The 'Attack Helicopter Force' is renamed 'Wattisham Flying Station', under operational command of the New 1st Aviation Brigade...

An NCO from 4 Regt AAC on Ex LONG LOOK in Australia, managed to take this picture of Sydney Harbour.

read more page 13

read more in the Eagle.
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Welcome to the Spring edition of the Eagle, which covers another very busy period for the Attack Helicopter Force, albeit the title AHF for Wattisham will have changed by the time this edition is published. As part of a transition process, on Wednesday 1st April 2020, AHF HQ was formally disbanded and replaced by Wattisham Flying Station Headquarters (WFS HQ); the same situation as before the creation of the AHF. The renamed WFS HQ, and all major units including 653 Sqn, will have resubordinated under the Operational Command (OPCOM) of the new HQ 1st Aviation Brigade (1 Avn Bde), which has formed up at Middle Wallop. In turn, the new HQ 1 Avn Bde will be under OPCOM of the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC). Associated with these changes there will only be a small reduction of service personnel from the AHF HQ, most of whom will bolster the new brigade. The Force will also adopt the 1 Avn Bde Tactical Recognition Flash (TRF) showing the red wings of a Griffin below:

The background to the new flash in light and dark blue is that of 9 Regt AAC, whilst the red wings are the former 24 Airmobile Brigade flash. This brigade was disbanded in Colchester during 1999, having joined with 5 Airborne Brigade to create 16 Air Assault Brigade as it is at present. In heraldry, the mythical Griffin’s amalgamation of Lion and Eagle gains in courage and boldness and it is always drawn to powerful fierce monsters. It is used to denote strength, military courage and leadership.

Also changing is the Striking Eagle Station shield, which will revert to Wattisham’s former badge shown below: The original Station crest was created by Wattisham Airfield’s first Station Commander during the late 1930s by Wg Comd Oswald Gayford CBE, DFC&Bar, AFC & MID, RAF. The Eagle upon the ship, signifies strength and power, and of course the Eagle is thought to be the highest-flying bird. The tail of the sailing ship is ‘borrowed’ from the Ipswich Coat of Arms. Originally, this was a shield adopted during the reign of Edward III, and became the ‘seal of Ipswich.’ The arms were granted the official Blazon Crest in 1561 (see image). I understand that the ship’s section was adopted by Wattisham as it represents the 5 x harbour towns of the time (of which Ipswich was one) that supported the Royal Navy for centuries; also, the significance of the military history of Ipswich as a port and its importance to relationships and trade globally. Following the arrival of the AAC to Wattisham during 1993, the RAF crown was removed and in recent times it was banded with a gold circle. So, very much a nod from Wattisham to its county town history and from Wg Comd Gayford who was a local man born in Hadleigh.

Remember wherever you are serving you can view The Eagle on-line at: www.theeagleonline.co.uk

Another useful website is the Suffolk Armed Forces Community Covenant, which can be viewed at www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk

The Editorial Deadlines for The Eagle magazine during 2020 are as follow:

SUMMER
Friday 26 June 2020

WINTER
Friday 13 November 2020

Contributions are welcome from all Units, Organisations, Clubs and Individuals and should be submitted via email or on disc to the Editor Robert.Silk421@mod.gov.uk

Please note that it has not been possible to include all the usual articles in this edition, but they will be included in the next.
Ready, resilient and prepared for whatever comes. This is the very clear message from the Chief of the General Staff for the Army in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Attack Helicopter Force and all of us at Wattisham will be playing our part in that response and plans are already in place and continue to be developed. My priority is protecting our people and supporting the Government’s response to tackling the disease. Several measures have already taken place such as the closure of the gym, bars, clubs and cafes which, while I understand may cause inconvenience, are essential in our fight against COVID-19. I urge you all to follow the advice of the Government and do whatever we can to support the NHS in these unprecedented times. You will continue to see flying activity at Wattisham and this will continue throughout the crisis because my second priority remains providing a very high readiness Attack Helicopter capability for Defence. That of course requires everyone to maintain their skills and proficiency for whatever that may be and that requires us to train and to do it properly.

With the closure of our schools and no date as to when they may reopen, I fully understand the strain that places on everyone with children. I am working closely with our local schools and child care providers, which themselves are under very real pressures, to ensure they understand your unique positions. I am also working very closely with the Commanding Officers to ensure that we as an organisation remain as flexible as we can be in supporting you. There will undoubtedly be some difficult decisions to make over the next few weeks and months. Please be assured that whatever decisions are made will always be made with our people at the fore and we will do our very best to communicate them to you as quickly as we can.

