capbadges in our 500-strong parade group) at His Majesty, our Captain General's Coronation in London must be at the very top of the list. Everything else that I have been able to do, from visiting our soldiers on operations, to attending as many events as I can with our veterans and families, have been humbling and rewarding in equal measure. From Gunner Sunday and Founders Day at The Royal Hospital Chelsea, the National Memorial Arboretum and the Royal Artillery Assembly at Blackpool, to continuing to represent the Gunners on the cricket field. All of it has shown me what it truly means to be a Gunner. I'm not sure that, even after 20+ years of service, I truly knew it until now. As the Master Gunner St James's Park articulates later, these truly are exciting times for us; Find and Strike is again at the heart of our Army at long last. I will be forever grateful for the chance to give something back to our Royal Regiment. Ubique.



Google play Apple



Sultan of Oman's Artillery

Still eyes look coldly upon me. Cold voices whisper and say, "he is crazed with the spell of far away Arabia, they have stolen his wits away" **Walter de la Mere 1912**



Regimental Colonel and Ameer Saif Said Al Rushaidy at the end of the centenary celebrations

1924 witnessed the birth of artillery in Oman with the first unit to appear being a section of two 2.75" British screw guns. Acquired from India, still on display in Oman today and complete with their George V cyphers, the United Kingdom has continually had a part to play in the threads that run through the Sultan of Oman's Artillery. As 2024 marked the centenary of the formation of the Sultan of Oman's Artillery, it is of huge importance that we, as Gunners, preserve our history and recognise these key moments in time that form part of our fabric and that we continue to support our friends with such events.

Arriving in the mid 1920s the 2.75" screw guns were manned initially by the Muscat Infantry, however the first properly constituted artillery troop was formed in 1942 when three 3.7" mountain guns were purchased. Commanded by a Pakistani officer, the troop was formed in Bait Al Falaj, Muscat, where it also inherited the original 2.75" guns.

With the flight of the rebels during the Jebel Akhdar campaign aiming to keep the powerbase in Muscat and Oman's interior separate throughout the 1950s, there was a requirement for an increase in firepower that could achieve the much needed range



up onto the jebel. Two 5.5" medium guns were loaned from the Royal Artillery along with a Forward Observation Officer and two SNCOs. Throughout the Jebel Akhdar campaign, the artillery troop maintained two gun positions, both on the southern edge of the Hajar mountain range.

With the cessation of hostilities in northern Oman in 1959 and with a full review of the Sultan's Armed Forces on the horizon, it was decided to establish a four-gun battery of 25lbs as well as retain the 5.5" guns as an alternative platform. As a result of the review, the original 3.7" mountain guns were to be phased out and as such, the artillery entered the Dhofar war in southern Oman in 1967 with an ORBAT comprising a battery of 6 guns; four 25lbs and two 5.5" guns.

Following the accession of Sultan Qaboos in 1970, the Dhofar campaign intensified. The requirement to better support the infantry was identified and it was felt this could be achieved by expanding the artillery. December 1970 saw the Royal Artillery provide further personnel to Oman to assist with their development. The acquisition of more 25lbs and the establishment of a training troop in Suwaiq eventually saw two operational troops and a third troop undergoing training by April 1971 and it was at this time that the troop was renamed as the Oman Artillery (OA).

Throughout the Dhofar campaign, the OA continued to flourish. 25lbs continued to be purchased, as were more 5.5" guns. Two 75mm pack howitzers were commissioned as a light role section giving the OA an airmobile capability. Narrow axled 25lbs were also brought into service allowing for

lift in Skyvan fixed wing aircraft augmenting the ability to move throughout the country at speed. Early STA capabilities made their way in to the OA's ORBAT at the same time and by April 1975, Cymbeline Locating Radar had been acquired and immediately deployed to Sarfait in support of the Dhofar campaign.

1976 saw the OA move to their current home in Izki in the foothills of Jebel Akhdar. 25lbs were phased out as the arrival of the BAE Systems L118 light gun commenced, bringing a refreshing, modern increase in capability to the OA. 5.5" guns were also consigned to the history books as were the 75mm pack howitzers.

By early 1980, the OA comprised one field regiment of 6 light gun batteries and a locating troop. The splitting of the 6 light role batteries to form two light role field regiments coincided with Sultan Qaboos bestowing the title of Sultan of Oman's Artillery (SOA) on the OA, the name by which they are known today. A VSHORAD capability was also introduced as an air defence troop equipped with SAM 7 missiles was established. Further iterations of systems was witnessed and the subsequent inclusion of Blowpipe into the SOA's ORBAT further enhanced the protect function with Javelin air defence systems eventually being brought into service, thus cementing the establishment of the air defence regiment in 1992.

Continued expansion wasn't just limited to the air defence capability and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, large scale re-equipping of the SOA took place. Chinese 130mm type 59 artillery pieces



brought a much needed heavy weight of fire to the ORBAT. The subsequent establishment of a third close support regiment occurred as the South African G6 155mm SP howitzer was brought into service and today remains in direct support of the Armoured Brigade with the 130mm type 59s remaining in service in locations across the country as the strategic reserve. Javelin also received a much needed upgrade and the air defence regiment found themselves in receipt of the 35mm Oerlikon anti aircraft gun and Skyguard radar.

As the SOA entered the early 2000s, the first battery of Mistral air defence systems mounted on Panhard light armoured vehicles started to arrive. The phasing out of Javelin commenced and the light role air defence battery was fully operational by late 2006 with, what is now, the current capability.

Woven into this rich tapestry of history is the support provided by Loan Service personnel. Between 1942 and 1961 commanders of the artillery troop were Subedars from the Pakistani Army, thereafter being replaced by officers on secondment from the Royal Artillery. UK personnel served as Forward Observation Officers, Battery Commanders and Commanding Officers within SOA during internal unrest and the aftermath, however today this has evolved into an advisory role, with two RA loan service personnel (a Joint Fires & Targeting IG and an ISTAR SMIG) supporting SOA develop their capability, enhanced by the deployment of STTTs and bilateral exercises such as Ex SAIF SAREEA and Ex KHANJAR OMAN.

Over the years, strong links have been maintained between former Loan Service personnel and their Omani colleagues. Enabled by the good work of The Sultan's Armed Forces Association, the association was founded in 1968 with the aim of maintaining the spirit of mutual friendship among those who served and continue to serve in the Armed Forces of Oman. The Association maintains close links with Oman with officers of The Sultan's Armed Forces serving on the Committee, which maintains the association on behalf of its members.



WO2 Cree with Omani Jundi

As the SOA continues forward with two light role regiments and a heavy regiment providing the strike capability, and protection being afforded by the air defence regiment, the SOA remains invested in continued development 100 years on. MUAVs and weapon locating assets provide the meat of current CAPDEV efforts, as does the synergising of effect through the establishment of JFCs. The pull through of support provided by loan service personnel and the wider Royal Artillery community since the early 1950s has continued to cement the bilateral relationship



that is enjoyed so much today by both the UK and Oman ensuring that the strategic handshake remains steadfast and firm as the next 100 years beckons.

Should anyone be interested in finding out more about Loan Service, they are encouraged to contact serving RA personnel on either Army-CATAT-SOA-Plans1@LSOman.org or Army-CATAT-SOA-WO2@LSOman.org. Veterans of Loan Service who are not members of the Sultan's Armed Forces Association and wish to join, should contact the Membership Secretary on members.saf@gmail.com.



