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**MARCH 2025**



**ROYAL ARTILLERY  
GOLD CUP**

**Ex NORTHERN MAGPIE 25**

**ROYAL ARTILLERY  
EQUESTRIAN TEAM**

**GUNNER**

**#FINDandSTRIKE**



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



## MARCH 2025

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Royal Artillery Gold Cup, Sandown  
Image taken by Michael Patrick

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**Colonel P J Farrell OBE ADC  
Regimental Colonel Royal Artillery**

It was an honour and a delight to be invited to write the editorial for this edition of Gunner, and to introduce myself as your Regimental Colonel. I would like to say a huge thank you to my predecessor, Charlie Harmer, for really driving RHQ RA into the place it is now: at the centre of the Royal Regiment and, more importantly, at the forefront of looking after our people. I shall strive to continue that great work in the future. And congratulations to Charlie for his imminent promotion and command of the British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands. We are not the only change in RHQ. Our Regimental Secretary, Matthew Carter, heads to well-earned retirement, handing over to Paul Bates who I am sure will continue Matthew’s wonderful work, particularly with the charities.

It is an incredibly exciting time to arrive in RHQ RA. With a bright future, it feels like the beginning of our resurgence! Not just the long-term, ‘jam tomorrow’ future, but the here and now future. The Gurkha Gunners are incredibly close to fruition; we will see them in weeks and months, not years. The naysayers told us our workforce was going to plummet; it hasn’t. Of course, we would love more people and low inflow remains a concern, so we shall continue to invest time and resource in recruiting. But with nearly 90% of our workforce

requirement, I would suggest there is not much we can’t do. The equipment programme continues as quickly as it can – driven from the top of the Army – to recapitalise the Gunners: more guns, Watchkeeper’s replacement, new and novel munitions, more UAS. It all adds up to momentum we must maintain.

Communications remain a key role of RHQ. They have come on leaps and bounds in recent times and we will continue to enhance and refine them. The Gunner Net app is alive and well and I encourage you to join it. We are steadily increasing the distribution of the DOWNREP and Gunner magazine, and will double check both of their places in our communications strategy. We see a lot of activity reported in the DOWNREP but far less in print in the Gunner magazine; please do send in your pictures and stories to spread the word – especially the pictures!

I look forward to getting out and about and seeing our people. The RA Gold Cup at Sandown last week was a reminder of what a wonderful group of people the Gunner family is. As I look at the forecast of the WO1s’ Convention, the RA Boxing, visits to regiments, Gunner 25, the Spring Dinner, the RAA Assembly – the list goes on – it will be an amazing couple of years and I look forward to seeing the Gunners grow ever-stronger.



Press Release

January 2025

**“Unite Veterans with their pensions” campaign appeal  
from Forces Pension Society Charitable Fund.**

The largest campaign appeal to date is being funded by the Forces Pension Society Charitable Fund (FPSCF), the charity arm of the Forces Pension Society (FPS). It will involve a major advertising campaign in a wide spectrum of military media across all three services. The campaign theme is “Help us unite Veterans with their pensions.”

This latest appeal is part of an ongoing campaign, begun by the FPS, which identified the fact that historically, around 2,000 preserved Armed Forces pensions go unclaimed each year. Currently there are almost 15,000 pensions that remain unclaimed, many involving significant sums of money.

Pensions are not paid automatically. Veterans must apply to Veterans UK, using AFPS Form 8, or telephone 0800 085 3600.

In addition to seeking help from the military community to unite Veterans with their entitlements, the FPSCF, will campaign for a change in the rules, insisting the issue can be addressed via improvements to current practices. The charity will also encourage donations to help fund the programme.

**Group Captain (Retired) Jonathan Wheeler OBE, Chairman of the FPSCF said:**

**“For most former service personnel, a pension makes a considerable difference. And it is only right the MoD pays Veterans the pensions to which they are entitled. To this end, we will seek the support of the military community in identifying those who should be united with their pension. That’s why our campaign will reach across all three services delivering our powerful message in large space sizes and directing people to dedicated web pages.**

**“Additionally, we will press for reform of the current arrangements whereby the application rules result in Veterans missing out. We believe change is consistent with the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant.”**

FPSCF is the charitable arm of the FPS. The Charity supports the charitable work undertaken by the FPS and works with the War Widows and the Single Service Widow Associations, members of the Forces Pension Society or persons who served in the Armed Forces of the Crown (whether or not they were members of the Forces Pension Society) who are in need by virtue of financial hardship, sickness, disability or the effects of old age. The FPSCF is a charity registered with the Charity Commission, charity number 264524.





13th February 2025



Mr Stuart Reed, Chairman of Wycombe and District Branch with Mr John Taylor



The grandstand of Sandown Park played host to the Royal Artillery Gold Cup



Jockeys jump hurdles on the final straight



Several of the days races were closely contested



The Pipes and Drums of 19th Regiment (The Scottish Gunners) Royal Artillery



Each race winner rides into the Winner's Enclosure with a King's Troop RHA escort



The Royal Artillery Gold Cup is opened by a Gun Detachment firing a round



Members from across the Gunner Family gather at the RAGC



The Master Gunner St James's Park presents the Royal Artillery Gold Cup





## Exercise NORTHERN MAGPIE 25 (EX NM 25) Flaine, France 4-11 January 2025



101st Regiment Royal Artillery Group

Exercise NORTHERN MAGPIE 25 is 101 Regiment's annual winter skiing overseas Adventurous Training (AT) expedition. Each year, students on this expedition attend Ski Foundation (SF) courses in a bid to develop their skiing proficiency and mountain survival skills, ranging from beginners learning the ropes on Ski Foundation Level 1 to capable skiers attempting Ski Foundation Level 2 and beyond. As this expedition was the first instance of me ever donning a pair of salopettes, I was firmly towards the lower end of that ability spectrum as our coach departed Geneva airport. The area we were staying was incredibly beautiful, and this was highlighted in a dramatic change from green to black and white, as grassy fields

and pastures steadily gave way to alpine hills and mountain vistas during our steady ascent to the French resort of Flaine.

On our first morning of the course, while the more experienced students quickly departed for the ski runs, my fellow beginners and I donned our fresh skis upon flat snow to familiarise ourselves. Naturally, there was a rather steep learning curve, and many falls were suffered – an indication of the days to come! We began by practicing simple drills: gliding on a single ski, utilising poles to move and recover and skating.

Eventually, we progressed onto inclines and began steadily increasing our confidence at moving vertically as well as horizontally, first by sliding downhill on flat skis but also clambering uphill on their edges,



both sidestepping and herringboning. This culminated in downhill speed control with the infamous 'snow plough', rounding out our first day with a steady and gradual descent of a green slope.

Each evening had the group sequestered in a small quiet corner of the hotel to engage in a reflection on the day's events with our instructor, as well as discussions of various topics adjacent to the skiing experience. This first evening covered mountain survival and heat/cold injury prevention on the slopes, but as the days continued, we also reviewed ski run conduct and etiquette, casualty drills procedure, weather forecasting, and mountain navigation.

Our second day continued our development with the snow plough into ever more confident linked turns on the beginner slopes upon which we had practised the previous day, and eventually onto more demanding green slopes a short gondola ride and button lift away. Here, we faced new challenges, practising turns and speed control on steeper and varied gradients. The end of this day marked our first ski down the mountainside, taking a route that was a confluence of red, blue and green slopes – returning to our hostel alongside a host of other skiers was a definite confidence boost after a number of falls during the earlier parts of the day!