It is not going to be easy getting through this crisis but get through it we will. It will require a huge effort from us all, real resilience and above all the maintenance of a sense of humour. As an extended Wattisham family we must stick together, protect ourselves to protect the nation and stay calm and carry on.
OPEN MORNINGS

Pre-Prep and Nursery Friday 15 May
Prep School Friday 15 May
Senior School Saturday 16 May

We look forward to welcoming you to Culford. To book a personal visit please contact the admissions office on 01284 385308 or email: admissions@culford.co.uk

Forces discount available
Spring is in the air and so 3 Regiment are getting closer to the main events in this year’s calendar. Over the next few weeks, we will make the final preparations for Exercise Defender taking place in Germany and Poland in April and May. If you take a peek at social media under #DefenderEurope, you get a sense for the size and scale of this US led exercise: There are over 37 thousand participants and 3 Regiment make up the largest single contribution from the UK. We will be taking around 750 people, 18 aircraft and nearly 250 vehicles across Europe to be part of a US Combat Aviation Brigade and US Cavalry Division. This is a unique opportunity to exercise at a size and scale not seen in Europe since the 1980s and will thoroughly test our readiness and ability to integrate fully with our US allies.

There will be times whilst we are away that we can’t use mobile phones for security reasons, these will be clearly signposted and our ability to communicate with home may be difficult for several weeks. Please be reassured that there is a very good reason for this as we must protect ourselves against exposing who and where our people are. I would ask that you support us on this as I would hate to see anyone’s phone or online profiles compromised inadvertently.

You will be able to follow along on Instagram and Twitter to see what we get up to!

For most there will be a long break over the summer and my intent remains to protect the whole of August as a leave period for as many people as I can. The Battle Group HQ and Command Troop have one further exercise called Exercise CERERUS ahead of them. This will see us operating from Salisbury Plain and validated in our role as a warfighting headquarters. Whilst the exercise is real for the Headquarters, the troops are all electrons in a large computer simulation – like a massive multiplayer game designed to test every aspect of our ability to plan and conduct operations. This will mark the final point in our journey of the last few years and will allow us the show the Army exactly what we can do.

After summer leave, we start the programme to replace our helicopters with the new E-model Apache. For many of our engineers and aircrew, this will involve courses in the US between September 2020 and May 2021. Most are under a month long and will convert our team to the new aircraft. We will physically receive our first new Apache in November and aim to start limited flying in February 2021. Bringing a new aircraft into service is not an easy task and there will be many bumps along the way but when we are finished next year, we will have a state-of-the-art upgraded Apache full of cutting-edge technology.

To mark the end of flying the D-model Apache and 50 years since the Regiment was formed, the whole Regiment will exercise the freedom of Bury St Edmunds on the 12 September. It is 10 years since we last did this and I expect it to be a fantastic day out. There will be the inevitable ironing and polishing to be done but I hope as many of you as possible will be there to support your soldiers as they exercise the ancient rights of a freedom. It will be a great day out for all.

With many of us away overseas in the next few months, please do follow on social media and if ever you need help do remember the welfare team is there to support you and your family.

Regards, Nick
662 Sqn departed Wattisham flying station in road convoy to Stanta training area. Upon arriving the pressure was placed on the JNCO’s to establish a vehicle hide for a variety of vehicles including an OSHKOSH. With limited experience 662 Sqn were tasked to make vehicle hides in order to camouflage and conceal themselves from the enemy. This was considered a challenge for the Sqn due to the ever-changing dynamics of the British weather. It was noticed that all Sqn members showed determination, professionalism and team work to establish an effective Sqn level vehicle hide.

Upon a new day recovering from Storm CIARA, the Groundcrew Arming loading point commanders were tasked to identify and establish multiple landing sites suitable for multiple aircraft types, ranging from SH in Chinook and Apaches. This provided the JNCO’s an opportunity to make key decisions and instill confidence within their ability to command a stressful and busy landing point while evading an active enemy.

The challenges were not just for the NCO’s. All members of the Sqn were tasked to provide a forward air refuelling equipment (FARE) with the Chinook to allow the supporting apaches to carry out their missions, a key skill required for upcoming Ex DEFENDER. For many of the Sqn personnel, this was the first exposure to this refuelling technique, which provided valuable training for all involved.

Although being aviation groundcrew specialists, the importance of our individual, section and platoon basic soldiering skills had not been forgotten. Under the directing staff, the Sqn carried out grenade lessons, contact drills both on foot and in vehicles, target indication and fire control orders at all levels. Skills, drills and procedures that will be tested on Ex DEFENDER.

This allowed aspiring both JNCO and SNCO to gain an insight in their one up role. This provided individual career development and enhanced skills that instilled self confidence in potential commanders in the Sqn.

All skills learnt were confirmed by a final reconnaissance patrol and arduous attack successfully destroying multiple enemy positions. The final serial involved several Sqn personal practising trooping drills and getting a ride back to Wattisham in a chinook, an experience that will not be soon forgotten by all.

As an exercise, Olethrion Storm provided the opportunity for NCOs to lead by example and promote confidence within their sections. In doing so, provided an environment for Sqn members to enhance team spirit and cohesion. At times the exercise was physical and mentally challenging however in true 662 fashion, the Sqn members strived for excellence and performed to their best ability in order to complete the mission set. Key qualities required for Ex Defender.
First impression: flat, wooded, peaceful.