Regimental Colonel presents Ameer Saif Al Rushaidy with a silver flaming grenade to commemorate the 100th anniversary



Major Alexander with G6



Sunday 1st December at The Royal Garrison Church of St Alban and St Barbara



Chelsea Pensioners and Standard Bearers outside the Garrison Church

Today, Sunday 1st December, the Royal Regiment of Artillery held the annual St Barbara's Day Service at The Royal Garrison Church of St Alban and St Barbara.

The Service was led by Rev Mark Henderson CF, Chaplain to 32 Regt RA and accompanied by The Ven Stephen Robbins CB, Honorary Chaplain to the RA.

This year we remembered the serving members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and members of the Royal Artillery Association who died during the last year. The congregation commemorated the lives of all Royal Regiment of Artillery who served and gave their lives on Op HERRICK (20 June - 12 December 2014).

The Council of the Church, dedicated a memorial plaque in memory of Brigadier

Alistair Clark, who was Commandant of the Royal School of Artillery from 1987-1990, who died on the 8th March 2024.

After the Service, lunch was held in the Officers' Mess.

Thank you to everyone who attended this event to make it successful and many thanks go to all who were involved with the organising of every aspect of the day.

We look forward to welcoming you next year.



Local Cubs and Scouts also in attendance



**ROYAL ARTILLERY GOLD CUP
Sandown Park Thursday 13th February 2025**



AN AFTERNOON OF QUALITY JUMP RACING

The Royal Artillery Gold Cup, first run in 1862 and one of the oldest events in the horseracing calendar and a flagship day for the Gunners. Regiments will again be setting up co-located focal points, within a dedicated Gunner area, this time in the Surrey Hall, which forms part of the main concourse on the ground floor. This venue puts the Regiment very much at the centre of the day, with immediate access to the racecourse and bookies on one side and to the Parade rings and the Winner Enclosure on the other. It also makes a range of catering outlets more easily available, with convenient bars and food outlets, providing greater choice and the opportunity to have a drink and meet with friends.

Serving and retired members of the Regiment will be able to meet fellow Gunners in the Surrey Hall, but there will also be an option to book a two-course buffet lunch in The Gallery, which is on the first floor of the Grandstand and has its own bar and views over the track. It is hoped that will be an attractive option to those who wish to enjoy a sit-down meal in slightly more formal surroundings. This will include:

- Two-course buffet including dessert
- Pay as you go bar (Card payments only)
- Private lounge, with shared tables

Gallery Badges and admission tickets included £52 per person, please contact the Sandown Park hospitality team on 01372 477747 or by emailing London.Hospitality@thejockeyclub.co.uk
Entry to The Gallery will be restricted to badge holders only until 1400 hrs.

Use promotional code **UBIQUE25**

Purchase tickets by scanning the QR Code



Tickets at the discounted price of £14 can be booked online
<https://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/sandown/events-tickets/royal-artillery-gold-cup-day/>

POC please email Carla.Brawn100@mod.gov.uk

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10th November 2024



The Trumpeters of The King's Troop RHA perform The Last Post at The Gunner Memorial



The Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland provided the music for the service



Soldiers of 12 Regt RA prepare to march on parade



T Battery (Shah Sujah's Troop) RA



The Master Gunner St James's Park salutes the Gunner Memorial as he lays a wreath



Gunner Rodhouse, King's Troop



The Honour Guard share a joke after the service concluded



The RA Service of Remembrance is a gathering of the entire Gunner Family: Serving, Retired and their Families



Led by the Second in Command, The King's Troop RHA provide a march past



1796370 Lance Bombardier Cyril James Lewis (Jim)



Ex Lance Bombardier Jim Lewis aged 103

In my capacity as Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery, Wales and the West Midlands and Regional Representative SSAFA Wales, I, and my wife Sue, visited ex Lance Bombardier Jim Lewis aged 103 years. We met him in his sheltered accommodation in Porthcawl and spent about an hour with him and his son. Meeting him can only be described as a real privilege. He proved to be a most engaging person to spend time with and his memories of his years serving in the Army, brought a sparkle to eyes. He is a very modest man who has lived through hard times, experiencing considerable emotional difficulties, but remains disciplined, independent and resolute.

Jim's full name is Cyril James Lewis but everyone knows him as Jim and he served in the Royal Artillery during the Second

World War. He is originally from the Maesteg area, a village called Nantfyllon, and he worked as a miner at both Dyffryn and Coednant collieries prior to joining the Army. After basic training he was posted to 37th Regiment Royal Artillery equipped with Bofors Anti Aircraft guns. Jim has a great memory and recall. He told us that he was on a troop ship and the captain ordered all hands on deck and they saluted HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Hood in the North Sea. A battery of 37th Regiment was sent to Iceland in 1941 to provide air defence for the Alabaster Force and this is probably where the ships would have crossed paths, prior to the warships' engagement with the Bismarck in the Denmark Strait. In 1942 the Regiment was sent to North Africa as part of the British 8th Army, principally



on airfield protection (Anti Aircraft) and in support of USAF. Jim told us that the Americans had everything and the Brits hardly anything, "they even had beds, whilst we had to sleep under the lorries." He remembers the American forces as being very generous, "if you asked for a cigarette they gave you a carton" he recalls, but he wasn't quite so complimentary of their discipline. When the Axis forces surrendered in May 1943, 37th Regiment was wound down and later disbanded. Jim was redeployed to 14 West Lothian Royal Scots Light Anti-Aircraft (which came under the Royal Artillery umbrella.) He landed with the Regiment in Salerno in September 1943, under command of 12th Anti Aircraft Brigade. He saw service in Italy, including Monte Cassino in support of Commonwealth infantry. He still has lucid memories about this time in the war. He remained with the Regiment until they returned to the UK in 1945.

Jim is partially sighted, and so registered blind, and he has had great support from Blind Veterans UK. After the war Jim did not receive his medals, but Blind Veterans UK were instrumental in acquiring his medals and he is very proud to wear them.



Jim in Swansea

They also arranged his attendance at the D-Day celebration event held in Swansea. You may have seen Jim on the BBC Wales news as he was the headline veteran for the BBC Wales coverage.

He is also very proud of the message he received from Her Majesty The Queen on his 100th Birthday and the card and letter he received on his 103rd birthday from the Master Gunner St James's Park, Lt Gen Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL, also Controller the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, SSAFA.

On leaving his company, you feel honoured to have had the opportunity to meet such a remarkable person and wish that others could spend time in his company: he has so much to offer us all and we have a lot to learn.



Jim with Lord Lieutenant and other veterans

by Colonel S O Thomas CBE
Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery Wales and the West Midlands
Regional Representative SSAFA Wales



Grave of St John's, Newfoundland soldier in Ashford's Bybrook Cemetery reveals history of 59th (Heavy) Regiment of the Royal Artillery at Ashford School during Second World War



Judith Holloway discovered Gnr Pike's grave near her own father's

As Judith Holloway visited her father's grave, her eyes were drawn to the nearby headstone for a fallen soldier - his mortal remains laid to rest a long way from home.

It would spark a remarkable voyage of discovery which would span across the Atlantic, creating a remarkable bond between the young soldier's surviving relations and a town in Kent.

As she stood in Bybrook Cemetery in Ashford, she became intrigued by the grave of 26-year-old Gunner Walter Pike. He was from Newfoundland - Canada's most easterly province.

