



The Shutter Telegraph

Newsletter of The Royal Signals Museum

Volume 2 Issue 1

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Women at War

In May 2007 the Museum was successful with a second lottery bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), who awarded a grant of £50,000 to the Royal Signals Museum "Women at War" project.

The aims of the project are neatly summarised by former SOE agent Gervase Cowell's comment to Her Majesty The Queen, in 1999, when he was appointed MBE and she asked him what he was doing now:

"I help the old to remember and the young to understand."

The story of Landgirls and women factory workers during the war is well known but little has been done to depict the role of women within the military. With the support of the HLF, the Women at War exhibition aims to engage and enthuse people of all ages, but particularly children in education, in our national heritage by telling the story of women who joined the services and had an active, military role. The award of £50,000 will allow the Museum to create a dynamic multi-media exhibition illustrating this largely untold story of Britain's unsung heroines. With particular concentration on the the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANYs), SOE and "Y" Service, Women at War will illustrate the essential "front line" role of women during the war and in civil emergencies during peacetime.

The FANY was formed in 1907 with the purpose of assisting the Military and Civil authorities in times of Emergency. During the First World War, they had a wide ranging role, including nursing and ambulance driving.

By the Armistice the ladies of the FANY had



Original FANY Uniform 1907 - 9109.

been awarded many decorations, including 27 Croix de Guerre. The SOE and "Y" Service had similarly impressive roles. This exhibition and its outreach material will create new insights into the nation's heritage and the sometimes hidden but formative role of women within our society. Furthermore it will open the eyes of school children to the bravery, sacrifice and achievements of these women who protected our community and our freedom.

In her own words Odette summarises her wartime experiences with the words;

"I am a very ordinary women to whom a chance was given to see human beings at their best and their worst."

The project will also start a national campaign to encourage women veterans who have never told their story to contact local organisations to make a record of their wartime activities. Working with the Imperial War Museum and Oral History Society the Royal Signals Museum is appealing to anyone with a story or photographs to contact them.



Odette Sansom, Violette Szabo and Noor Inayat Khan, all of whom were awarded the George Cross. Sadly only Odette survived imprisonment.

Museum Report



by Colonel (Retd) Cliff Walters

I know that many of our readers are keen to know about the complex issue of what is happening here in Blandford. So here goes.

You will recall that in the 2007 Shutter Telegraph I advised you of some possible future changes for training at Blandford. A significant step forward for this complex issue was taken in January 2007. It was announced that the METRIX consortium had been appointed as the Preferred Bidder by MoD to provide Defence CIS training in the future. METRIX propose the creation of a Defence Technical Academy, whose output will include CIS, aeronautical and electro-mechanical engineering training for all 3 services. This will be located at a new, purpose built facility at St Athan, which is located West of Cardiff and is currently an RAF Base. The Academy will be a centre of excellence for the whole of Defence. Since this announcement both MoD and METRIX have been busy refining the details of the proposal and draft contract and this work continues behind the scenes although very little has been released to the general public. All being well, the proposal will receive Ministerial Approval in spring of 2008, with the Contract being signed in 2009.

A few months after the Contract has been signed in 2009, selected civilian personnel will move from the Civil Service into a METRIX company and METRIX will gradually take on responsibility for delivering CIS training to the Army at Blandford. They will do this by picking up the reins of what we are already delivering; similar activities will be happening at other sites across Defence at the same time.

Then a few years later, currently expected to be in the 2012 – 2013 timeframe and when the new facility at St Athan is ready, the delivery of CIS training for the 3 Services will relocate to St Athan. All of the teaching facilities at Blandford will then either move or close. However, it is intended that Blandford will remain as the home of the Royal Corps of Signals. This will mean that the SOinC(A), the Museum, RHQ and HQ Messes will remain in Blandford. A small element of the SOinC(A)'s staff will locate forward to St Athan to carry out essential functions with the Defence Technical Academy. The Army has stated that Blandford Camp will be retained and that it will be backfilled, possibly by 14th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) who are currently in

Haverfordwest, Wales.

We are obviously delighted that the Museum is most likely to remain in Blandford. Meanwhile, whilst all of this planning has been ongoing the Museum has continued to thrive. Another major exciting project is nearing completion as Adam Forty, Business Manager and Stella Ancell, the Curator have put together 'Women at War'. This is an interactive display covering a wide range of subjects from FANYs in WW1 to the current day Signallers of the Corps. We will also have a display to commemorate the Centenary of the TA (TA100 as it has become known).