This confidence was seen by our instructor however, and we shortly found ourselves ascending to the greater heights of the resort on an enclosed gondola. Taking our first steps onto the mountain proper, it was hard not to feel intimidated by the sheer scale of the slopes we could witness in all directions, stretching beyond line of sight, deep into the clouds of violently swirling snow flurries

hundreds of metres above our heads. The naming convention of the slopes we were now witnessing ranged from encouraging in the form of lustrous precious gemstones (Tanzanite, Emeraude, Saphir) to menacing in the form of ominous demonic figures (Belial, Lucifer, Belzebuth) – there were a surprising amount of the latter!

The sudden increase in gradient paired



LBdr Bell feeling the effects of the snow

with a frustrating lack of visibility tested the assuredness of many within the group, and our first blue run (as expected) came with no small number of tumbles. Distances that would have taken us minutes to traverse the day before were taking hours, and the chill of the biting wind did naught to ease this plight. These setbacks initially knocked our confidence, but upon reaching the bottom of some more aggressive slopes and observing the routes we had just taken, it was hard not





to feel a sense of pride and achievement, especially when one had in mind the green slopes, we were similarly struggling with not 2 days prior.

Our confidence and skills continued to grow as we attempted more blue runs throughout the reaches of the resort, with several of the more confident members of the group beginning to smoothly execute linked parallel turns while succinctly navigating the group down the slopes using the resort map. Thanks to good fortune and patient instruction, each of the group finished the penultimate day with a pass mark for the foundation course, allowing one final day of free skiing before returning home.

The main takeaway – one shared both by my course mates in the moment and anecdotally by those who had taken their first skiing steps many years prior – is that while every adventurous step into a new challenge is initially met with (sometimes overwhelming!) discomfort and panic, it is followed by immediate derision of that previous worry the instant after that challenge has been conquered. Within five days, we had gone from wobbling along nigh flat ground to comfortably descending kilometres of blue and red slopes with

minimal trouble, routes that would have had us quivering mere hours earlier.

The confidence gained by all those within the cohort was palpable, and I do not doubt that holding onto that earned conviction will benefit us all in our careers to come – both civilian and military.

The aim of Adventure Training is to push soldiers out of their comfort zone in different, challenging but rewarding environments, allowing soldiers to put into practice, leadership, physical robustness, and mental fortitude. Ex NM 25 achieved its aim and was an unreserved success, engendering comradeship, teamwork and, with the exceptional capacity to develop our Ski Instructors, the Regiment now has a greater capability to generate future SF exercises.

The officer in charge, Capt Dee Crawford said “I’m confident that Ex NM 25 will help towards the continuing goals and challenges that face the regiment. Events like this will also have a most positive effect on recruiting and retention which is even more important with the new levels that need to be attained”.

by 2Lt Matt Burden RA  
269 (West Riding) Battery  
101st Regiment Royal Artillery



Cross Country Skiing



The Royal Regiment wishes to congratulate the following:  
**Appointment to the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire**

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Craig Herberts RA



Presentation of Elizabeth Cross to the family of 420863 Lieutenant John Alexander Joe, Royal Regiment of Artillery. York Army Museum, Saturday 15th February 2025

### RA Historical Society 2025 Programme

Date and Timings	Event	Subject	Lecturer/Lead	Bookings Close	Cost per Head
Wednesday 02 April 1100-1200 hrs	Spring Lecture, Artillery Centre, Larkhill	Wellington and Expeditionary Warfare in the Iberian Peninsula 1807-1814	Col Nick Lipscombe	Wednesday 19 March	To be notified
Wednesday 21 May 1930 hrs	Webinar	The Walcheren Expedition 1809	Dr Martin Howard	Friday 16 May	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.





## Exercise WYVERN COMMANDO WHITEOUT



Left to right Mne Alex Mann, Mne Jak Plummer, Capt Aaron Chapman, Bdr Toby Barker, LBdr Adam Williamson, Gnr James Norris, Gnr Connor Wright and LBdr Leon Batten

In December 2024, 24 members of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery embarked on an ambitious ski expedition to Tignes, France, for Exercise WYVERN COMMANDO WHITEOUT. This adventurous training exercise provided personnel with an opportunity to develop resilience, enhance their skiing ability, and take on the physical and mental challenges of the alpine environment. After a busy schedule in 2024, which saw personnel deployed overseas for months at a time, the expedition served as a much-needed opportunity to recover and reflect. Adventurous training remains a fundamental part of military life, pushing individuals beyond their comfort zones while allowing them to recharge, away from the pressures of operations.

Skiing, with its physical demands and technical challenges, provided the perfect medium for this year's expedition.

The team departed the Royal Citadel, Plymouth, on 13 December, heading straight to RAF Yeovil to collect one of their instructors before beginning the long journey to France. The trip spanned 26 hours, including a two-hour ferry crossing from Dover to Calais, followed by an overnight drive through France. Despite a few tired faces on arrival, the breathtaking scenery of the French Alps quickly restored morale, with the towering peaks of Tignes offering a glimpse of what was to come. Before settling in, the group stocked up on fresh supplies from a local supermarket, making use of Cash In Lieu Of Rations (CILOR) to ensure each four-



person apartment was well-equipped for the week. The self-catered accommodation, complete with kitchenettes, bathrooms, and balconies, provided the perfect base - allowing groups to cook together and debrief over hot meals after long days on the slopes.

The first morning on the slopes was spent assessing each individual's ability, with all personnel completing a few warm-up runs on a nearby green slope. This allowed instructors to divide the group accordingly, ensuring each individual received the right level of coaching for their experience. From that point on, training intensified, covering a variety of ski techniques while progressively increasing in difficulty. The weather conditions throughout the week varied dramatically, giving personnel the full spectrum of alpine experiences - from near-total whiteouts to perfect bluebird skies. The group was based in Val Claret (2,300m above sea level), the highest village in Tignes, which boasts ski-in, ski-out accommodation and direct access to chairlifts leading to Val d'Isère and beyond. The slopes catered to all skill levels, allowing for both beginners and advanced skiers to push their personal limits.

Each day on the mountain lasted up to eight hours, with training delivered in small groups at a 1:6 instructor-to-student ratio. The beginner group quickly progressed from basic snowploughing on nursery slopes to confidently navigating steeper terrain, while the more advanced SF2 and SF3 groups tackled challenging pisted runs, ski touring, and off-piste skiing.

For the SF2 and SF3 groups, avalanche awareness was a key focus. Personnel received crucial training in search-and-rescue techniques, learning how to use avalanche transceivers and probes to locate buried casualties. These skills are directly transferable to Cold Weather Warfare Courses in the High North, reinforcing the expedition's operational relevance. One of the highlights of the week was an overnight stay in a remote mountain lodge for the SF3 group, which tested their ability to operate in extreme environments. Navigating through deep snow with touring skis, they experienced firsthand the challenges of movement in sub-zero conditions, essential preparation for future winter deployments.

By the end of the expedition, every participant had demonstrated significant personal growth, from first-time skiers overcoming their initial apprehensions to seasoned personnel refining their technical ability in some of the world's best ski terrain. Beyond the physical challenges, the trip strengthened team cohesion and resilience, with personnel supporting each other through both the highs and inevitable tumbles on the slopes. Despite the demanding nature of the training, injuries were minimal and dealt with swiftly and appropriately - testament to the professionalism of both the instructors and participants.