It is the land closest to the wreck of the Titanic - lying in the deep some 400 miles off its Atlantic coast.

Originally from the province's capital of St John's, the fact he was interred some 2,300 miles away from his family tugged on

Mrs Holloway's heartstrings. So she started looking into his life and times. His cause of death was even more tragic.



The grave of Gnr Pike in Bybrook Cemetery

She found out that Gnr Pike died on October 1, 1941, in a road accident while his 59th (Heavy) Regiment of the Royal Artillery was billeted at Ashford School - the private, then girls-only, institution



in East Hill which at that stage had been requisitioned for wartime service.

He had been a pedestrian when he was hit by a car.

Mrs Holloway said: "I wrote to the local paper in St John's saying although he was so far from home, Walter was not forgotten and, through that, I was put in touch with his family and his remaining brother Frank, 89.

"He was just 12 when Walter died and due to wartime security was told only that his brother died somewhere in England. He was overcome to hear that I had been visiting Walter and paying my respects to him."

"In May 2019, I visited St John's and met with Walter's family and on my return, I was invited to come and talk to the school about its connection with Newfoundland."

"In 2022, I then had the pleasure of welcoming Frank's daughter Vicki and her husband and daughter to Ashford, to show them where Walter had served when billeted at Ashford School."

Mrs Holloway's key contact at the school has been the chaplain, the Rev Richard Bellamy, who was also touched by Gnr Pike and his comrades' story and instigated a Remembrance Service for the 59th Regiment RA at St Mary's Church, Ashford in November 2019.

The Rev Bellamy recalled how this ignited Ashford School pupils' interest in the 59th Regiment RA connection.

He explained: "During the service, a book called *More Fighting Newfoundlanders* was donated to us from Walter's brother Frank. Written by a Canadian artillery officer this book includes reports of the 59th's exploits

- after a relatively quiet time before D-Day, they were soon in the thick of it - and it became a great resource for pupils."

Ashford School head Michael Hall said the whole school was now aware of Gnr Pike and his regiment and added: "Walter's younger brother Frank wrote to me expressing the comfort that has come to him and the wider family through learning that Walter has not been forgotten."

A recent ceremony at Ashford School unveiled a memorial to all members of the 59th (Heavy) Regiment RA based there during the war who served and gave their lives during the war.

It was attended by many VIPs and members of the UK and Canadian armed forces.

A special guest at this event was another Ashford resident who has done much to recognise the area's long-distance links with Newfoundland.

Aldington villager David Hughes, 81, whose quest to erect a war memorial for the 50 war dead of the Ashford villages of Aldington, Bonnington and Hurst started in 1950 when, aged seven, he realised that local church plaques had omitted many names of the fallen.

Mr Hughes, who co-authored *The Kent War Memorial Transcription Project*, said: "It was wrong that Aldington and the local area didn't have a memorial and the Newfoundlanders, who had some gunners based in our village, also had nothing marking how they came thousands of miles to make sacrifices in our defence."

Masterminding a determined fund-raising campaign, Mr Hughes' dream was finally realised in July 2016 when a 9ft-high war



memorial was unveiled, built from ragstone – a building material for which Aldington was once famous. Next to this monument is a ragstone bench commemorating the Newfoundlanders of the 59th Regiment RA.

The regiment arrived in England in June 1940 as the Battle of Britain began and will have witnessed dogfights over the southeast and shared in the real fear of Nazi invasion among the whole population.

The Newfoundlanders then gained a long-term base at Ashford School the following June, plus orders to fight to the last, using their heavy guns to defend the Kent coastline from Hythe to the western edge of Romney Marsh.

The war diary of the 59th's commander, Lt Col J W Nelson, noted: "The [school] premises are particularly suitable for

military occupation, though it is not possible to accommodate heavy vehicles. The latter are in the main wagon lines at Charing."

A period of intense training followed and then re-arming with formidable 7.2-inch howitzers and 155mm guns, dubbed 'Long Toms' by the Americans, to follow up the D-Day landings of June 1944.

They fought many notable battles across northwest Europe, finishing in Hamburg, Germany when the war in Europe ended in May 1945.

Honours awarded to the regiment's soldiers included the Military Cross, British Empire Medal, Distinguished Service Order, and Croix-de-Guerre, but at the cost of 87 men.

by Steve Loader
Communications
Public Relations



Gnr Pike's niece Vicki Colborne (third left), school head Michael Hall (centre left), Brig Gen Dwayne Parsons - representing the Canadian Armed Forces in the UK - and Judith Holloway are flanked by the school captains and their deputies



BREMONT ROYAL ARTILLERY WATCH

The Bremont S301 Royal Artillery timepiece is exclusively available to past and present personnel of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and is limited to 100 pieces.

A portion of all proceeds will go to the RA Charitable Fund.

For more information contact: military@bremont.com

BREMONT

CHRONOMETERS

TESTED BEYOND ENDURANCE



Remembers a true hero



Commando Gunner Veterans gather in Plymouth

Saturday 2nd November witnessed remembrance to one of Plymouth's greatest heroes. In the company of Lord Mayor Tina Tuohy and Colonel Richard Horner Royal Artillery Association Wessex Region representative, a large assembled gathering of serving and retired gunners, ably supported by ACF cadets from Mutley and Crownhill marked the 170th anniversary of Andrew Henry winning the Victoria Cross. The service of memorial was conducted by ACF Cadet padre the Rev Graham Hamilton with a bugler from 6 Rifles playing the 'Last Post'.

Sergeant Henry RA on the 5th November 1854 faced severe opposition during the Crimea War. Russian troops outnumbered the British position forcing both sides ultimately into a bayonet battle. Whilst all of his colleagues were killed

around him Sergeant Henry literally 'stuck to his guns' and defended the honour of his regiment and protected the colours. With his sword in one hand, he pulled the enemy bayonets from his body with the other and continued the fight. In all he sustained twelve bayonet wounds, but never gave up. The battle was named 'Little Inkerman' after the location.

Miraculously he survived this most bloody of encounters and was nursed back to health. For this act of unequalled bravery he became only the second member of the regiment to receive the Victoria Cross. He was also given a field commission ultimately rising to the rank of Captain. As a thirty one year old soldier he still had a lot to offer in his chosen career and continued serving, ultimately commanding 4th Division of the Coastal



Brigade at the Royal Citadel in Plymouth currently the home of 29 Commando Regt RA.

On the 14th October 1870, still a relatively young man of 46, he died.

Whilst being born in Woolwich, London, the people of Plymouth looked on this hero as one of their own. Over 4,000 citizens lined the route from the Royal Citadel to Ford Park Cemetery on the day of his funeral. A solid stream of faces watched on as the funeral cortege was still exiting the Royal Citadel as the lead entered the gates of Ford Park. Plymouth had never witnessed such a show of respect and admiration for any citizen.

A headstone was erected carrying the Victoria Cross in 1952, paid for by members of the Royal Citadel and each year since members of the Plymouth branch of the Royal Artillery Association meet at Ford Park to remember 'one of their family'. Along with them are officers, NCOs and cadets from Plymouth's Army Cadet Force, who also take the opportunity to plant crosses on the graves of gunners killed in action during two world wars in readiness for the National Day of Remembrance.