I could not let a ST go by without mention of our volunteers who, once again, have served us so extremely well throughout the year. Over 50 of us gathered together, organised by David Walker, on 9th November 2007 at the Volunteers Dinner to say 'Thank You'. I would also like to thank once again all of our 'Friends Of The Museum' who have supported us through purchase of Lottery tickets, donations and mail order purchases.



Finally, this will be my last report in the ST as I intend to retire at the end of March 2008: *tempus fugit*. This will end 47 years association with the military, 43 directly with the Corps and 12 with the Museum. My last 12 years have been here at Blandford but having seen Aden, Hong Kong, Belize, South Africa, Cyprus, Germany, Northern Ireland, Swaziland and a few more on the way I can hardly complain about not getting around the world. My last 8 years have been as Director of the Museum and together with our Volunteers, the permanent staff, members of the SOinC(A)'s Staff, Garrison Staff and the Museum Trustees, all of whom I would like to thank, it has been a pleasure for me to be able to take the Museum forward to the high standard that it has reached. I know that there is a lot more that still can be done and I will wish my successor (still to be appointed) good luck in this challenging venture.

I hope ST readers will continue to support the future regime in the way that you have supported me. Many thanks. Cliff Walters.

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| 3RD PRIZE £500 | MR FISHER, LANCASHIRE |
| 4TH PRIZE £250 | MR A WHEELER, WILTSHIRE |
| 5TH PRIZE £100 | MR B RAWLINGS, SOMERSET |
| 6TH PRIZE £50 | MR B MATHEWS, HEREFORD |
| 6TH PRIZE £50 | MR P LEWER, GERMANY |
| 6TH PRIZE £50 | LT COL POPE, CREDITON |

Congratulations to all of the winners and may we thank everyone who supported our Heritage Lottery Draw.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Please remember that the Royal Signals Museum is a registered charity. Profits from our Heritage Draw Lottery and items sold in our shop are put back into the Museum, helping to maintain & improve it for this and future generations.



TA 100

THE CENTENARY OF THE TERRITORIAL ARMY

By Colonel (Retd) Cliff Walters

The nation will celebrate the Centenary of the TA in 2008 (this will be known publicly as TA 100). This article traces the history of the TA from its inception onwards and gives an outline of Royal Signals involvement.

Prior to the First World War in 1908 a new military force structure was established for war in which the Regular Army (RA) provided first line forces, the Militia (later renamed the Special Reserve) provided training drafts and the Territorial Force (TF) was raised as second line mainly for home defence but with elements that could relieve Regular garrisons overseas. In the TF there was a signal company for each division and fifteen army troops companies. These comprised five airline companies, five cable companies and five wireless companies. Their equipment was largely what had been used in the Boer War of 1899 – 1902. The numbering system of the Territorial divisions owes its origins to the order in which they were drafted overseas in the First World War. To this day many of the squadrons in TA signal regiments have adopted the divisional number of their ancestors eg 45 Signal Squadron descended from 45 Divisional Signals.

On demobilisation after the First World War the Territorial force melted away. In 1920 the Force was reconstructed as second line to the Regular Army. It was renamed the Territorial Army (TA). In October 1920, on formation of Royal Signals, all Territorial Signal units were transferred to the newly formed Corps.

In 1924 the Supplementary Reserve (SR) was formed with two purposes. First, to provide highly technical officers and soldiers who would supplement the Regular Army on mobilisation. These personnel had hardly any training commitment. The second purpose was to provide complete specialist units. For example companies were formed in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham and Leeds. These units trained at annual camps. It was with the TA and SR in support of the Regular Army that the Army went to war in 1939. These Territorial soldiers were 'embodied' into the fighting force.



56 (London) Divisional Signals with cable wagon, at the Lord Mayor's Show in 1930.

After the Second World War the TA and SR units were mostly disbanded. Individual war veteran reservists became known as 'Z Reserve'. In January 1947 the TA was reconstituted and recruiting was reopened and a new signal order of battle was drawn up, which included 27 signal regiments and several independent squadrons. In April 1950 the SR was reformed, later being renamed the Army Emergency Reserve. Seventeen SR signal regiments were raised.

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16 Airborne Divisional Signals (TA) Middlesex Yeomanry, Coronation Duties 1953.