Exercise WYVERN COMMANDO WHITEOUT was an overwhelming success, proving once again that adventurous training remains a vital part of 29 Commando's development programme. As personnel now look ahead to their next





set of operational commitments, the skills and confidence gained in Tignes will no doubt prove invaluable in the challenges to come. With eyes already on 2026, the next iteration of WYVERN COMMANDO WHITEOUT promises to be just as rewarding.

by Lieutenant W Daw RA  
7 (Sphinx) Commando Battery Royal Artillery  
29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery



## THE DUNCAN ESSAY COMPETITION 2025

The Duncan Essay Competition is sponsored by the Royal Artillery Institution which is piloting a new approach this year. Previously a purely essay-based competition, a more modern approach will be adopted for 2025. Whilst the traditional essay format will remain submissions will also be accepted via other mediums including podcast, animation, power point presentation or any alternative format that enables the same level of analysis expected of the original essay competition. See the rules below for details.

The competition is open to all ranks who are serving members of the Royal Artillery (Regular and Reserve). All submissions are to be sent to RHQ RA Adjt no later than 25 Mar 2025. Additional direction and guidelines regarding RA Unit submissions will be issued by Formation HQs.

### The Prizes are as follows;

1st Place - £1500.00

2nd Place - £1000.00

3rd Place - £750.00

4th Place - £500.00

The entries will be graded and judged by a designated panel and invigilated by the Regimental Colonel, their decision is final. Results will be published in Gunner Magazine and the RA DOWNREP.

### Competition Rules:

- Questions are to be chosen from one of the titles provided by RHQ RA below.
- Submissions must be original work but can be from a single author or by collaboration.
- Virtual submissions must be pre-recorded and last between 15 - 25 mins.
- Essay submissions must be written in accordance with the Joint Services Command and Staff College Essay Writing Guide January Edition 2014. Essays not submitted in the correct format may be discounted. Please contact RHQ RA for a copy of the writing guide.
- The essay word count remains between 2,500 and 3,500 words in length and must be unclassified. An abstract is not required.
- All submissions illustrated with pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs must have the source stated for copyright purposes.
- To avoid a marking bias, all submissions must be anonymous and submitted using a nom de plume/pseudonym displayed in the top right corner of presentations and on the header on each page of essays.
- A covering letter must accompany each submission to include the rank, name, contact details and the author's chosen pseudonym which will be retained solely by the RHQ RA Adjt.
- Submissions must be received by RHQ RA electronically.
- All submissions will become the copyright of the RAI and may be reproduced in journals, magazines and presentations belonging to or associated with the RAI, at the discretion of the Regimental Secretary.

### DUNCAN ESSAY COMPETITION TITLES 2025

1. How should the British Army adapt its structure and equipment to reflect lessons from Ukraine and the centrality of artillery in high intensity warfighting?
2. What must the Royal Artillery do to ensure that it trains at the pace of relevance?
3. Should the Royal Artillery be considered a combat arm, rather than combat support?
4. What are the risks and benefits to Royal Artillery capabilities of reinvestment in high-intensity, armoured warfighting, balanced against the context of global security dynamics, for example, instability in the Middle East?
5. Explore how autonomous technology and artificial intelligence could transform artillery capabilities. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of integrating autonomous systems into the Royal Artillery?
6. Talented, diverse people are vital for the delivery of the Royal Artillery's capabilities; yet attracting and keeping sufficient numbers remains a challenge. What improvements can be made to ensure we recruit and retain such people?





## Exercise SNOWSTORM 25 Flachau, Austria



On January 10th, 2025, a small group of soldiers and officers from 47 Regiment Royal Artillery swapped their usual training grounds for the slopes as they embarked with 6 other Royal Artillery regiments on the trip to Austria. Nestled in the heart of the Austrian Alps, Flachau is a snow sports paradise that offers a perfect range of slopes making it a great introduction to snowboarding for beginners and advanced riders. The expansive Ski Amadé region, boasts over 760 kilometres of interconnected pistes with state-of-the-art facilities. Having reached the accommodation after a long drive the snowboarders screwed on their bindings and had an initial brief ready to start the following day.

On the first day, we were split into three groups based on ability: novice, intermediate and advanced. There was a wide range of skill ranging from those

who have never been on the slopes before to the advanced, seasoned riders. All three groups started at the resort of Flachauwinkl only 10 minutes from the main town. The novices began by learning to strap into their boards and practicing balancing techniques while the intermediate and advanced groups headed up the lifts to dust of any rust on blue and red runs. By the end of the first couple of days most novices had developed a basic technique and were soon able to progress to the resort's wide, forgiving green slopes. The instructors were patient, professional, and made the process of learning or improving technique an enjoyable experience.

After a day spent on the slopes, the village offered plenty of après-ski activities to relax and unwind. A particular highlight was watching an Austrian Celebrity Ski team compete against professionals such as



Olympic gold medallist Hermann Maier in a slalom race.

Within a few days of practice, the novice group ventured onto longer blue and red runs, gaining confidence and rhythm. Meanwhile the intermediate and advanced riders practised both boardercross and slopestyle in preparation for competitions later in the week. The standard of riding across all levels was notably some of the best the instructors had seen in recent years. The first week for the novice category led up to a slalom style race with competitors weaving down a 250-metre section of slope, against the clock. Despite a few falls and DNF's groupings were tight across the board with a strong display of board control and speed from the novice category. The intermediate and advanced groups then competed in boardercross with

SSgt D Munson (REME) coming in first place. The following day they participated in the final event – slopestyle where WO2 Lavery (7 PARA RHA) displayed exceptional skill and board control coming first place.

Overall, the trip was a resounding success, all ranks and abilities had an enjoyable experience with many already keen to attend next year. The end of the trip wrapped up with presentations and awards. Congratulations to 7 PARA RHA who won the overall award for combined results across the snowboarding competitions.

Finally, a huge thank you to RACPD and all other organisations involved for assisting in making this trip happen and run smoothly.

by 2Lt R Poulton RA  
Gibraltar Troop Commander  
43 Battery  
47th Regiment Royal Artillery







## George Burke 131584



George Burke with battery

In 2008 my father Ron Burke encouraged me to start researching our family tree. He suggested I start by looking at the life of grandfather George Burke who was born in Walton, Liverpool in 1891, moved with his family to Seacombe, Wirral around 1900, and passed away in Greasby, Wirral in 1979. My father could remember George's service number, 131584, and that he had served as a gunner in World War I, during which he had been injured and ended up in a Prisoner of War (POW) camp that housed Russian prisoners, one odd thing was that he knew a few Italian words and mentioned a place called "Montebaloon". At the time this made little sense to us as we thought George had served on the Western Front.

I joined one of the family history sites, and searched the military records for Burke and 131584, I was lucky as my grandfather's

army record had survived about 15 of it. From the record I discovered that George was appointed to the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) on 22 April 1916, he trained at the artillery school at Rolleston, and on 9 July 1916 was posted to 48th Division British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Soon after he transferred to 58 Battery, 35 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery part of 7th Division. The records also revealed why George knew some Italian, as in November 1917 7th Division was sent to Italy where it deployed on the Asiago Plateau to help the Italians repel the Austrians. The records also showed that George was been gassed, had received a shrapnel wound to his arm, and had been taken prisoner during an Austrian attack on 15 June 1916. Amazingly the records also contained a letter from George's mother Annie to the Army saying



he was alive, and she had received postcards from him, I guess she had been informed he was missing presumed dead.