This year, serving members of 49 Inkerman Battery RA were in attendance to mark this 170th anniversary. The assembled body also commemorated the war dead at the Cross of Sacrifice memorial close to the cemetery gate.

Captain Henry is not the only VC to be found in Ford Park. This is also resting place of Quartermaster George Hinkley VC RN.

The word 'hero' is so often tossed around like confetti, but in the case of Captain Henry it is so completely fitting.

The Royal Artillery Association is a social and charitable body serving the needs of serving, ex-serving regimental soldiers and their families across the southwest. Contact may be made via email at chairman@plymouthraa.co.uk, or fuller information on their website www.plymouthraa.co.uk.

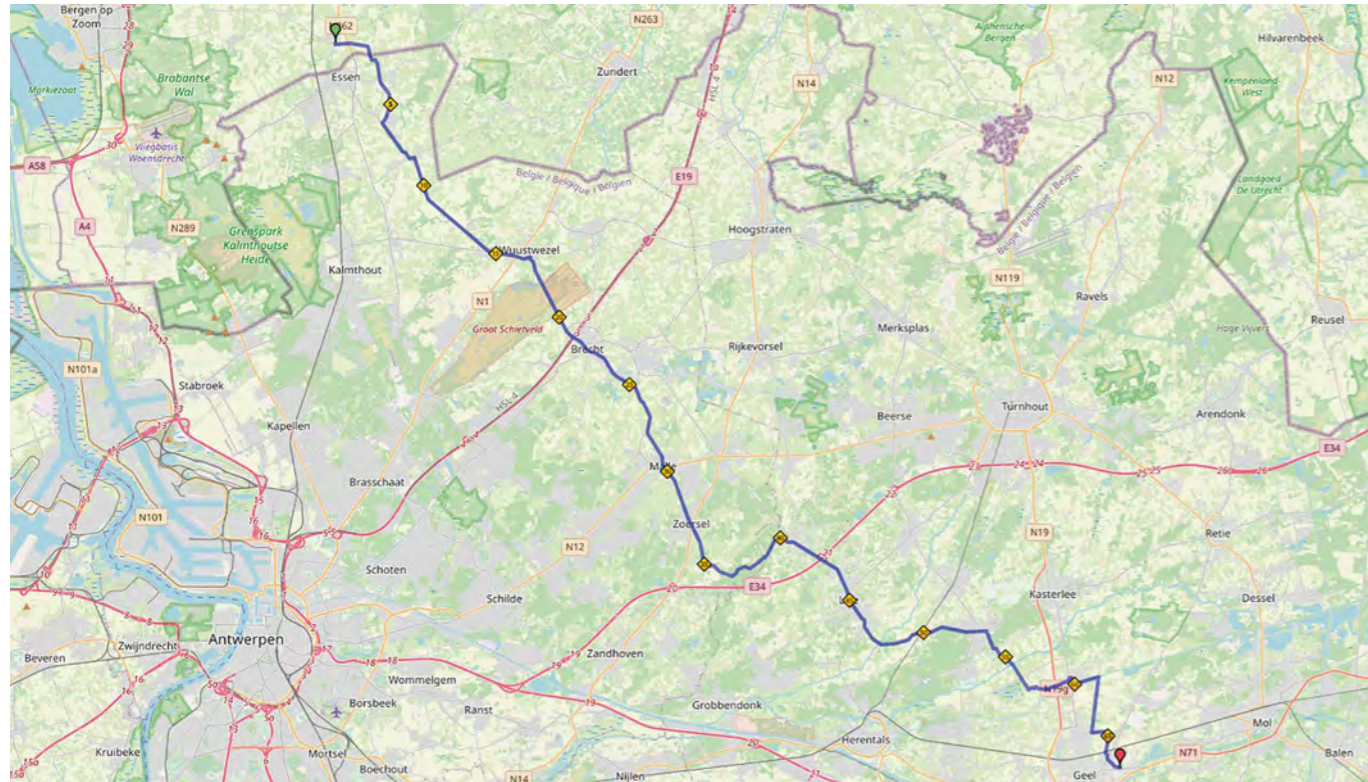


Lt Col (Retd) Richard Horner MBE VR alongside RAA Members





Nispense runners relay run 80 years liberated



FREEDOM, especially given the large number of conflicts in the world, we increasingly realize what the word **FREEDOM** means:

- Being free to say what you want.**
- Being free to go where you want.**
- Being free to make friends with whoever you want.**
- Being free to vote for whoever you want.**
- Being free to love who you want.**
- Being free to raise your child the way you want.**
- Being free to read what you want.**
- Being free to believe in what you want.**

This freedom however, is not self-evident.

During World War II people experienced what it was like to no longer be able to experience these freedoms. We are grateful that we can now celebrate that Nispense was liberated from the occupying

forces 80 years ago. A battle that was fought by many foreign soldiers, among others, who lost their lives far from home to give us our freedom back.

In the heavy battle in Nispense, 3 soldiers of the Reconnaissance Corps RAC 49th (West Riding) Regt, 12 soldiers of the Essex Regiment 2nd Battalion, 7 soldiers of the Gloucestershire Regiment 2nd Battalion and 2 soldiers of the Wales Borderers Regiment 2nd Battalion died. A total of 24 British soldiers, of which 8 soldiers are buried at Bergen op Zoom War Cemetery and 16 soldiers at Geel War Cemetery. This cemetery in Geel also contains the burials of 7 other British soldiers who fell in the Nispense area.

The Nispense Runners want to honor these soldiers - who gave their lives for us - by running in a relay race to Geel (province of Antwerp, Belgium) on the morning of Friday October 25. At the



War Cemetery in Geel a ceremony will take place at 1:30 PM in collaboration with local historian Gorik Goris. As part of this ceremony, works of art made by children from the primary school in Nispense will be placed on the relevant graves. After the ceremony we will continue in a relay to Zoersel for an overnight stay in a youth hostel and on October 26 we will continue our run towards Nispense, where we will arrive in time for the memorial meeting at Honingbossenweg. A new memorial for the fallen soldiers will be unveiled here.

During this trip of 2 x 80 km we will also remember the 23 civilian war dead of Nispense of World War II and remember our liberators who gave their lives and thank them that we can now live in **FREEDOM**.

THE NISPENSE RUNNERS.



Emblems of the RA Anti-tank Units





28th November, 14th Regiment WOs' & Sgts' Mess



32 Regt RA winners of the Victor Ludorum presented to Maj Edwards, 21C



Master Gunner St James's Park awarding Sgt Hillman 32 Regt RA winners of the Victrix Ludorum



Master Gunner St James's Park awarding WO2 Frier RAFC Women's Royal Regiment Team of the year



Winners of the Victor Ludorum, 32 Regt RA, alongside the Regimental Colonel



Regimental Colonel awarding Bdr McCarrick, 19 Regt RA, the Harrison Award for Tug of War



All the evening's award winners gather outside the Sergeants' Mess



Master Gunner St James's Park awarding 32 Regt RA Cricket team Regimental team of the year



Brig Glendenning awarding WO2 Mitchell, 14 Regt RA, the Long Service Award



Brig Glendenning awarding Sgt Turner, ATR Pirbright, the Most Outstanding Personality



Held at Knighton Down on 20 Oct 24

Unusually, the 2024 Army and Royal Artillery Hunter Trials were visited by Storm Ashley; result: torrential rain and high winds for the first three Classes!!