In 1967 there was a major overhaul of the TA organisation and Royal Signals units were reduced significantly in number and reorganised into Signal Groups (later Brigades) each designated with specific operational roles.

Nowadays the British Army has a 'One Army Concept' in which the TA is regarded as an integral part of the fighting force. Its individuals are often called upon to serve in operational areas alongside their RA counterparts. Occasionally formed units of Volunteers are deployed to meet specific specialist needs. The TA has been heavily committed in all major operations of the 21st Century including Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Territorial connection follows the tradition of volunteer service. In most cases TA units have a long history, not all of it within the Royal Signals. In most TA Regiments a number of the Squadrons are not collocated with the Regimental HQ. Many units have their own variations of dress reflecting their local origins, and all have a pride in their history in addition to their pride in the Corps. Volunteers often spend their entire military careers with the same unit during which time they build up a strong professional capability and expertise. TA units have the same rank and trade structures as the Regular Army. The principal difference is that the TA carry out their training in the evenings and at weekends with a 2-week period of continuous training each year.

In every TA regiment there is a cadre of up to about 20 Regular officers and soldiers who provide support for training and administration of the volunteers. Some volunteers spend time with regular units or, increasingly in recent times,

on operational deployments. All spend some time during their service at Regular training establishments to undertake professional training.



The 51st, 52nd & 61st Signal Regiments (TA) at the Esplanade at Edinburgh Castle, 1965. Pipers from 30th Signal Regiment and 32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (V) comprised of the same amalgamated units 30 years later in almost exactly the same place.



TERRITORIAL ARMY SIGNAL UNITS

Throughout its history, the Royal Signals TA Order of Battle has kept pace with requirements of the British Army. This remains the case today and below is an outline of the TA structure.

31st (City of London) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) has its Regimental HQ in Southfields with squadrons in Coulsdon, Banbury and Eastbourne, with detachments in Kingston and Brighton.

32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Glasgow with squadrons in Aberdeen, East Kilbride and Edinburgh, and a detachment in Elgin.

33rd (Lancashire and Cheshire) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ and two squadrons in Liverpool with two further squadrons in Manchester and Runcorn.

34th (Northern) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Middlesbrough with squadrons in Leeds, Darlington and Hartlepool and detachments in Hull, Newcastle and Hartlepool.

35th (South Midlands) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Coventry with squadrons in Birmingham, Newcastle under Lyme, Rugby and Shrewsbury.

36th (Eastern) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Ilford with TA Centres spread widely from the Norfolk Coast to the Thames, with squadrons in Colchester, Cambridge and Aylesbury, and detachments in Ipswich, Southend-on-Sea, Norwich and Bedford.

37th Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Redditch with squadrons in Cardiff, Stratford and Coventry. There are further detachments in Brecon, Stourbridge and Birmingham.

38th (City of Sheffield) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Sheffield with squadrons in Sheffield, Derby and Blackburn, and detachments in Nottingham, Leicester and Manchester.

39th (Skinners) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ in Bristol with squadrons in Bristol and Windsor, with detachments in Gloucester, Reading and Chertsey.

40th (Ulster) Signal Regiment (V) has its Regimental HQ and one squadron in Belfast. The other two squadrons are in Limavady and Bangor.

71st (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment has its Regimental HQ in Bexleyheath with squadrons in Bexleyheath, Lincoln's Inn, Chelmsford and Uxbridge. It has detachments in Harlow, High Wycombe and Whipps Cross.

1 (Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (Special Communications) is an independent squadron based at Bletchley.

2 (City of Dundee) Signal Squadron (V) is an independent squadron based in Dundee.

63 (Special Air Service) Signal Squadron (V) is based in Thorney Island, Hampshire with detachments in Thorney Island, Portsmouth, Southampton and Poole.

81 Signal Squadron (V) is based in Corsham. It is a sponsored squadron mainly staffed by Installation Technicians recruited from within British Telecom who are widely dispersed across UK. It provides assistance in planning, delivering, maintaining and restoring critical defence and national infrastructure for UK operations, expeditionary operations and overseas bases. The squadron trains by meeting annually to practise their skills. It is administered by Central Volunteer HQ (CVHQ) Royal Signals at Corsham, which is responsible for the of all TA specialists in the Corps.

The Land Information Assurance Group (V) – LIAG(V) – is based in Corsham, Wiltshire.