On arrival the Squadron was able to get up and running with minimal effort and friction between all other air users. The Estonians were delighted to host, they made getting airborne an easy task and seemed to fit around how we wanted to operate – this would only become even more slick as the deployment went on. Other air users comprised of: German and British Typhoon, Estonian R44, Wildcat, the odd transporter flight and now the first Attack Helicopter Squadron. 663 Attack Helicopter Squadron and 661 Reconnaissance Helicopter Squadron were to operate from a joint operations room, which housed the two squadrons for the whole tour. This helped the Squadrons to synergise early on, and the natural banter flowed, and rapport was built. Along with the Operations room was comfy accommodation and a great field kitchen to keep morale high. In the time between exercises and other major events, the Squadron was able to make the most of the disc golf course and the numerous saunas around camp.

Exercise SPRING STORM

Spring Storm is the annual exercise where the two brigades – this year focused on 1 brigade - exercise to react to an aggressor from the east, the overarching aim was to delay the enemy force until reinforcements in the form of NATO were able to mobilise and counterattack. The exercise was the first opportunity for the Squadron to begin working with the Estonian Defence Force and all other players in country, it was also the first time that the aircrew were to fight tactically in this new environment within the divisional fight. The flat terrain offered little cover, and the enemy was able to fold themselves into the towering trees making them concealed and nearly impossible to spot until the last minute. The first few missions saw the Estonian brigade using aviation as a close protect platform, it took a deployed aviation liaison officer to influence not only how they plan to use aviation, but how to task Apache when already on task. When the realisation set in that Apache could be devastating when allowed to hunt deep into enemy territory, we saw the Brigade using aviation as a proactive hunting force as opposed for reactionary force. The Attack Reconnaissance Team (ART) is an old concept re-branded for the Wildcat and Apache. The concept is simple: Wildcat cue Apache onto target. This mean the wildcat launching early, remaining clandestine, finding the target to pass the location strength and activity to the Apache. This allows the Apache flight to take an increased weapon load as it will need less fuel to loiter and find the enemy before the strike. The ART was exercised to good effect with ground forces now looking at a Wildcat and Apache as a team that can be tasked in a hunter killer type scenario. After the exercise we firmly felt that the Brigade understood our doctrine and how we like to fight, however the pursuit to understand how we should fight in such flat terrain went on.

Normal jogging

As well as routine flying that all frontline squadrons must achieve, it was a great to exploit the opportunity to link in with the ground forces on exercise to conduct valuable training with UK and Estonian forces. Naturally, the wildcat is more task able in a peacetime environment, but outside of the exercising periods we were asked on occasion to provide an escort for the wildcat while transporting VVIPs around the country. Whilst not doctrinally sound it was good PR and more importantly a good photo shoot. Some of the REME and Air Corps soldiers enjoyed the opportunity to get out on the ground and call in emergency close air support from the Apache overhead. This training was enjoyed by all and allowed the soldiers an opportunity to witness the fruits of their labour.
With Tallinn only an hour down the road, this was the natural choice when any of the Squadron members could afford a day off. The city revolves around the old town and has many great spots to sip on a beverage and enjoy the local delights. Towards our time in country, the squadron organised a battlefield tour focusing on the relatively untrodden territory of the Eastern front of WW1 and WW2. The tour began with a briefing day covering the history of Estonia and how the two world wars panned out for the country. It was fascinating to hear how many times the tide of the red army on the east, and other players from the west have washed over the country. It really hit home why we – NATO – were an enduring reassuring force here. The next couple of days consisted of us traveling right up the Russia Estonia boarder in Nava, receiving step by step accounts of not only the large miles away. Many would agree the hardest part was the planning, however once we stepped out of the door the plan allowed the Squadron to run on rails, all the way over 5 countries in total and be an effective fighting force the other end. It was a plan with many cogs, thus lots of points of failure, none of which were an issue. Well done to everyone involved, by far one of the best things of us in 663 will be involved in.

**Excursions**

**Ringshall School** is now part of Asset Education. As a small school, this has given us access to additional resources and expertise to enhance the children’s learning.

At Ringshall School we provide a challenging, nurturing environment in which children grow and flourish. Good teaching and high expectations encourage all learners to love learning and do their best. Through a wide variety of activities we develop the individual qualities of the children. There is a strong emphasis upon outdoor learning and learning through the environment. Everything is underpinned by our Rainbow Skills which we actively teach the children. We have identified these as essential skills for successful learning and, in future life, the skills that will enable the children to be fully participating members of society.

For further information or to arrange a visit please contact the school office.
Telephone: 01473 658307 Email: admin@ringshallprimary.co.uk
Or visit our website www.ringshallschool.co.uk Head teacher: Ms Tania Devereux
20 has begun with a familiar pace of activities. 656 Sqn has once again deployed to the Arctic, our readiness mechanism has been tested and plans for post-winter are well underway. This initial period has certainly seen 4 Regt stretch its legs and already our team has been deployed to France, Norway, Cyprus, Jordan, Austria and very shortly to Germany.