Again, held at the Royal Artillery's Cross Country Course on Knighton Down, some 265 Serving, Veteran, Dependent and Civilian competitors took on the 20 jumping efforts on each of the four magnificent courses built and maintained by Lt Col (Retd) Andy Welsh and John Hoare. The Event was again run faultlessly by Captain Bryan Elliott RA with considerable assistance from Major Anna Kirkin RE both of 100 (Yeomanry) Regt RA, Staff Sergeant Lisa Leighton (47 Regt RA) and a raft of knowledgeable Serving, Veteran and Civilian volunteers, in accordance with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's and British Eventing's regulations. Our thanks must go to our Class Sponsors; Mabway, Clearview Security, North Star, Vela Ventures, EH Haylage, and Ruddy Nice, our Fence Sponsors: HighGround, WH Management Group, and Metris Leadership, and to all our volunteers who literally stuck it out through wind and rain, without whom the Event could not have been run.

Despite the weather all had a great day!

The Military results were:

Class 1 – Open (Fences up to 1m 05) sponsored by North Star:



www.johnceclesphoto.co.uk

1st Major Kirstie Deakin-Main Royal Artillery (Royal School of Artillery), riding Spey Faerie Tale

2nd Captain Holly Day RAMC riding Mustang

3rd WO1 (RSM) Peter Pagan-Skelley (King's Troop RHA) riding Prussellstown Cavalier

All three went clear, with no time penalties. Placings were decided by closest to the Optimum time.



Class 2 – Restricted Novice (Fences up to 70cm) sponsored by Mabway:



www.johnceclesphoto.co.uk

1st Trooper Sumner (HCMR) riding Tudor
 2nd Corporal James Dodds (RLC) riding Heathviews Taran-Y-Storm
 3rd LCpl Amy Fletcher riding Genepi

Class 3 – Novice (Fences up to 80cm) sponsored by Clearview Security:



www.johnceclesphoto.co.uk

1st Staff Sergeant Lisa Leighton (47 Regt RA) riding Kilrainey Solo Performer
 2nd Lance Bombardier Elizabeth Griggs (Royal Artillery) riding Harri Coeswen
 3rd Major Harriet Chapman RA riding Meres Jumbo Jet

Class 4 Pairs (Fences up to 80 cm) sponsored by Vela Ventures:



www.johnceclesphoto.co.uk

1st Major Amy Curtis riding Jockeyhall First Class and Captain Holly Day RADC riding Mustang

2nd Lance Bombardier Ellie Mitchell riding Duke, and Lance Bombardier Rosie Smith riding Ronaldo (King's Troop RHA)

Class 5 Intermediate (Fences up to 90cm) sponsored by EH Haylage:



www.johnceclesphoto.co.uk

1st PC Laura Hughes riding Pembroke Hollywood

2nd Major Nick Gould REME riding Mr D'arcy

3rd Honorary Group Captain Helen Gripton RAF riding Aprique



Tweed not required !



Members of the RA Shoot after a successful drive

The Royal Artillery is lucky to have its own Shoot. It runs as a not-for-profit organisation, providing access to affordable pheasant shooting for all serving members of the Royal Artillery, their families and veterans, catering for those with lots of experience and none. It has been running for almost a century and, after a challenging few years with COVID restrictions and the trials of avian flu, it is back once again enjoying what can justifiably be described as a full season.

Each Saturday we wend our way onto Salisbury Plain near Larkhill – a somehow more attractive place when not wet and cold on exercise! Assembling for the Shoot Captain's brief, which sets out the day's plan, we welcome our guests. Each week this includes junior Soldiers & Officers from Gunner Regiments, often with little or no experience of field sports.

These 'Regimental Guns' are specifically intended to help provide the newest members of the Gunner family with the opportunity to experience a field sport they might never have had access to otherwise.

A typical day unfolds with us mounting our Land Rovers and custom-built tractor trailers and heading off to the first of six drives. While twelve of us take up positions at various pegs, guns at the ready, the remainder push through the woods of Salisbury Plain, beating to drive the pheasants up and over the Guns. All the while, we're ably assisted by the blur of our loyal spaniels and labradors. Our gamekeeper, Mike, keeps a steady eye on everything, guiding us toward success with his wealth of experience. With 20 years of service on our Shoot and a former Battery Sergeant Major, Mike is more than qualified to keep us on track.



The day is punctuated by elevenses, with warming coffee and cake, and lunch is always a highlight, with people sharing their culinary creations to sustain them through the day's activities. The atmosphere is always lively, with chatter filling the air as people catch up on life and share news since the last meet.

This year, we've been fortunate to have some exceptional flying birds, thanks to the tireless efforts of our gamekeeper, who has cared for them so well. While this has made the shot-to-bird ratio a little more challenging, the size of the bag is rarely the main concern. More than just a sporting event, the shoot fosters camaraderie, nurtures fledgling guns,

and strengthens the bonds within our broader Royal Artillery family.

Our meets are always filled with warmth and inclusivity, with families and friends welcomed alongside our members. Some people come to shoot, some just to work their dogs and others just to enjoy the social side with a great walk in the country – tweed is not essential, just a desire to get involved. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining us, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Shoot Secretary at rashoot.sec@gmail.com to be added to our mailing list and receive updates on our activities. We hope to see you out on Salisbury Plain soon.



The RA Shoot is open to all who have a passion and interest





Royal Artillery Assembly

FRIDAY 16TH – SUNDAY 18TH MAY 2025
AT THE NORBRECK CASTLE HOTEL



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

3 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner – Saturday 17th May) – **Just £165.50 Per Person**

2 Night Package inclusive of Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

(Including RA Grand Gala Dinner – Saturday 17th May) – **Just £137.50 Per Person**

Grand Gala Dinner Only – No Accommodation **£30.00 Per Person**

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

To book a Gala Inclusive Package – call **0161 923 0300** and quote **RAANB0525**
 Calls cost 13p per minute plus your chosen phone company access charge.

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

For Gala Dinner Only bookings – please call **01253 500 701**

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

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



#FINDandSTRIKE #ONEFAMILY - ROYAL ARTILLERY CHARITIES

Branch Christmas Parties

The RAA Association Secretary and Assistant Secretary attended Branch Christmas parties over the festive season; Lewes – Sat 23rd Nov, Shoeburyness & South Essex - Sat 30th Nov, Stockport & District – Thu 5th Dec, Biggleswade Fri 6th Dec and Birmingham – Sun 15th Dec.



Birmingham & District Branch



Lewes Branch



Shoeburyness & South Essex Branch



Stockport & District Branch

Aigburth-Merseyside Branch

After receiving a contact earlier this year from the daughter of 101-Year-Old Sgt Jimmy Finnigan, Ex Gunner and later RMP, branch members Julie Mantova and her father, 87-Year-Old Fred Evans, Ex 68 Regiment RA, paid him a series of visits where they exchanged fond memories of their service. Jimmy unfortunately cannot recall his Regiment, but he served in India. His daughter did collate a Service History book to commemorate his 100th Birthday, which noted his joining the RA on 26th February 1942 serving until 5th October 1944. Pride of place in his album was a course photo titled Special Course Squad 40 India October - November 1943 the course consisted of 29 Gnrs, 2 Sgts, 2 Bdrs and 25 OR's. There was also a picture of Jimmy in a Military Police Willis Jeep. So, with the help of a local enthusiast, we managed to help Jimmy to relive this by bringing along a Jeep.