The Land Information and Communications Specialist Group (V) – LICSG(V) – is based in Corsham, Wiltshire, Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham and a detachment in

Leicester.

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TA Captain joins Sandhurst elite - 4 Sep 07

(news excerpt from <http://www.mod.uk/>)

A Territorial Army Captain is set to become the first TA officer since the Second World War to command a Platoon of Officer Cadets on the TA Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS).

Territorial Army Captain Vicky Freer becomes a Platoon Commander on the TA Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

As Platoon Commander, Captain Vicky Freer, aged 37, and already experienced in TA officer training, will be responsible for assessing more than 25 TA candidates for their suitability to be commissioned as officers.

Captain Freer joined the TA in January 2002 and in May 2003 was commissioned at Sandhurst. She then joined East Midlands University Officer Training Corps in Nottingham, where she was responsible for preparing Officer Cadets for the TA Commissioning Course:



"This is a fantastic opportunity," said Captain Freer. "Being selected to train and assess the TA's future officers is an enormous privilege."

Colonel Simon Bell, the officer in charge of TA Training at Sandhurst, believes it is an outstanding achievement for a young TA Captain to be selected to join the RMAS instructors:

"A Queen's Commission in the Army is the finest leadership accolade that our young men and women in the Reserves can achieve, and their assessment at RMAS is the culmination of their training. It is only four years ago that Vicky Freer herself gained her Commission, and we are very proud of her and her achievements."

When not pursuing her TA career, Vicky is a self-employed training consultant and lives in Burley, in the New Forest, with her husband, two horses and three whippets. Her interests include the history of the battles of Monte Cassino and equestrianism, at which she has represented the Reserve Forces in Belgium and Holland.

The Territorial Army trains its potential officers either at one of the 19 University Officer Training Corps, or at one of the seven Regional Training Centres situated across the UK. Training usually takes 12-18 months and culminates in a three week assessment course at the RMAS. It is a demanding course, both physically and mentally, and is directed at the fit and motivated candidate.

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

Operator Power

In 1957 as a Wireless Operator I was posted to No1 Wireless Regiment in Germany, close to the Dutch border. We worked a four day shift cycle as follows:

Day One - Free morning, then worked 1pm 'til 5pm returning at 11pm until 7am next morning.

Day two - Sleep from night shift then work from 5pm until 11pm

Day Three - Worked 7am until 1pm. Afternoon and all next day (Day 4) off.

Christmas day was the only day the set room shut but even that changed in 1958 when "our friends" used the day to change all their call signs and frequencies and caused much panic.

To continue, In essence our shift system really meant two days on and two days off. That is, until SSM Williams was posted to our camp. He decided that the morning of day one should be put to more military use like drill or bed inspections, this did not go down well with we operators. Time passed and then on one change over, my opposite number said "Its Nil Heard we are on strike". When working we were usually very busy but if it was quiet you put "Nil Heard" every 15 minutes on the log.

After 24 hours of "Nil Heard" the powers that be were concerned. This being the cold war period any radio silence was alarming. Then someone went into the aerial room and pulled out all the plugs. This was becoming serious, Major Sandy's visited every shift, the word Mutiny was mentioned and we were all very ill at ease. Then the OC called a SNCO to his office to find out what the problem was. He was told the problem. His reply was "Well I cannot countermand the SSM but I will see what I can do".

Not long after wards peace returned when the SSM was posted

Graham Macklenrey

Daddy is Going to War - a True Story

During the Persian Gulf War, I was assigned to go to Saudi Arabia. As I was saying good-bye to my family, my three-year-old son, Christopher, was holding on to my leg and pleading with me not to leave. "No, Daddy, please don't go!" he kept repeating.

We were beginning to make a scene when my wife, desperate to calm him, said, "Let Daddy go and I'll take you to get a pizza."

Immediately, Christopher loosened his death grip, stepped back and in a calm voice said, "Bye, Daddy."

Military etiquette

Officer: Soldier, do you have change for a pound?

Soldier: Sure, mate.

Officer: That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again. Do you have change for a pound?

Soldier: No, SIR!

Communication Breakdown...

The reason the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines squabble among themselves is that they don't speak the same language. For example, take a simple phrase like, "Secure the building."