The deployment to Norway has once again put 4 Regt in the focus of Defence. Live Hellfire ranges in the northern Fjords against dynamic and automated targets has been a first for the AHF, whilst interoperability with the Commando Wildcat of 847 Sqn is further developing Aviation Manoeuvre. But very pleasingly, many of you have sought to take the opportunity to get away and challenge yourselves with some excellent adventure training and to enjoy some stimulating Battlefield Studies. HQ Squadron’s lead on Ex DRAGON TYROLEAN continues to go from success to success. This year Capt Glyn Dix has provided skiing for over 60 members of the AHF across Ski Foundation Levels 1 and 2. Shortly SSM (WO2) Jones will oversee the commemorative Battlefield Study of Operation VARISTY in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Allies’ Crossing of the Rhine in 1945. I am certain it will be insightful, educational and very humbling when reflecting on the courage and heroism of our fore fathers. And finally we also look forward towards the All Ranks Regimental Dinner Night in Spring, a 2-week Regimental Live Firing exercise but most importantly recovering our Squadrons from abroad. I hope everyone takes a break over Easter leave and enjoys time off with their families – you all thoroughly deserved it after a tremendous start to 2020.

In May 2019 the exchange program started with a NCO from Australia joining 4 Regiment. He was attached to 664 Sqn where he participated in all events that we had planned including Ex Swift Response and Regimental Adventure Training that took place in France. During this time, he also went to our phase 2 establishment at Middle Wallop and took part in the Basic Apache Course so he would have a better understanding of the Apache. From this point it was a case of filling out related paperwork and confirming flight and arrival dates.
Ex Long Look
An Account from Downunder

Exercise Long Look is an exchange program between the MOD and the Australian Defence Force, which lasts 3 months for each representative.

and spent the longest time at in Australia was the 6th Aviation Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks in West Sydney. The Aircraft they use at 6th Aviation Regt is the S-70 Black Hawk and the MRH 90 Taipan, both are multi role Aircraft that can be used for support missions. I was placed into a FARP team where I would take part in all Exercises. They work in small team at a low level military imprint, using white refuel trucks that blend into normal traffic. On one occasion

we set up a 2 point FARP on a cricket pitch for Black Hawks to pass through on a media day. On return to the barracks I was given a flight around the iconic Sydney Harbour. The next place that I visited was the 5th Aviation Regiment at RAAF Base Townsville in Queensland. I was here for 2 weeks working with the MRH 90 Taipan and the CH-47F Chinook mainly on the fuel side of things. The chinooks play a heavy role in all aspects of the military including aid relief that extended out to Papa New Guinea while I was there. During my short time at RAAF Base Townsville I was able to go on white water rafting Adventure Training. This was a first for me, that was very enjoyable and a great way to build teamwork.

I also spent 2 weeks with the 1st Aviation Regiment at Robertson Barracks in Darwin. The Aircraft that is used here is the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) which has similarities to the Apache. Due to the location that the Tiger ARH is in, it was a quick drive down the road to a FARP where they can use the entire weapon systems platform. While under supervision I join in on an arming team getting hands on all the ammunition. It was a great chance to see how they operate and what different procedures they use.

My time in Australia was one of the most exciting and enjoyable thing that I have done, the people that I worked with out there where very friendly and welcoming. The Exchange Program Ex Long Look has many positive points about it that will develop anyone who is lucky enough to experience it.
To add icing on the cake, we were fortunate enough to stay in the Hotel De Bilderberg, just a short walking distance to the historic town of Oosterbeek, with amenities including an indoor pool, sauna, gym and jacuzzi! The purpose of the tour was for 656 Squadron members to gain insight into the Airborne Regiment’s involvement in WW2 and what impact aviation assets had on the battle of Arnhem.

It was an early start from Wattisham Flying Station on Monday Oct 14 as we headed to Harwich Port for the ferry ride to Hoek Van Holland. It was an early start from Wattisham Flying Station on Monday Oct 14 as we headed to Harwich Port for the ferry ride to Hoek Van Holland. After almost 7hrs accumulating sea miles on the ferry in the choppy waters we arrived around 1900hrs and the ferry ride to Hoek Van Holland. After almost 7hrs accumulating sea miles on the ferry in the choppy waters we arrived around 1900hrs.

From there, we went to visit Lonsdale Church which first featured in the fighting at Arnhem on 19th September 1944, when Major Richard Lonsdale, second in command of 11th Bn Parachute Regiment, gathered the survivors of the fighting around St Elisabeth Hospital. Himself wounded, he climbed in the pulpit, and delivered his famous speech. The troops defending this sector of the Oosterbeek perimeter became known as ‘Lonsdale Force’ and the church soon became known as ‘Lonsdale Church’. Next to the church was Kate Ter Horst’s house and it was used as a first aid post. Our last activity of the day was a visit to John Frost Bridge (John Frostbrug) over the Lower Rhine at Arnhem where we learnt about the German defence and the British advance. The bridge is named after Major-General John Dutton Frost, who commanded the British forces that reached and defended the bridge during the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944.