I was so fascinated by this that I ordered up 35 Brigade's war diaries at the National Archives. These contained a five-page typed, detailed report on the very action in which George was taken prisoner in. On 15 June 1918 the men of 58 Battery were "in front of our front line wire N. of PELLY CROSS" preparing new positions for the guns, the men did not have their rifles with them, unfortunately this was the very day and place of the Austrian spring offensive. I suspect questions were asked as to why all four of 35 Brigade's batteries were out of position or out of the Brigade's control, hence the commanding officer's lengthy report, during which he revealed "The 35th Brigade RFA had therefore no defensive command". The Austrians sent George to a military hospital, and the family even has a photograph of him sitting in uniform on a hospital bed. Once he had recovered he was then sent to Deutsch Gabel POW camp in what is now called Jablonné v Podještědí in the Czech Republic, this camp housed some Russians so that was another part of the mystery explained.

Using the details from the war diary I was able to locate the position north of Pelly Cross where George was taken prisoner, it is about 2.6 kms southwest of Asiago in the Province of Vicenza, and close to the village of Canove. In August 2008 I visited this area and took photos of the rough site where 58 Battery was engaged. While it is a beautiful place in the summer, the winters are cold and 7th Division had a hard job preparing and supplying the positions up on the snow-

covered Plateau. As for "Montebaloon" it is actually Montebelluna a supply base during World War I, and where 35 Brigade serviced its guns.

In 2017 I inherited a treasure trove of my grandfather George Burke's effects from his daughter Joan, this included his medals, a Royal Field Artillery badge (RFA), photographs, postcards from the Prisoner of War (POW) camp, various World War I souvenirs, and a letter from King George V, I understand the latter was a standard letter sent to all men who had been prisoners of war (POWs). Around this time I posted a brief profile of George's wartime career on the Imperial War Museum's "Lives of the First World War" site, this reaped dividends. I thought that with the precious objects I had inherited I had everything that survived relating to George's time in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA), little did I know.

Fast forward to late afternoon on 11 December 2024 when I received a message out of the blue from a family history site. The message began "Someone on Reddit just posted a genealogical query regarding R.A.F. [sic] George Burke wanting to return a watch to his family". I was stunned and quickly followed the link to the post on the Reddit forum. There I discovered that a man in the Netherlands, Shane Westerlaken, had indeed found my grandfather's watch, there was no doubt about it because on the rear of the case was engraved:

R.F.A.  
58 Batt  
35th Brig  
G Burke

Shane had bought the watch from a German dealer and discovered the engraving on the



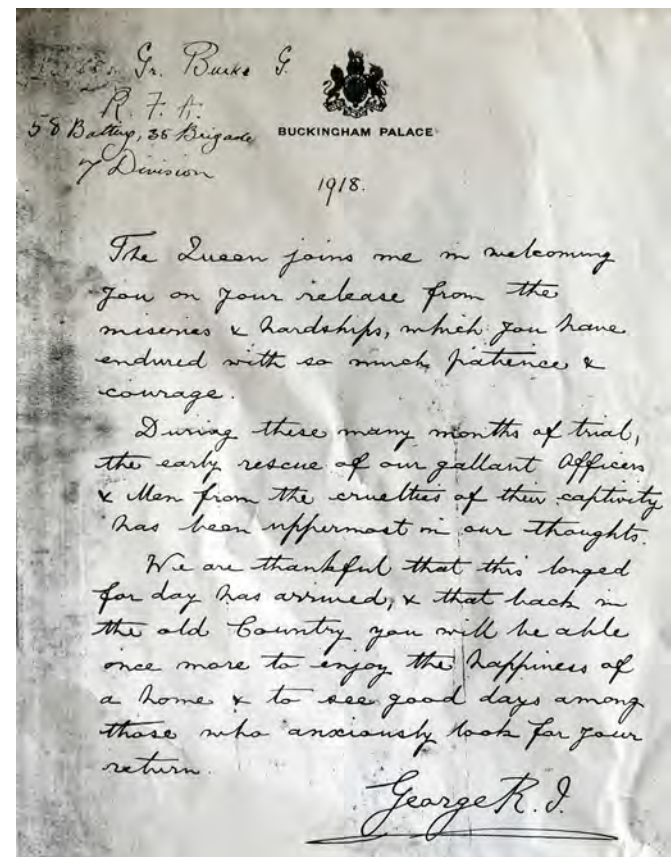


case, he'd done some research and found the profile I'd written on the Imperial War Museum's (IWM) Lives of the First World War" site. However, there was no contact information for me on the site so on 11 December Shane posted on Reddit asking for advice on how to track down George Burke's family. Within an hour a member of Reddit found my tree on the family history site and sent me the message, and within half an hour of that Shane and I were in contact. Shane's only interest was in returning the watch to our family, he did not want any recompense which is extremely generous of him. Shane sent the watch to my sister in Brittany where I picked it up over Christmas, and I sent him a gift of two very nice bottles one of whisky the other of rum.

As to how the watch got to Germany I can think of a few scenarios. Perhaps the watch was confiscated when George was taken prisoner, or it was cut off his wrist when they attended to the injuries to his left arm, it is also possible that George simply swapped it at the prisoner of war (POW) camp, there was a World War I Austrian medal and ribbon in his possessions. Suffice to say the watch has been on an incredible journey, the UK to France, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Austria (?), Germany, the Netherlands, Brittany and now home to the UK. I now have my grandfather's watch from World War I an extraordinary memento of his time in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA), and as my father says "what a tale it could tell if it could talk."



George Burke and other soldier



**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](mailto:military@bremont.com)

**BREMONT**  
CHRONOMETERS

TESTED BEYOND ENDURANCE





In recently going through my father's old paperwork, these two accounts were found in his handwriting. He was an Instructor in Gunnery (IG) for many years and specialised in sound ranging and mortar location. It seems that life was a lot of fun!

His Long Gunnery Staff Course No 18 had invited the Naval equivalent course to Larkhill for a social weekend and this is his account of the two weekends that occurred in February and June of 1959. The mess games were well known after dinner activities. It is not known how much, if any, serious gunnery was discussed at these occasions.

The course assembled at the RA Mess to await the arrival of the visitors. Unfortunately, their map reading was not up to standard and the cars they were travelling in were spread over two counties. We awaited their arrival in the bar and eventually they were all present and were shown to their rooms. They reassembled in the bar and after an entertaining session we all moved off to a local pub. One car left the road on the return trip, but they were all

fine and returned to the mess with very sore heads but managed to sing their heads off for the rest of the night!

By the next night everyone had recovered and guest night was held. After dinner, 'Billiard fives' started the entertainment and with a firm set of Larkhill rules, the Army won! Next came a boat race which the Army won easily thanks to Dick Ward-Best and me, who are both proficient at downing pints in seconds.

The Navy 'gun drill' followed in the hallway and this ended with the firing of the Barbara Cannon and the target falling at the very end of the corridor. It took a number of rounds to make the target fall.

After a short break, bicycle 'pig sticking' started and the Army were victorious. It was then back to the ante-room for the pyramid game where a considerable amount of energy was expended without a clear result.

[Ed. note: A game where a human pyramid is formed, and the winning team is the highest pyramid]



Thus the mounted slide rule was retained by the Army and the Navy retired back to Whale Island with the wonderful picture we had presented to them to mark the occasion.

### Second visit to Larkhill in June 1959

Let us look back, if we can, through the haze of RN cigarettes and the inevitable cloud of smoke that occurs at such occasions to those days in February. That was when the brains of Whale Island came to the seat of gunnery to learn about 'gunnery'? The rematch was on.