- The Army will put guards around the place.
- The Navy will turn out the lights and lock the doors.
- The Air Force will take out a 5-year lease with an option to buy.
- The Marines will kill everybody inside and make it a command post

Military Truisms

- "Aim towards the Enemy"--instruction printed on US rocket launcher.
- When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is no longer our friend.
- Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever volunteer to do anything.
- If your attack is going too well, you are walking into an ambush.
- If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn't plan your mission properly.
- Don't draw fire; it irritates the people around you.
- No combat ready unit has ever passed inspection.
- If the enemy is in range, so are you.
- Tracers work both ways.
- Friendly fire isn't.
- The problem with taking the easy way out is that the enemy has already mined it.
- The quartermaster has only two sizes: too large and too small.
- If you can see the enemy, he can see you.
- And never tell your Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.



Oops !..... Err, I've parked the Tank Sir !

ROYAL SIGNALS MUSEUM

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2007/8

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www.royalsignalsmuseum.com



Your Letters & Poems

The Joys of Catterick Camp

There's an isolated, desolate place I'd like to mention
Where all you hear is "Stand at ease", "Slope Arms" and
then "Attention"
Its miles away from anywhere, by jove it is a "Rum-un"
A man lived there for forty years and never saw a
woman.

There's lots of tiny wooden huts dotted here and there
For those who live inside, then please offer up a prayer
Its mud up to your elbows, you get it in your eyes
But into it you have to go, no matter what your size.

There are soldiers living in those huts and it fills my
heart with sorrow
With tear dimmed eyes they said to me, "Its Catterick
Bridge Tomorrow"
Inside these huts they say there's rats as big as goats
Last night a soldier saw one trying on his coat

To breakfast every morning is just like Mother Hubbard
You double round the hut three times, then dive into the
cupboard
Sometimes they give you bacon, sometimes they give
you cheese
Which marches up and down your place "Slope Arms
and Stand at Ease"

At night you sleep on boards and straw, just like a herd
of cattle
And if perchance you turn yourself, your bones begin to
rattle
And when you hear reveille blow, it makes you feel
unwell
You knock the icebergs off your head, and wish the
bugler well

And when the war is over, and we've captured Little
Willy **
To shoot him would be merciful, but absolutely silly
Just send him down to Catterick amongst the rats and
clay
I bet it won't be too long, before he fades away

** The German Emperor

By Jim Jarman

Memories of Harrogate

I was OC 3 Squadron in 36 Signal Regt TA at annual
camp, the year we had the Z reserves posted in to us for
the two weeks. Our intake for the squadron included 7
sergeants, one of whom asked straight away to see me.
My SSM was Bill Wilkins and our three striper was duly
marched in- it transpired that he was in The Royal
Signals only because he had been posted in from an
Infantry Regiment to Harrogate. Bill Looked at him and
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suddenly said "I remember you, you sent me for three
haircuts in two days!"

We all three had a good laugh and we were able to
make very good use of this man as we had two very
scruffy lads in the intake who were determined not to
change. At the end of 48 hours they were two of the
smartest lads in camp!

From Jack Stokes, New Zealand.

The Lament

I remember how it was bonfire night when they lay their
dead to rest.

I'd known some of the dead lads lying there and they
were some of the best.

The Colonel he had chosen the site, he had chosen the
where and when.

It was easy to see why he had chosen the spot, he had
taken his men back to the glen.

I couldn't see much of the piper, my eyes were too filled
with tears.

Then The Lament resounded around Korean hills and its
echo came back to my ears.

But I noticed the Colonel he stood tall as he lay his men
to rest.

I couldn't help thinking I had known some of these men,
they had been of the best.

The Regimental Sergeant Major stood scowling when he
heard my Lieutenants camera click.

I could see his face getting redder as he clenched on to
his pacing stick.

Then once again I heard The Lament, drifting back along
with the breeze.

I slowly turned and whispered to my Lieutenant "I had
known some of the best of these."

I then heard the "crack" of rifles as they gave them their
last salute.

The Lament seemed to die away then returned as if an
Angel's Flute.

I wondered if God had answered and said, "I have taken
these souls to my breast".

I stopped to remember how I had known some of these
"souls", and how they were of the best.

So now when I hear bagpipes "plaintive" and gaze on a
Scottish moon.

I well recall how it was The Lament, I recognised the
tune.

I see once again the Padre with his bible held close to
his chest.

And sadly I recall the "dead" I once knew and to me they
were truly the best.

By Harry Orton

Please keep your Poems coming.