Here we learnt how the troops were unable to advance north as quickly as anticipated and they failed to relieve the airborne troops according to schedule. After four days, the small British force at the bridge was overwhelmed and the rest of the division became trapped in a small pocket north of the river.

In the river forelands the British Infantry troops were dug in, followed by the First Allied Airborne Troopers. From there, we went to visit Lonsdale Church which first featured in the fighting at Arnhem on 19th September 1944, when Major Richard Lonsdale, second in command of 11th Bn Parachute Regiment, gathered the survivors of the fighting around St Elisabeth Hospital. Himself wounded, he climbed in the pulpit, and delivered his famous speech. The troops defending this sector of the Oosterbeek perimeter became known as ‘Lonsdale Force’ and the church soon became known as ‘Lonsdale Church’. Next to the church was Kate Ter Horst’s house and it was used as a first aid post. Our last activity of the day was a visit to John Frost Bridge (John Frostbrug) over the Lower Rhine at Arnhem where we learnt about the German defence and the British advance. The bridge is named after Major-General John Dutton Frost, who commanded the British forces that reached and defended the bridge during the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944.

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Day three started off with a visit to the Hartenstein Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek. The museum is dedicated to the Battle of Arnhem in which the Allied Forces attempted to form a bridgehead on the northern banks of the Rhine river in September 1944. Hartenstein served as the headquarters of the British 1st Airborne Division. In the museum an extensive and diverse collection is displayed consisting of original weaponry, genuine uniforms and equipment used in the battle. There are also numerous photos and films on display that provide a realistic picture which is enhanced by interviews with Allied soldiers. After the museum visit we went to visit the Airborne Cemetery which was established in 1945 and is home to 1764 graves from the Second World War. Most of the men buried in the cemetery were Allied servicemen killed in the Battle of Arnhem or in the liberation of the city the following year. A two-minute silence was held at the cemetery to reflect and remember the fallen.

Five junior soldiers read citations. Visiting all these historic places and hearing the stories and testimonies taught the group the importance of speaking up when you think something is wrong and that communication at all levels is key and never to underestimate your opponent. Also, no matter who you are in the battle group, your input is key. I have so much respect for the people who fought during this battle considering the basic kit they had compared to what we have in the modern times and the conditions they were fighting in, and yet they achieved so much.

The battlefield study tour wasn’t all work and no play. During the evenings after we were done with our daily activities, we had time to go to the Hotel gym, sauna, swimming pool, bar and restaurant. Most people also went to socialise in Oosterbeek, Arnhem and of course the convenience of an hour train ride to Amsterdam was not put to waste. This was one of the rare opportunities for SHQ, Signallers, Ground Crew and REME Technicians of 656 Squadron to relax and bond. I look forward to another battlefield study in a different location and I highly encourage and recommend everyone to put their names forward if any battlefield studies come up because it was an informative, educational and thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Cpl Gondwe
The Regimental football team had some success on the football pitch putting behind them an 11-1 loss to 3 Regiment AAC in a friendly to beat them just one week later 2-1 in a league game. When it matters, we deliver!

In X-Country the team headed off to Gibraltar Barracks, Surrey having qualified to take part in the Army Championships. The event was staged on Minley Training Area and would prove to be a very different proposition to some of the areas the team are used to racing on. The weather had already played its part in making the ground extremely wet, boggy and heavy going which when coupled with the undulating terrain made for a very challenging race. Despite all that the team acquitted themselves very well and will use the experience gained to make a final push in the UK Midlands Cross Country League. With only 3 races left in the season, the team are in a good position to potentially take the Major Unit first team prize. Anyone interested in Cross Country should contact Capt Ross Wilcox, HQ Sqn 2IC ext 8426.

No sports report would be complete without a mention of Orienteering. Whilst not for everyone it is gaining momentum, with younger soldiers from the Regiment assisting the more experienced members of the team in bringing home the Army Aviation ‘David Hicks Trophy’ for 2020. Again, the competition was held on Minley Training Area the same day as the X-Country Championships which made for some very interesting navigational challenges - not least trying to stay out of the way of the X-Country race. The competition hosted teams from across Army Avn Units with 4 Regt narrowly beating 47 Regt RA to become Unit Champions. The team will be looking to continue their success when they compete at the Army Inter Unit Championships being held in May. Anyone interested in Orienteering should contact the 4 Regt AAC RSM, Ext 8406 or visit the British Army Orienteering club website: www.baoc.info
For the uninitiated, the Cresta Run starts in St Moritz and is a 1200m ice run that winds its way down the valley into the town of Celerina 157m below. It consists of just 10 corners, the most notorious of which is named Shuttlecock. This is designed to spit riders out into the waiting straw and snow should they be going too fast for their ability! If they successfully navigate this corner, they can expect to reach speeds of up to 75mph as the fly past the finish line in the prone, head first position before raking with their toes to slow themselves down until smashing into the crash mats at the end of the run.