It all began on the Wednesday with the traditional crazy cricket match. John Lean was the first batsman for the Navy but disaster struck when he was hit in the eye with the first ball. This quickly formed in a black eye, but like Nelson, he 'sailed' on for the rest of his two overs. How many runs he scored was never really recorded but he was quickly followed by Bradbury and Holbrook wearing full Cossack kit! At this point, the game resembled more a game of baseball than cricket. Our American, Chuck Goodfellow, was then allowed to 'bowl' which had nothing to do with cricket!

The navy scorer made it +20 to them and -10 to us which was interesting as our

scorer, Mike Reggles, made it 130 to us and -85 to the Navy! It was agreed that the Army had won. The victory was confirmed by the staggering consumption of 234 pints of beer in three hours!

On the Thursday we had a formal dinner in the mess and this again was followed by the indoor games. With our two stars at the boat race, the Army were quickly in the lead 1-0.

Our lead was immediately removed by the excellent billiard firing of the Navy. However, that was the end for the Navy as the Army won the bicycle tent pegging, the gun race and the pyramid game. We did learn a new skill in that the Navy taught us how to shoot coins at an open box. A splendid effort by all.

Friday morning was grey both inside and out, but all concerned had recovered in time for the tennis, squash and golf matches which the Army were victorious in all, though we did need the gamesmanship of Clive Walker to clinch the golf.

The visit ended with a 'thrash' at the Hatchet pub where yet more beer was consumed and some excellent curry.

So, the Slide Rule and the Golden Gun stayed at Larkhill after what had been a splendid three days which were enjoyed by all.







LBdr Lauren Sweetland now subsequently promoted to Bdr, 19th Regiment Royal Artillery

This year has seen the team go from strength to strength. Catering for all levels of horse riding, we have had riders compete at the Army Grassroots and Intermediate League, RAF Championship, Services Cup at Royal Windsor Horse Show, UK Armed Forces Dressage Championship, Royal Tournament, RN Championship, UK Armed Forces Championship, and the Services Championship at London International Horse Show.

In Dressage, our riders within this discipline have had an exceptional year. LBdr Liz Griggs on her own Harri Coeswan has had tremendous success

at the British Dressage Associated Championship coming away as Bronze League Champion. An enormous achievement for an older horse who used to be a Saddle Club school horse. The UK Armed Forces Dressage Championship saw LBdr Lauren Sweetland on her own Rolanda I, come away as the Reserve Champion and Maj Harriet Chapman on her own Meres Jumbo Jet taking the Introductory Champion. We have also had other riders dip their toes into dressage with Bdr Hails qualifying for the Blenheim Palace Retraining of Racehorses on her own Nordic Fire.



Many of the military events host show jumping competitions and we have seen plenty of our riders come away with rosettes and silverware. Maj Chapman won the inaugural Royal Tournament Grassroots Champion at the Defence Animal Training Regiment on her own Meres Jumbo Jet. Gnr Charlotte Pudge won all her qualifying rounds to qualify for London International Horse Show where she rode two impressive rounds to take the overall win on her own Cassinaro Dream. In addition, Gnr Pudge also had a fantastic time competing at the Mediterranean Equestrian Tour in Spain where she won a class and placed in her other classes. We also had Bdr Charlene Davey out with her young horse Perseventia Honour take Novice Reserve Champion at the Royal Navy Championship and LBdr Sweetland turn her hand/hoof to a bit of showjumping on the lovely Asby Mills Amigo.

In Eventing, this has seen Maj Chapman with her own Meres Jumbo Jet and SSgt Lisa Leighton with her own Kilrainey Solo Performer, an ex-military working horses from the King's Troop RHA, qualify and attend the Cotswold Cup Championship 3-day event, a strong end to the season. SSgt Leighton place 12th out of 40 riders. The team had a strong turnout at the Army and Royal Artillery Hunter Trials, seeing a clean sweep in the novice class: 1st SSgt Lisa Leighton, 2nd LBdr Liz Griggs who every so often likes to have a jump over the rustic fences and 3rd Maj Harriet Chapman who has stepped up to the 80 class comfortably.

We have had our novice riders attend the Army Grassroots League. This league aims to provide new riders with competition experience and encourage them to build up

through the levels. LBdr Scott McDermott placed overall 3rd in the league. Showing how valuable this league is, he has now purchased his own horse and begun competing at the various military events in dressage and showjumping. LBdr Amy Richardson gave an impressive performance in the new Intermediate League placing 2nd in the combined training class and is now beginning to bring her own young horse to events.

An enormous thank you to Larkhill Eventing for their donation to the team. Without this funding we would not be able to support our riders' development and subsequent success.

Finally, a huge thank you to our 4-legged partners. Without these incredible horses we would not have a sport to enjoy.

#### Team Awards:

The team award for the Army Inter-Corp League winners.

LBdr Lauren Sweetland – Full army Colours and Army Riders Rider of the year.

Gnr Charlotte Pudge – Army half colours.

SSgt Lisa Leighton – RA Lifetime Achievement award.



Left to right LBdr Griggs, LBdr McDermot, Gnr Pudge, LBdr Sweetland, LBdr Morton, Maj Chapman and LBdr Richardson





## Exercise ALPINE TIGER



Photo credit: Capt Jonathan Buchanan, Army Photographer at Ex LC

Captain Lauren Bailey (26 RA) skiing for the silver medal at the Army Championship's Super G

Exercise ALPINE TIGER is the Royal Artillery's annual alpine training scheme and championships, designed to develop physical and mental resilience, courage and leadership in an unfamiliar environment. Winter sports continue to be a unique part of the British Army's 'offer', providing an exciting way to take soldiers overseas and do something that, for most, is only accessible because they serve in uniform.

With the support of the Royal Artillery Institute, MBDA UK and Saab UK, 82 soldiers and junior officers from 11 regular units and 104th Regiment RA participated in the training scheme, reducing to 70 for the championship week due to exercise commitments. Two thirds of participants were junior soldiers and a third were novice; it was

rewarding when French ski instructors offered their "genuine respect" as they watched mental resilience and determination of the Gunners in action during the Super G speed race. 35 racers from nine teams progressed on to the Army Qualifying Championships, with the four-person 1 RHA team and four individual Gunner Alpine racers invited to compete at the Army Championships. Congratulations to 1 RHA, who won the Army Championship's Team Giant Slalom and Super G. Captain Rob vanbeck (1 RHA), who won the Army Championship's Individual Slalom, placed second in the Individual Giant Slalom and Individual Overall Combination, was selected to captain the Army men's team. Congratulations, also, to Captain Lauren Bailey (26 RA) – selected for the women's



alpine team having podiumed in the women's Army Championship's Super G and Downhill. At the Inter Service Snow Sports Championships 2025 (ISSSC 2025), Captain Rob vanbeck came third overall in the men's competition and was selected as 1 of 4 tri-service personnel to represent the UK Armed Forces at the British Championships. Captain Lauren Bailey won the blue-ribbon Downhill event and won the female 'best newcomer' award.

**Soldiers from across the Royal Regiment summed up their experience:**

**Gunner Noah Brown, 7th Parachute Regiment RHA – Royal Artillery Novice Champion** "I found the races were some of the best parts, starting in Les Deux Alpes where I was able to compete for the first time, and then moving onto a higher level of competition at Serre Chevalier. Overall, this was one of the best choices I have made in my army career so far, and I fully plan on doing this again next year."

**Private Anna Hollinshead, AGC(SPS) attached to 3rd Regiment RHA**

"I've loved the competitive yet supportive environment, particularly skiing alongside different regiments. Participating with 3 RHA has been a highlight – I didn't know anyone beforehand, but I've come away with amazing friendships. It's also been inspiring to watch my teammates, some of whom had never skied before, make incredible progress over three weeks. I wholeheartedly recommend alpine skiing to anyone – it's an unforgettable experience, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity!"