We agreed to meet at his next Iconic 102nd Birthday and alongside the Standard Bearers from Widnes Branch we gave Jim a Guard of Honour as he entered the venue. As well as looking marvellous for his age he was also in fine voice when



Branch member Joe Little gave a rendition of some WW2 Classics on the harmonica. Well done to all those attending to show the locals that our Motto Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner is true to its word.

We have tried to get some information on why the recruitment drive was made but it appears the course was run by RMPI (Royal Military Police India) and may have been for a specific role, the 14th Army was engaging with the Japanese at the time. If anyone can give us any more information, we would like to pass this on to Jimmy and his family?



RAA Battery Grants

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

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

28/143 Battery (Tombs's Troop) Royal Artillery

Amalgamation Anniversary Parade and Dinner Night

On the 31st of October 2024 members of 28/143 Battery (Tombs's Troop) took part in a parade and dinner night to mark the anniversary of the amalgamation of 28 Battery and 143 Battery (Tombs's Troop).

To best celebrate the occasion, we invited all previous serving members of the battery. In attendance we had ex members of the Bty that had served as far back as 1970 and those that have left the Army in the last 12 months.

The week leading up to the parade the Battery spent time prepping with drill rehearsals under the Battery Sergeant major. Luckily for the Battery this was accelerated by the fact that most of the troops spent time with the PDRC (Public Duties Reinforcement Company) where they spent long hours perfecting their drill in London.

On the day of the Parade the Battery Captain, Captain M Thompson RA lead the Battery in front of the Battery headquarters. The Inspecting officer Colonel R Forster RA followed by the Battery Commander Major A Bennett RA went to each of the Troops speaking to the soldiers some of which he remembered from when he was the Battery Commander.

After the parade we veterans had the chance to look around the Battery History



Room and the equipment display held within the Gun Park. On display were a range of capabilities from the brand-new Archer weapon system, the L118 Light Gun, Warrior command vehicle and 25 Pounder guns from the Garrison Artillery Volunteers.

To end the day, we invited the guests and veterans up to the Henry VC Warrant Officers and SNCOs mess for a dinner night. Guests were regaled vignettes from the battery history and a summary of the recent events from the Battery commander.

Not only was this an amazing opportunity to re-connect with the veterans of the Battery, but also likely the first time any of the junior soldiers have had the opportunity to experience a military dinner night. This event would not have been possible without the kind donations from charities across the Royal Artillery as we were able to offer a fantastic event to current and previous members of the battery.



K Battery, 5th Regiment Royal Artillery

Upon return from Op ELGIN (K), K Battery, 5 Regt RA and supporting elements comprising of members from the Queens Dragoon Guards, Adjutant General's Corps, Intelligence Corps, Royal Signals and the Honourable Artillery Company celebrated their deployment with an All-Ranks Dinner Night, held at Marne Barracks. The dinner night was a small token of

gratitude for the dedication, professionalism and expertise exhibited by all members of ROTO 14 during the deployment. Their indispensable contributions were crucial to the successful completion of this task. The dinner night also offered junior members of the GBR Task unit an invaluable opportunity to experience the customs and formalities associated with the WOs' & Sgts' Mess dinners.

The evening comprised of welcome drinks in the bar, followed by a seated three course meal in the dining room. As the most junior member of the WOs' and Sgts' mess present, Sgt A Hutchings (RA) assumed role of Mr Vice and ensured people were corralled into the right places for the right times. Speeches were delivered by the GBR-TU OC, K Bty's BC, Maj A Hollyoak as well as K Bty BSM, WO2 A Perkins. Both reminisced on the previous 6 months and thanked the multitude of individuals who made the deployment possible.

We extend our sincere thanks to the RAA for the invaluable assistance provided in the form of a Battery Grant. Their generous support was instrumental in ensuring a seamless and enjoyable evening for all.





10 (Assaye) Battery, 47th Regiment Royal Artillery

10 (Assaye) Battery, part of the 47th Regiment Royal Artillery, recently celebrated its birthday with a day of camaraderie, sportsmanship, and tradition. This annual event is a cherished opportunity for both current and former members to come together, reinforcing the Battery's proud history and unique esprit de corps.

The day began with a variety of sports activities, fostering team spirit and friendly competition among the members. Sports such as football, rounders, team relay races and other fun games were on the agenda, providing both a physical challenge and a chance for soldiers to showcase their skills. These activities encouraged teamwork, highlighting the values of unity and perseverance that are integral to the Battery's ethos.

After a lively morning, members of 10 Battery regrouped and prepared for the evening's events. As the sun set, the Warrant Officer's & Sergeant's Mess hosted a formal dinner night, a time-honoured tradition in the military. The dinner night brought together serving members and officers each with a shared commitment to the Battery. The evening included speeches reflecting on the unit's accomplishments, toasts to the Battery's heritage, and stories shared across generations, with a special performance by The Pipes and Drums from 19th Regiment Royal Artillery. This formal gathering in the Warrant Officer's & Sergeant's Mess emphasized the respect and pride the Battery holds for its

historical roots, as well as its dedication to the future.

The celebration of the 10 Battery's birthday was a fitting tribute to a unit that has shown unwavering loyalty and strength throughout its storied history. Events like this serve as a reminder of the importance of tradition, camaraderie, and the bonds that unite soldiers in the Royal Artillery. With thanks to the Royal Artillery Association for providing the funding for the day, without this support, events like this would not be possible.



53 (Louisburg) Battery, 5th Regiment Royal Artillery

On 20th June 2014, 53 (Louisburg) Battery officially became part of 16 Air Assault Brigade to become the Army's high-readiness Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) unit. Now designated 53 (Louisburg) Air Assault Battery, the last 10 years have been spent developing and innovating deployment methods and techniques as well as the equipment itself in order to increase output and efficiency as an Air Assault STA asset. We have seen the adaptation of the Lightweight Counter Mortar Radar (LCMR) go from a static radar to a highly maneuverable system, as well as the significant reduction in size and footprint of the Advance Sound Ranging Programme (ASP) going from 12 Sensor Posts to 4, to the point where both



assets can now be deployed on quad bike and swiftly inserted on to the battlefield via helicopter.

Most recently the Battery deployed small teams in support of two Air Assault Task Force activations. OP POLAR BEAR in April 23 saw troops deploy to a forward staging area in Cyprus ready to push forward into Sudan to assist in the Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation of British entitled personnel from the region. And OP CHAMBREY in November 23, again to conduct an evacuation of Entitled Persons from Lebanon during the conflict outbreak in Gaza. These two activations validated the Battery's ability to react and deploy at very short notice, in this case within 48 Hours. With new equipment planned and an ever-present and evolving threat from enemy artillery, 53 Battery is set to continue its high-readiness STA role for many years into the future.

To celebrate and commemorate the Battery's 10th Anniversary of its re-role to Air Assault, a formal dinner night was held in the 5th Regiment Royal Artillery Warrant Officer's and Sergeant's Mess on 11th June 2024. Former members of the Battery were invited and in attendance, acknowledging their contribution to the Battery's development over the last decade. The Royal Artillery Association was also invited and their kind contribution towards the celebrations was much appreciated and enabled the dinner to take place. History was a main feature of the evening's events, not only rolling back the last 10 years of the Battery's exploits, but also as far back as its formation as

Capt Melledge's Company at Woolwich in April 1740. A night fully enjoyed by all, and a night that more than anything, served as a congratulations to the soldiers of 53 for their consistent efforts.