The first week in St Moritz gave the team an opportunity to practice the run and was an enormous competitive advantage compared to those who turned up as beginners on the week of the competition. As most Army participants in the Cresta Run were beginners, there were a considerable number of crashes and many riders were falling at shuttlecock more often than they were completing the run. As training entered the second week even more Army riders descended on St Moritz and the disparity between the quality of novice riders from the previous week and those who had just arrived gave the AAC team some confidence that they could be competitive.

As race day arrived there would be three trophies up for grabs, all over the course of two runs; The Novice cup (fastest beginner), The Junction Handicap (each rider is given a handicap and ridden individually) and the 17th/21st Lancers Cup (open pairs race). You must successfully get down the run three times; crash and you’re out!

Beginners Capt Hartland and Lt Vickers teamed up as the AAC pair while Capt Pryor, an experienced rider, concentrated on training from the top of the run, in preparation for the inter-services competition. The first run of the competition saw both riders post personal best times and already half of the pack had been eliminated through falls. Both of their second runs were mediocre times, but most importantly they stayed in the run. This was however, not enough to place on the podium of any competition as the Household Cavalry took 1st, 2nd and 3rd for every event. While only placing 6th place in the 17th/21st Lancers Cup event was well contested and the St Mortiz Tobogganing Club were very pleased to welcome back the AAC with a hope that we return next year with both soldiers, officers, men and women.

The 2020 AAC Cresta Team thank the AAC fund, 3 Regiment and 4 Regiment for their generosity in supporting the team and allowing the AAC to be represented in the competition.
In such a small village it does not take too long for news to travel and we were soon being welcomed into the community. In return, I felt compelled to get involved with some of the village activities and it was not long before I was a member of the Community Council and assisting in the Village Hall bar on Friday nights. It was there that I heard about auditions for a production by the Whatfield Players, the village Amateur Dramatics (Am Dram) group. Why not? I thought. So along I went, with my eldest son, to see what was on offer. After a couple of read throughs of various characters, I was offered the role of Prince Charming in ‘Snow White and the Curse of the Ice Queen’. This caused quite a stir throughout the MT department along with numerous Prince Charming posters. This was going to be my first occasion of performing and singing in public to an audience of strangers. But it was great fun, successful and raised money for a local charity. Over the next 12 months, a couple of short plays and another Christmas production followed. I later had the opportunity to take part in a comedy sketch with the Village Independent Players (VIPs) from Bildeston. Obviously startled by my dazzling acting skills, I was asked to take part in the group’s future production of ‘Sinbad’ as the panto bad-guy, ‘Sinistro’. This role was made a lot easier by channelling experiences with previous Regimental Sergeant Majors (names not included).

Three pantomimes, two ‘Allo ‘Allo comedy nights and two 40s events later, and we have recently completed four successful performances of ‘Aladdin’. This year I reprised my role as the panto Dame. This comes with its own challenges, especially when you have several family members in the audience. I had always been quite good at keeping my ‘out-of-hours’ activities separate from work; it is not the stereotypical hobby that one would associate with a Serviceperson. But then it’s good to be a little different. After months of rehearsals, word got out that I was going to be playing Widow Twanky. I could not have expected any better support than from a small collective of willing victims coming to watch the RCMO belting out songs of yester-year wearing too little, too much or just enough make-up. I must say that I was very grateful to those that attended, and I got the feeling they may not have known what to expect; they did by the end of the show!! I am sure that the Regtl 2IC now has his selfie with the Dame taking pride-of-place on his mantlepiece.

Being part of the local community has been an important part of my family’s life while living in Whatfield. Being part of the Am Dram groups has equally been important to me as it has allowed me to get involved in something different. My fellow Players and VIPs were very surprised when I told them about my ‘day job’. But they have all taken a keen interest; it has also meant that I have been able inform about some of the wider activity at Wattisham Flying Station and some about some of the roles of the officers and soldiers.

Rehearsals for the next winter production will begin in September, maybe we’ll have some new faces?

Capt Gray Searle
RCMO 4 AAC

In 2013, my family and I took the decision to buy our own property with a plan to settle in the local area; in the [lucky] village of Whatfield.
Although Christmas is already a very distant memory, it is worth remembering the huge successes the Battalion helped to deliver on Ex CRIMSON EAGLE at the end of 2019. With 603 flying hours achieved and 55 pilots trained, this exercise significantly exceeded any previous iteration of the exercise and it was all executed alongside a superb adventurous training package in San Diego. The Battalion has already engaged with 653 Squadron AAC to start planning the next iteration, although the 2019 achievement has set the bar very high.