**Gunner Ellie Moss, 32nd Regiment RA – winner of the 'Best Endeavor' award at the Army Qualifying Championships**

"I will never forget the feeling of standing in the start tent overwhelmed by nerves that were quickly taken over with excitement when I got on the run, the constant adrenaline during, and the accomplishment I felt when I finished the race. Moving into the Army's Qualifying Championships, Ex PIPEDOWN, was a whole new challenge but one that I thoroughly enjoyed. The teams were incredibly supportive, friendly and encouraging. I will always value the memories I made with them on the slopes. There are no words that really do my experience of Ex ALPINE TIGER justice. It was phenomenal and I would jump at the chance to get back and do it all again."

**Gunner Marvile Williams, 26th Regiment RA – winner of the Royal Artillery's most improved award**

"Growing up in the Caribbean, I never thought that I would be skiing, much less racing. Learning never to give up (perseverance) was a lesson that I took back with me from this ski trip, no matter how many times I fell, how many times I thought that I couldn't do it, I couldn't turn, or I couldn't stay up right – I persevered. I tried and tried until I got comfortable enough to race and to compete. Alpine skiing has been the best time that I've had, and I can honestly see myself participating every year, improving and hopefully getting on that podium."





**Lance Bombardier Josh Gothorp, 1st Regiment RHA – Royal Artillery Junior Champion** “I was pushed out of my comfort zone, particularly during race week. Alpine racing is a very different type of skiing that I’d recommend to anyone who is up for a challenge and wants to push themselves. This was an experience I will not forget, and I will seek the opportunity to attend again in the future.”

**Bombardier Mark Birkett, 1st Regiment RHA**

“Alpine skiing enhances cardiovascular fitness, strength and agility, as well as mental robustness, decision making and determination. These are all extremely beneficial in my job as a soldier. It’s great to see the new generation of skiers coming through with the intention of coming back every year to progress as I have. This allows me the opportunity to pass on my knowledge and experience just as the previous generation of skiers did for me.”



Bombardier Tim Hill (104 RA) went on to be the highest placed Army Reservist at the Army Championships

**Bombardier Tim Hill, 104th Regiment RA – Army Reservist and Royal Artillery Team Captain**

“I have been participating in the Gunner Alpine scheme for a number of years and had the honour of being selected as the RA Team Captain for the past two years. I am looking forward to building up the reservist participation within the sport over the coming years, as I truly believe this sport makes us all better soldiers and also builds so much character, enabling young soldiers to learn not only how to ski, but new life skills too.”

**Sergeant Sophie Barnes, 19th Regiment RA (The Scottish Gunners)**

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t scared and at times didn’t think I could do it, but every race I found myself at the top of the slope, back in the start gate ready to take on the challenge. Finishing the race was the best feeling, the adrenaline and excitement that you got going down was amazing, I may not have always got the best times but for me the aim was always to make sure I finish each race. The team spirit between everyone involved was one of the best bits and I would recommend it to anyone.”



Gunner Noah Brown (7 Para RHA) skiing his way to winning the Royal Artillery novice category



**RESULTS**

**MBDA Royal Artillery Slalom**

Individual Champion – Captain R vanbeck, 1st Regiment RHA  
Ladies Champion – Captain L Bailey, 26th Regiment RA  
Team Champion – 1st Regiment RHA

**Saab Royal Artillery Giant Slalom**

Individual Champion – Captain R vanbeck, 1st Regiment RHA  
Ladies Champion – Captain L Bailey, 26th Regiment RA  
Team Champion – 1st Regiment RHA

**Royal Artillery Super G**

Individual Champion – Captain R vanbeck, 1st Regiment RHA  
Ladies Champion – Captain L Bailey, 26th Regiment RA  
Team Champion – 1st Regiment RHA



Captain Lauren Bailey (26 RA) and Captain Rob vanbeck (1 RHA) at the Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships downhill

**Junior category:** Lance Bombardier J Gothorp, 1st Regiment RHA

**Novice category:** Gunner N Brown, 7th Parachute Regiment RHA

**Veteran category:** Captain F Petterson, 47th Regiment RA

**Royal Artillery Ladies Combination Champion:** Captain L Bailey, 26th Regiment RA

**Royal Artillery Individual Combination Champion:** Captain R vanbeck, 1st Regiment RHA

**Royal Artillery Team Combination Champions:** 1st Regiment RHA.

by Lt Col C M Wane MBE RA  
Chairperson Alpine  
Royal Artillery Winter Sports Association



Captain Rob vanbeck (1 RHA) skiing to gold at the Army Championship’s Individual Slalom





**A Tale of Two Teams - 3 RHA Skiing**



3 RHA Alpine team

Snow sports remains one of the jewels in the crown of 'The Offer'. 3 RHA was proud to field both Alpine and Nordic Teams in action at the Army Qualifying Championships in Les Contamines.

This followed a journey starting at the back end of November, with months of training and competition to get the teams to this point.

The Nordic team had the steepest learning curve, participating in Ex NORDIC GUNNER in Skeikampen, Norway, learning both skate and classic styles and raced in multiple Biathlon races, improving their marksmanship concurrently with their fitness. Pte Ledden, from our AGC (SPS) detachment, raced superbly, coming 3rd at the Gunner champs in the Men's Novice 10km Classic.

At the RA Alpine Ski Championships in Les Deux Alpes, even with some challenging

conditions, the Alpine team had a magnificent outing, taking seven Bronze medals across the competition.

- Super G Novice - Bronze, Gnr Bond
- Super G Team - Bronze, 3 RHA A Team (Capt Hall, Lt Morris, LBdr Murphy, Pte Hollinshead)
- Overall Combined Female - Bronze, Pte Hollinshead

Five members of the team went forward to compete at the Divisional Championships alongside the 3 RHA Nordic team.

In all it has been a highly successful period for 3 RHA's skiing output, with new faces across all ranks getting significant time and experience on the snow and ice. A huge congratulations to all the skiers who took part.

by 2Lt M J Mundy RA  
G Troop Commander  
D Battery RHA  
3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery




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.







# Royal Artillery Assembly

**FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> – SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> 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

### Gunner Sunday

Gunner Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea will take place on Sunday 13th April 2025. Branches and Regiments are strongly encouraged to send representatives and bring along their friends and relatives.

#### Timings:

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

1015hrs: In-Pensioners and RAA Standard Bearers assemble for a brief, prior to the Parade.

1040hrs: Parade finishes.

1100hrs: Chapel service begins.

1230hrs: Lunch (ticketed).

**Dress:** Suit or blazer with Gunner/Regimental/Battery tie.

**Lunch:** After the service, a curry lunch will be served in the Club, £12.50 per person, places are limited for lunch, booking is required.

Please contact Cas Thoburn for further details – [cas.thoburn603@mod.gov.uk](mailto:cas.thoburn603@mod.gov.uk)



### Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance

The Royal Artillery Association will conduct the Royal Artillery Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas on Saturday 5th July 2025 commencing at 1100 hrs. All members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and their families are welcome to attend. Please find further details of the events [www.thegunners.org.uk/events](http://www.thegunners.org.uk/events)



### Canterbury Branch

In January Canterbury Branch visited their local primary school, St Stephen's, they have developed a link with the School and visit throughout the year, keeping in touch with the children and engaging with the local community.







### Birmingham Branch

February marks the 51st Anniversary of the M62 coach bomb that killed twelve people, including a wife and two children; aged 5 and 2 and injured over 38 others. On that day the Catterick Garrison trooping coach was on its Liverpool-Manchester-Catterick weekend commute, the bus was full of soldiers and their families.