1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery Families Day

On the 21st September 2024 in a weather gap that felt out of keeping with the year so far, 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery hosted an 'Around the World in 80 Days' Families Day to spend some shared time together as a wider regimental family. With the Regiment now into its last rotation of Op CABRIT, following Bty commitments for the last 2 years, it is as important as ever to maintain the family nature of the Regiment and to acknowledge the wider sacrifice of the loved ones of those deployed for long periods.

The Regiment has diverse culture which the theme allowed us to play on, with food and culture from around the world. The Fijian community cooked pork on hot stones buried underground the night before giving the most delicious meal on the day itself and in truth all the food from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Britain was exceptional, my personal favourite was the Pani Puri from Asia, but the children were more taken by the macaroni cheese pie from Scotland.



More than just the food, the national garb and decorations were a delight and I enjoyed immensely being educated on the Gurkha selection process including those of Singapore and India and how the family caste system often denotes occupation, I was assured that Gurungs are warriors.

uniforms and saw the field kitchen cooking the basics in contrast to the other food on offer. Firing the 6 Pounder and Rockets were a real spectacle and added greatly to the day. We were very lucky to have them attend and deepen the relationship with the Regiment and the Troop.

Continuing the cultural aspect at the day, O The Rocket Bde, re-enactment troop, deployed into the field displaying a day in the life of a Rocket Brigade soldier in 1813 prior to the Battle of Leipzig. Their passion was infectious as families tried on period

DJ Music bellowed out across the field thankfully dampening slightly the squeals of delight from the children endlessly jumping on the bouncy castles. Equally thanks must go to SSgt Amponsah who brought the whole day together.



RACF SUPPORT TO THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

The RACF and RAA spent the day down at The Royal Hospital Chelsea dispersing the Annual Christmas grants to our 18 Gunner In-Pensioner's. What wonderful company we had and always a pleasure to be there.



As 2024 comes to a close we have helped our Gunner family by providing 670 grants.

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 159 4560/0300 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

"Mrs X and her daughter would like to express their gratitude for the incredible pledge made by the RACF, words aren't enough to say the gratitude that mum feels and how the RACF continue to look after her... this has taken a heavy weight off ... it has enabled her to live comfortably and safely in her later years."

"That is superb, thank you very much. That will make a huge difference... We are raising money this week for the RACF!"




The 4th Regiment Royal Artillery has JTAC & TACP roles available at OR2 to OR4 (Pte to Cpl) now. Use the QR code or link to register your interest.





Date	Event	Location
2025		
13 Feb	RA Gold Cup	Sandown
25-27 Feb	WO1s Convention	London
06 Mar	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
20 Mar	RA Boxing Finals	Larkhill
21 Mar	Gunner 25	Larkhill
21 Mar	Spring Dinner	Larkhill
13 Apr	Gunner Sunday	Royal Hospital Chelsea
16-18 May	RA Assembly	Blackpool
08 Jun	Armed Forces Day	National
19 Jun	Hail & Farewell Dinner	Larkhill
Jul 25	Gunner vs Sapper Cricket	Larkhill date tbc
05 Jul	NMA Service	Staffordshire
02 Oct	Alanbrooke Lunch	London
16 Oct	RA Awards Dinner	Larkhill date tbc
24 Oct	Alamein Dinner	Larkhill
06 Nov	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
09 Nov	RA Ceremony of Remembrance	Hyde Park
27 Nov	Sports Awards Dinner	Larkhill date tbc
07 Dec	St Barbara's Day	Larkhill Garrison Church



LAST POST

Notification of Death:

Michael Atkinson October 2024
 Walter Stephens October 2024
 Sgt Andy Haines 7 November 2024
 Boris Orford 24 November 2024
 Roy Palmer November 2024
 Geoff Day November 2024

GALLAGHER - Bombardier Peter Joseph passed away peacefully in his sleep at Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay, Ontario, Canada at the age of 91 on November 23. Devoted husband to his loving wife Maureen and was the much loved father of Sean and Siobhan as well as 14 Grandchildren and 13 Great Grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by his family and many friends.

Subscription Price List

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

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

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

RA Historical Society 2025 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead
Wednesday 22 January	Webinar	From Garrison Duties to Operations: The British in the War of American Independence	Major Paul Knight
Wednesday 19 February	Webinar	The Brassington Animations: The 7-inch RBL (1861-1902) and the French 75mm of 1897 (The Soixante-Quinze)	Compiled animations by the Ordnance Society
Wednesday 02 April 1030-1600 hrs	Spring Lecture. Newcome Hall, Larkhill	Wellington and Expeditionary Warfare in the Iberian Peninsula 1807-1814	Colonel Nick Lipscombe

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.



Hugh Colley OBE, WKhM(G)



That so many were gathered at Boldre Church near Lymington in Hampshire for Hugh's funeral Service on 16th October 2024 was itself a great tribute to Hugh.

During conversations about his regimental life Hugh often said "... it was all about the soldiers wasn't it?" "That's true but it was also about the way in which Hugh led them". Hugh's face would light up with that characteristic smile which throughout his long life brightened the faces of many soldiers.

Hugh's military life started at Ottershaw School. He and some contemporaries decided they wanted to become professional soldiers. Sandhurst followed and then his posting to the Royal Artillery 6th Field Regiment in Germany. Hugh received excellent training in that Regiment because he became a highly professional artillery officer. Throughout his career, when training others, he made full use of this grounding. He flourished

in the Royal Artillery Parachute Regiment 7RHA, where his enthusiasm and leadership were inspirational.

There is a classic photograph taken when Hugh supported 3 Para's operations during the Radfan campaign in South Arabia in 1964. The background is of those unforgiving Radfan mountains. Hugh, with his signaller beside him, is coaxing a radio set into transmitting a message. The steely and determined look in Hugh's eyes would seem to be transmitting far more effectively than that reluctant A41 radio.

While adjutant of 27th Regiment Royal Artillery in Germany Hugh volunteered for secondment to the fledgling Oman Artillery. His service during the campaign in Dhofar Province in Southern Oman is legendary. As a result he was honoured with the MBE - and also awarded the Sultan of Oman's Medal for Excellent Service for Gallantry WKhM (G). With his characteristic modesty he never mentioned these awards.

If Hugh had been asked which period of his military service he enjoyed the most it would most likely have been his service in Oman. There, at the beginning of the 1970's, his outstanding achievement was in developing the fledgling battery of the Oman Artillery, into being a

highly effective artillery unit. Virtually everything was in short supply. He set about training young Omanis to be competent gunners who, at his initiative, were rewarded with the privilege of wearing a treasured white lanyard. This inspired them to take pride in belonging to their Sultan's artillery - al Midfaaeya - the artillery which Hugh was crafting. He visited Jordan seeking assistance with equipment and training; and while visiting Bahrain he bought for £100 a surplus 25 pounder gun - chrome plated parts an'all - which had been used for funerals and ceremonial occasions. The gun was flown to Oman, tested, and brought into action in Dhofar where it became known as "The Colley Gun".

From the outset Hugh displayed tremendous enthusiasm and initiative - the hallmarks of his time in Oman. He led the battery on operations, and deployed the guns and the artillery observers with foresight and very effectively. The Oman artillery became experienced and trusted while it supported infantry regiments on operations - operations which led to the gradual ascendancy of the Omanis over the insurgents.