The last time I wrote to you, I promised 2020 would be a great year and I haven’t been disappointed so far. January seemed a good time to send a 6-man team to Les Contamines to spend 2 weeks wearing Lycra in sub-zero conditions. Fortunately, their visit coincided with the gruelling 1 (UK) Division Nordic Skiing Championships and the team gave an impressive account of themselves, especially considering one member had never worn skis before (think Eddie the Eagle but without any jumps...). More cold weather training has been ongoing on Ex CLOCKWORK, with a team from 71 Aviation Company and 132 Sqn RLC sent to Bardufoss, in Norway, to support 4 Regt AAC cold weather Apache flying with equipment and logistic support. An outstanding achievement in temperatures as low as minus 28 Celsius. Not to be outdone, 72 Aviation Company deployed to Otterburn to help deliver Ex LIGHTNING FORCE with 653 Squadron AAC. The weather may not have dipped as far as minus 28 but I can attest to our technicians conducting maintenance at midnight in driving rain at close to zero. Just one of the many benefits of training in Yorkshire.

Work is now ongoing in earnest to prepare 72 Aviation Company for Ex DEFENDER, which will take them to Northern and Eastern Europe to support 3 Regt AAC in April and May.

Other members of the Battalion have been keen to make the most of the cold weather on offer. 71 Aviation Company has conducted collective training in Lydd and Hythe over the past 2 weeks and I have been impressed by how well the OC has planned the exercise to coincide with some truly awful weather. 132 Squadron RLC have also recently returned from a particularly cold and windy battlefield tour of Scotland’s Bannockburn, Stirling and Edinburgh. Finally, a small and determined team are preparing to deploy to Fort William to compete in the annual Commando Speed March - I’m not convinced they will be too bothered by the chilly conditions. 72 Aviation Company made the most of an Apache Mk 1 precautionary landing in a farmer’s field in Lincolnshire. The event presented an excellent opportunity to practise our Down Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) skills and drills. The recovery was slightly complicated by the aircraft undercarriage being heavily bogged down in the mud and there was the minor factor of Storm Ciara and up to 80 mph gusts of wind. Nevertheless, our team worked exceptionally well with the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transport Squadron to recover the aircraft safely back to Wattisham. With Apache E Model delivery planning now being done in earnest, the tempo has been well and truly set for the year. The Battalion will soon celebrate its 25th year in Wattisham with a parade in Hadleigh, a regimental dinner and a 500km bicycle ride to Detmold, in Germany, to remember where we were formed - if anyone fancies blowing out the cobwebs, please get in touch.

After departing Wattisham at the crack of dawn and making it across the channel, the Coy arrived in Ypres and immediately started with an impromptu visit to Branhoeck Cemetery where twice VC recipient Capt N Chavasse is laid to rest. In the bitter cold and snow, the 2IC read his two citations before we embarked and headed for Ypres. Once in Ypres, the OC led a tour around the town with
In late February 2020, 25 members of 72 Coy, 7 Avn Sp Bn REME departed for Ypres, Belgium for a whistle-stop study of the Ypres Salient during the First World War.

visits to the Menin Gate, Cloth Hall, St Martin’s Church and St George’s Church, explaining the significance of the town throughout the war to both the British and the Germans. This added some context to the rest of the exercise. After a bit of free time to explore the Flanders Field museum and the rest of the town, it was time for the nightly ceremony of remembrance at the Menin Gate where wreaths are laid by members of the public.

The next day promised to be full of interesting locations and stories relating to the war. With the sun shining and the rain and snow holding off, the Coy set off to the first location of the day, Essex Farm Cemetery. It was in the dressing station here where John McCrae wrote the famous poem, In Flanders Field. With another VC recipient in this cemetery, Pte Thomas Barratt, the 2IC read his citation.

Following this, another couple of cemeteries were visited, firstly the Canadian memorial at St Julien, then Langemarck German Military Cemetery which is notable due to it’s mass grave of 44,000 German Soldiers. After a period of reflection at these locations, the group moved on to RE Grave at Railway Wood where the use of mining during the war was discussed. This location, on the high ground add some more context to the rest of the war in the area as you could see all the major locations such as the town of Ypres and two high ground features held by the Germans throughout most of the war.

After a quick brew and a chance to warm up, the Coy set off to Black Watch Corner, an area significant at the start of the war in 1914. It was here where the Black Watch are remembered for their valiant defence against the Prussian Guard, the elites of the German Army at that time. The focus of the study then turned to the end of the war with a visit to a couple of locations in Passchendaele, the focus of the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917. Firstly, to Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth War Grave in the world for a period of personal reflection. Finally, the study ended in the Passchendaele Memorial Museum which included artefacts and history of the battles in the Salient region as well as a replica dugout and trench systems.

The study was a massive success. With only a short amount of time to study what is a massive topic and something you could spend weeks doing, the Coy increased their understanding of the First World War in the Ypres Salient region and had a chance to relax a little before a very busy period in the run up to Ex DEFENDER.
The Coy then moved into a weekend of team building activities before moving to Lydd ranges and an LFTT phase. Carrying out basic combat skills will round the Coy and allow them to ‘get back to basics’ whilst ensuring readiness and missions and tasks are met.