The annual service is attended by many serving, veterans, families and Branches to pay their respect at the M62 Coach Bomb Memorial, within the grounds of Hearthead Moor Service Station.



### Aigburth-Merseyside Branch

HSF STILL HAS IT (The Blakemere and Delamere Forest circular)

103 AD Regt's Ex A Bty (HSF) force which was initially formed in 1985 by the Conservative Government at the height of the Cold War, the Home Service Force (HSF) bolstered the UK's Home Defence assets, units were primarily tasked to defend Key Points throughout the UK against sabotage from enemy Special Forces. Disbanding officially in 1993 at

Altcar they joined the Regiment continuing to assist in passing on their skills.

Veterans of then brfor the past 30 plus years, embarked on numerous walks to raise funds for the Alder Hey Children's Hospital Trust raising over £30,000. Branch members met at the Delamere Forest Visitor Centre on 25 September 2024 for the annual sponsored walk. This year the walkers fundraised £2,850.



### 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.

### 3/29 (CORUNNA) Battery, 4th Regiment Royal Artillery

On Thursday 16th of January 2025, 3/29 Corunna Battery participated in Corunna day celebrating the anniversary of the battle of Corunna as well as the amalgamation of 3 Battery and 29 (Corunna) Battery. The day started off strong with a 5-a-side football tournament, PT challenge and other activities in the morning, which pitted the likes of Inkerman, Falklands and Chalmers troops against each other in a fierce head-to-head battle to prove who really are the best troop within the battery.

In the afternoon, the Battery donned Spanish-themed fancy dress to further test their skills in another series of challenges, which included building the best Corunna tower out of straws and a relay race.

In the evening, the Battery held a formal dinner in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess, in which we were also joined by some very special guest veterans bringing all the members of Corunna Battery together to honour our

history and pay tribute to the members of the Regiment who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

All in all, Corunna Day was a resounding success, a sentiment which was shared with the other members of the Battery.



### E Battery, 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

E Battery recently celebrated its 230th Battery Birthday, the day was marked by the Officers and SNCOs of the Battery serving Gunfire and bacon rolls to the junior soldiers at 0600 hrs, followed by a Battery photograph, an inter troop sports competition and an excellent dinner night held for all ranks in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess. Throughout the day, the Battery hosted two members of the Royal Artillery Association. The Association kindly contributed funds to help cover the cost of the day, fostering comradeship respective of rank, between all who are serving and who have served.







### RACF SUPPORT TO THE REGIMENTAL FAMILY

2025 begins with the RACF helping our Gunner family across many areas, providing 91 grants thus far. Helping with household goods, mobility items and providing help for our serving personnel.

If you find yourself in financial hardship and struggling to find those extra funds to help pay for much needed items 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. If serving please contact your UWO. If you're a veteran or dependent please call SSAFA on 0800 731 4880 or the Royal British Legion on 0808 802 8080 to get a case up to us.

You can also call the RACF direct on either 0300 159 4560/0300 158 7035 and we can help and direct where we can.

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

*"Thank you and the RACF for this donation to help support XX, I have spoken to them and explained where the support has come from, XX has been and will continue to be front, and centre of the Regiments continued support raising money for our charity."*

*"The RACF support has been impressive in providing timely, straightforward financial assistance. Thank you to you and team."*

*"Thank you so much for processing this application so promptly. The client is very grateful for your help and relieved."*



# RA Boxing Finals 2025

## 17-20 March 2025

Prelims take place on 17-19 March  
Final takes place on the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> March

### 14 Regt RA Gym, Larkhill Garrison

Speak to your COC regarding attendance

RSA TIC 25-0166 BLU 191





Date	Event	Location
2025		
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:

Kenneth Obertelli 4 December 2025  
 SSgt Herbert Todhunter 13 December 2024  
 CSgt Nelson Chesterfield Simons 15 December 2024  
 WO2 Alan Aldred 18 December 2024  
 Kenneth John 18 December 2024  
 Eddie Worsfold 22 December 2024  
 George Kenway January 2025  
 Billy Vodo BEM January 2025  
 Major (Retd) Alan Roynon January 2025  
 Alan Moss 15 February 2025  
 Roger Forbes February 2025  
 John (Geordie) Laing MBE February 2025

**BOLWELL** - Lieutenant Colonel Michael (Mike) Bolwell RA, died aged 89 years old, on 2nd January 2025 in his sleep after a fall on 25th December 2024. He was so much loved, admired and cherished. His son Mark and daughter Kate were with him throughout, holding his hand to the end. Michael now joins the love of his life, wife Anne, who died in 2011. He will be leaving a massive void in the lives of his family and friends. His charisma, energy and enthusiasm for life will be greatly missed. He was the ultimate gentleman right to the end. RIP Dad, RIP Grandpop.

**GATEHOUSE** - Major (Retd) Leslie John Gatehouse OBE. John died on 2nd November 2024 aged 87, peacefully and no longer in pain after a long illness. In December 1954, aged 18, he joined 17 RA Training Regiment and gained a commission in 1977. On leaving the army in 1984, John joined Zengrange Defence Systems, based in Leeds and in 1991 was awarded the OBE by the late Queen for service during the First Gulf War. John retired in 2001 and moved south to Yeovil in Somerset before finally settling back in Salisbury to be close to his children and their families. He will be missed by his wife of 67 years, Betty, his three children, Linda, Martin and Joanna and his seven grandchildren.



**GILCHRIST** - Graeme Elder Gilchrist died on 13th December aged 90. Dearest husband of Susie. Wonderful and proud father of Tom and stepfather of Barney. Loving Gumpily of Alfie and Jack. Uncle and friend. Former Commanding Officer of The Honourable Artillery Company, Honorary Colonel Commandant of the Royal Artillery. Master Gunner within the Tower.

**GRIFFITH** - Major (Retd) P M Griffith (Peter) passed away 30th January 2025. Peter was a subaltern in 7 Para RHA, a Captain in 4th Regiment, Troop Captain of The King's Troop

### 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

RHA and commanded G Parachute Battery (Mercer's Troop) RHA. He played rugby for the Gunners, and was a member of the RA Steeplechase Committee for many years. He was commissioned in 1973 and retired in 1990, serving operational tours in Northern Ireland and Rhodesia.

**HARDY** - Major Mike Hardy MBE. Passed away recently. He served in 1 RHA, 3 RHA and 39 Fd Regt, 40 Lt Regt, 45 Fd Regt and 47 Lt Regt and on secondment to the Oman Artillery, as well as several UK and NATO staff appointments. He retired after full service.

**MARCHANT** - Warrant Officer Class 2 Ernest (Ernie) Marchant. Passed away peacefully on 24th January 2025 (86 years young) in Great Dunmow, Essex. He leaves a wife, Jo to whom he was married for 63 years; daughter Wendy Jo, son Trevor, their families and three grandchildren. Ernest completed his 22 years of service (1958 to 1980). He saw active service in Malaya (1964-1965) and also served in Wales, Scotland, England, Germany and Canada with S of A, 2 Loc Troop, 36 Regt, 45 Regt, Gunnery Wing, Guided Weapons, Heavy Defence, Blowpipe and Radar. Ernest will be sadly missed by all who knew him.



**RODICK** - Lieutenant Colonel Roger Anthony Rodick RA, died peacefully on 8th January 2025 in Henley-on-Thames aged 93. He will be sadly missed by all the family.