Hugh's development of the Oman artillery was astonishing. A brother officer at the time has said "I don't know how he did it". Hugh was skillful at pulling



together the nationalities that made up his command and he developed expertly relationships with his seniors, his comrades, his soldiers and the Sultan's Air Force, - all of whom respected him. Hugh, also, was astute in identifying Omanis as potential officers and thus the vital process of Omanisation gathered momentum within the artillery.

After two years Hugh returned home leaving the Oman artillery to become 1st Regiment The Sultan of Oman's Artillery - a Regiment well worthy of this distinguished title. Those who followed Hugh's command have each recognised the sure foundations on which he built the Regiment. Most importantly Hugh would come to know that Omanis, to this day, appreciate greatly his service in the interests of their Country.

Hugh returned home to command I Parachute Battery (Bull's Troop) in 7 RHA and was then appointed as Staff Captain HQRA in 4th Division in BAOR.

Hugh was later selected to command 4th Regiment Royal Artillery in Aldershot. This was an extremely challenging command. The heavy workload included a wide range of British and International responsibilities - far beyond the normal duties of a commander of an artillery regiment. Hugh flourished and

was, as always, like a small power station capable of delivering a huge amount of beneficial energy.

Hugh's energy was just what was needed to make 4th Regiment fit smoothly into the airborne role and his emphasis on training laid the foundations for most of the regiment to deploy successfully to the Falklands. All ranks, and their families, respected their commanding officer; they knew that he was truly interested in their well being. He put them first and that loyalty was often at his expense. Hugh's style of leadership is sometimes used, during the training of cadets at Sandhurst, as a shining example of good leadership.

Hugh's command of 4th Regiment was another of his impressive achievements. For this he was honoured with the OBE. The final paragraph of the citation for Hugh's honour reads:

" There is no doubt that Colonel Colley's exceptional personal performance has had a direct and personal influence on the solidarity of the NATO alliance and upon the standing of the British Army".

Hugh's subsequent appointment to become a member of the Directing Staff at the Army Staff College was prestigious and unique. His was one of the first, if not the first, of such appointments for an officer who had not

been a student at the College. Hugh became highly respected by his contemporaries and students once they had overcome their curiosity into the background of this Gunner officer of such short stature, Gunners were often the butt of "back hand" jokes but these were never at Hugh's expense.

During his retirement since 1986 Hugh led and supported Sultan's Armed Forces events especially reunions of those who served with him in Oman. He also supported wholeheartedly activities of the local Royal British Legion particularly the Poppy Appeal and the annual Remembrance Day Service.

There are many strong adjectives which describe Hugh's invincible yet kindly personality but one word describes it best of all - courage. Hugh was a courageous soldier. General Paton, that famous Second World War American soldier, said of his many soldiers "... as time moves on let us remember him not so much for the fact that he died but rather that he lived and gave so much to each of us". Those words apply most definitely to Hugh.

Hugh was widowed when his wife Kathy died in 2006. We give our sympathy and condolences to Rachel, Hugh's daughter, and her family.



REUNIONS

ROYAL ARTILLERY OFFICERS' ALANBROOKE LUNCH THU 6 MAR 25



The next Royal Artillery Officers' Alanbrooke Lunch is on Thu 6 Mar 25 at the Army & Navy Club, St James's Square, London. Drinks 1200. Lunch 1245. The Alanbrooke Lunch Club is open to all Gunners officers, Regular and Reserve whether serving or retired. The lunches cost £75 and the price includes pre-lunch drink, wine and port. A cash bar is available after lunch. The dress code for this event is lounge suits or equivalent. To attend the lunches you must be a member of the Alanbrooke Club. There is an annual membership fee of £10 but this is waived for serving officers. Members wishing to attend this lunch should make a bank transfer for £75 to the Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund (Sort code 30-11-75, Acc number 00568858) annotating your transfer with your initial and surname or send a cheque made to 'Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund' to the Regimental Secretariat Officer, Mrs Carla Brawn. If you make a bank transfer please email the Royal Artillery Secretariat Officer on Carla.Brawn100@mod.gov.uk to say that you have done so. Do spread the message

amongst your Gunner friends, and of course you may bring a guest (who may be non-military) should you wish, or bring a group of friends you served with. Commanding Officers are asked to encourage and facilitate attendance by their officers.

To purchase tickets please use the QR code



RAA CARLISLE BRANCH

Calling all gunners in the North of England scottish borders region RAA Branch Carlisle needs your support. Please contact RAA Secretary richard.davies557@mod.gov.uk

INFORMATION

BESPOKE WALKING STICKS

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

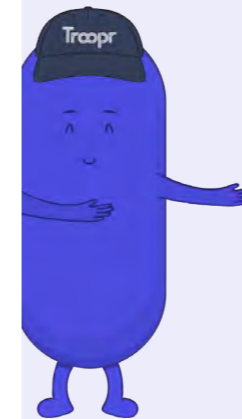


Troopr

About Troopr

We are the one place to go to promote your opportunities to the Armed Forces community.

Troopr is a platform designed to connect Forces-friendly organisations with the UK Armed Forces community. By creating a profile, your organisation can easily share tailored opportunities, including jobs, events, services and discounts, to a highly engaged audience. It's a powerful way to show support for the Armed Forces community, attract skilled talent, and build lasting relationships with our Armed Forces community.



Why Partner with Us?

- Tap into a pool of veterans, military people and their families.
- Position your organisation as a proud advocate for the Armed Forces community.
- Promote your jobs, training, events, and services to a dedicated audience.
- Make a lasting impact by supporting our Armed Forces community.

How it Works

- 1 Join the Directory:**
Become part of our trusted network of Forces-friendly organisations.
- 2 Post Your Opportunities:**
List jobs, events, services, and more with ease on Troopr's platform.
- 3 Engage the Community:**
Connect with veterans, personnel, and their families seeking opportunities and support.

troopr.co.uk

29 COMMANDO REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY

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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.

'Unity-Honour-Heart'

Looking for something different?

We are continuously looking for physically and mentally robust volunteers from the Tri-Services to become Special Observers.

To join us, volunteers must successfully complete the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Patrols Course (SRPC).

For those that are successful we guarantee a unique, challenging and rewarding career like no other in the regular army.

If you want to work with like-minded individuals, conduct high quality training and deploy across the globe; then look no further.

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

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

ROYAL ARTILLERY MENTORING PROGRAMME

AN INCLUSIVE PROGRAMME TO NURTURE TALENT AND MAXIMISE POTENTIAL. COMPLEMENTARY ROLE TO ROUTINE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY, PROVIDING A BROADER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY OUTSIDE OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

WHAT?

INSPIRE OUR TALENTED WORKFORCE; MAXIMISE INDIVIDUAL POTENTIAL; IMPROVE THE LIVED EXPERIENCE; DEVELOP SKILLS; BROADEN PERSPECTIVES; OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING.

WHY?

A PROGRAMME OPEN TO EVERYONE; ALL RANKS; TO BE BOTH MENTORS AND MENTEES.

WHO?

A RELATIONSHIP AND A PROCESS WHERE A PERSON OFFERS HELP, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO FACILITATE LEARNING OR DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLEAGUE.

HOW?

Mentee Form

Mentor Form

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
- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
2100 — 2359 HRS
- —
£70 PER PERSON