**WILBY** - Lieutenant Colonel Keith Grantham Wilby RA, died on 6th December 2024, aged 90. Commissioned from Sandhurst in 1954. He served in 20 Fd, 1 RHA, 1 RCHA (exchange officer), 40 Fd, 2 Fd, 19 Fd (Comd 25 Bty in Dortmund and Belfast), 16 AD (CO in Soest and Londonderry). Much loved father of Jane, Katie, Robert (deceased) and Nicholas (deceased) and proud grandfather of nine.





## Lieutenant General Sir Maurice Johnston



In the 1970s he led a study which concluded that women should not serve on the front line

Able and ambitious officer who served in Indonesia and went on to become a successful businessman.

Lieutenant General Sir Maurice Johnston, who has died aged 95, reached high rank in the Army after serving in the infantry, the Royal Artillery and the cavalry before embarking on a successful career in business.

Johnston had great energy, an immense capacity for hard work and was highly ambitious. Problems on whatever scale left him undaunted, for he never doubted his ability to surmount them.

Maurice Robert Johnston was born in Bangalore, India, on October 27 1929. His father, Brigadier Allen Leigh Johnston, served with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and the 126th

Baluchistan Infantry. He saw active service in the Mesopotamian Campaign in the First World War and was a wartime ADC to the King before he retired.

Young Maurice was 11 when his preparatory school was bombed in the Blitz. His parents in India received a telegram: "Kindly remove your son. The school is no more." This early test of his self-reliance saw him boarding the liner SS Stratheden at Liverpool on his own with a label around his neck to join his parents. Several ships in the convoy were sunk by U-boats in the Atlantic.

After two years at Aitchison College, Lahore, he returned to England with his parents, as his father had reached retirement age, on the same liner, Stratheden. On the voyage the vessel picked up the battleship Warspite as escort.

The family settled in Dorset. Arriving at Wellington a fortnight after the start of the summer term and, having missed Common Entrance, Maurice was placed in the bottom class.

In 1947 he enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment. He went on to RMA Sandhurst the following year and passed out top. He was awarded the King's Medal, which was presented by the 23-year-old Princess Elizabeth.

Commissioned into the Royal Artillery, he served in BAOR in

postwar Germany. He competed at Army level in the hurdles and quarter-mile and rode several winners on his thoroughbred stallion; the horse had been "liberated" from its German owner during the war.

He transferred to the 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery and went with them to the Canal Zone in Egypt. He soldiered in the morning, and in the afternoon sailed his dinghy on the Great Bitter Lake. After dark, many an evening was spent with a blackened face, pursuing terrorists along irrigation ditches.

After accepting an invitation to transfer to The Queen's Bays (2nd Dragoon Guards), he joined them in Aqaba, Jordan. He served there as troop leader and then in Sabratha, Libya. In 1958 he instructed at Sandhurst and, the next year, the Regiment amalgamated with 1st King's Dragoon Guards to form 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG), a reconnaissance regiment equipped with Saladin armoured cars.

In 1965, Johnston commanded a squadron in BAOR and Omagh, Northern Ireland, before taking it to Borneo on active service during the Confrontation with Indonesia. After instructing at Army Staff College, in 1969 he was appointed Military Assistant to General (late Field Marshal) Sir Geoffrey Baker,



Chief of the General Staff. Baker had been his commanding officer in early days in Germany.

In his recommendation that Johnston's exceptional service be recognised, Baker wrote: "He has a sound and balanced judgement allied to the ability to assimilate vast quantities of paper, extract all the important points and put forward his conclusions concisely and clearly. He has been an outstanding success in this most demanding job."

Johnston was appointed OBE. The experience would stand him in good stead in Whitehall.

He commanded the QDG from 1971 to 1973, initially at Catterick, where he had to handle the romance and engagement of one of his subalterns, Mark Phillips, to Princess Anne. He then led the Regiment, equipped with Centurion tanks, to BAOR. There they were involved in trials of a "square brigade" comprising two tank regiments and two infantry battalions.

After commanding 20th Armoured Brigade at Detmold, BAOR, followed by attendance at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS), in 1977 he was appointed Brigadier General Staff at UK Land Forces, Wilton.

There, he led a study into the question of whether combat units should be open to women. His team

concluded that women should not serve on the front line but should be taught how to defend themselves with personal weapons. Women in the British Armed Forces were not allowed to serve in any combat roles until the ban was lifted in 2018.

After two years on the Directing Staff at RCDS he was appointed, successively, Assistant Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Operational Requirements) at the MOD. In 1981, that post was abolished. The problem of reconciling scarce resources with the growing commitments to balance the budget resulted in conflicting views of the Service chiefs being put directly to the Secretary of State for Defence, John (later Sir John) Nott.

This led to a White Paper which strengthened the powers of the Chief of Defence Staff. Johnston was promoted to lieutenant general and appointed Deputy Chief of Defence Staff to co-ordinate the efforts of the Operational Requirements, Operations, Policy and Signals staffs.

He was knighted in 1982 and, two years later, he retired from the Army. Having embarked on a business career, he was chief executive of a merchant bank, chairman of a company pioneering private prisons and of another recycling Birmingham waste.

For many years he was a non-executive director of a hydraulics firm.

He was Honorary Colonel 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards from 1986 to 1991, High Sheriff of Wiltshire from 1983 to 1984 and Lord Lieutenant from 1986 to 2004. He was also Governor of St Mary's School, Calne, and Dauntsey's School. For his services to Wiltshire he was appointed CFO by Elizabeth II in 2005.

He was a horseman all his life, an enthusiastic fly-fisherman and a keen shot, and his talents included glass engraving and making tapestries. He also enjoyed gardening and keeping bees.

Maurice Johnston married, in 1960, Belinda Mary Sladen, who survives him with their son and daughter.

**Maurice Johnston, born October 27 1929, died November 10 2024.**

© The Telegraph







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

THE 35TH REUNION OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY BOYS AND JUNIOR LEADERS' ASSOCIATION

The 35th reunion of The Royal Artillery Boys and Junior Leaders' Association will take place at the Holiday Inn Coventry M6 Junction 2 on the 2nd-5th October 2025. Full details and booking form will be published in the January 2025 edition of "Trumpeter", or by contacting the Secretary, Ted McKenzie by email only on exboysra.tm@gmail.com

YOUNG OFFICERS' BRANCH CENTENARY DINNER

The first of a long series of young officers courses assembled at the School of Artillery on 2nd February 1926 under the command of Maj Wyndham Greene DSO MC, assisted by Maj Ambrose Pratt MC. To celebrate 100 years of the establishment of the first Young Officers' Course, a Centenary

Dinner supported by the MGStJP will be held in the RA Mess, Larkhill on 20th February 2026. The event is open to all former Chief Instructors, Senior Instructors, Adjutants, IGs, MGs, SMIGs, QGIs and civilian staff that have worked within the YOs' Branch. If you are interested in attending, please submit your initial interest by completing your details using the QR code below or emailing WO1 (MG) Mostert on adele.mostert559@mod.gov.uk Further information will follow toward the back end of 2025.



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

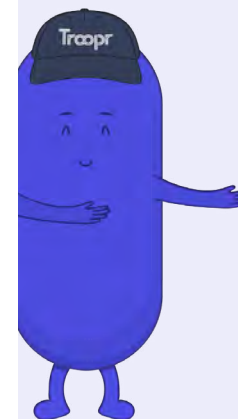


Troopr

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.
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- Make a lasting impact by supporting our Armed Forces community.

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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:**  
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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](mailto: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).

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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.

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**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**

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**SAT 27 SEP 25**

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