Ex CLO CKWORK
71 Coy and 132 Sqn currently have a Forward Repair Team (FRT) and Deployed Spares Pack (DSP) support to 4 Regt AAC in Bardufoss, Norway. As part of the exercise 3 AH are deployed in what is the second deployment of its type to this region. The 7 Bn soldiers have been carrying out routine maintenance and providing a logistical stores node in what is an extremely challenging environment that has tested our tradesmen and logisticians to their limits, with temperatures routinely falling to as low as -30 degrees Celsius. Prior to deployment, a Cold Weather Survival Course (CWSC) was carried out so all those deploying were trained and then tested to be able to deploy. Following this exercise, 71 Coy and 132 Sqn soldiers can deploy, operate and deliver output in the most of challenging conditions.

71 Company
CT1/2
71 Coy recently deployed near Folkstone conducting low level soldiering skills including patrolling, fire and manoeuvre, navigation, and living in the field. The week concluded following a dawn attack.

PNCO Course
17 - 29 Nov 2019
Build up for the course started in earnest in Sep 19, with WO2 Anderson and his team of Sgt Daly and Sgt McIntosh, working flat out to facilitate the course.

From inception to execution, the training team had now firmly engaged with delivering Corps level activity to deliver the next batch of qualified JNCO’s back to the field force.

The team deployed to Swynnerton, Staffs, early on Friday 15 Nov 19, which included the 3 mentors, Sgt Murrie (71 Coy), Cpl McDonald (132 Sqn), Cpl Robertson (QM’s) and the enemy (6 soldiers from various depts within the Bn). The team arrived at Swynnerton, Staffs, and quickly set about taking over the facility and preparing for the inflow of the soldiers for the cadre.

Week 1.
The first week of the course consisted of; power point lessons delivered by Sgt Daly (Plt Sgt), the Platoon Commander (Lt Wilson, 8 Fd(Para) Coy) and the 3 mentors. We also had guest speakers, Capt Bull (RCMO) on Career Management, WO1 (RSM) Edgeworth on Discipline and Cpl Doorbar (RAO Dept) on JPA. The week concluded with a familiarisation to the training area in preparation for the field phase in week 2.

The students had practical revision of Fire Control Orders, Contact Drill, Section SOP’s and finally Section Attack, this was a timely reminder for the students, so once they deployed, they hit the ground running.

Sgt Daly went to great lengths to ensure that the students were not in the lecture room all day getting frazzled with power point, but had at least one period outside activity per day, which included NAVEX, Command Tasks and a 6-mile tab.

Week 2.
The course deployed out onto the training area on the Sunday morning, tabbed out to the harbour and quickly set up routine for the next 4 days. The conditions for the first 2 days were awful with
rain the order of the day. This gave the mentors and Plt Sgt the chance to see how the sections operated, how they worked together and their administration in the field. The training team convened every night at EXCON, where they discussed the day's events and chatted in-depth about the students and their performance. The exercise phase concluded on Thursday at 0500hrs with a final attack and then a stretcher race, before returning to the camp for lunch and weapon cleaning. With the course nearly finished the emphasis was now on the mentors to get the course reports written ready to be delivered on the Friday morning.

For the final pass off parade the course formed up under WO2 Anderson (Course Director) and Lt Wilson (Pit Commander), each student received a pass certificate and course photo. There was also awards for the top 3 students of the course with LCpl Rivers (5 FS Bn REME) awarded top student.

The Training Team returned to Wattisham, handing back the weapons, ammunition and returning all the loaned kit to the QM's Dept before dispersing. The Training Wing recently had feedback from the REME Arms School, rating it the best in the Corps for delivering PNCO Courses, a big pat on the back for all those who were involved in facilitating the course.

WO2 Anderson, Training WO
EXERCISE SAPPERS RETURN

Following my retirement from the Regular Army as the RSM 4 Regt AAC in 2014, and succumbing to my fear of civilian clothing, I immediately joined the Army Reserve to undertake an engagement and recruiting role with 6 Regt AAC working three days a week out of the Army Reserve Centre in Ipswich.

This was my first ‘Posting’ away from Wattisham since I arrived there from Dishforth as a young JNCO some eighteen long years earlier and it took some adjusting to. The change in pace of life coupled with the new role kept me occupied for the next four years until a return to Wattisham with Headquarters Squadron 6 Regt AAC in October 2018. The more predictable working pattern provided a welcomed respite however, some say the devil makes work for idle hands and during an enjoyable and thankfully uneventful 2018 Christmas leave, Beulzebub seized his opportunity to play his hand. During a brief moment of nostalgic reflection, I went back in time to the 1980’s to remember my first period as a reservist.

During that period of reflection, I contemplated the weekend in February 1988 when I arrived at what was then RAF Wattisham for the first time to complete a series of selection tests for the Territorial Army (TA) unit based there. 212 Field Squadron (Airfield Damage Repair) Royal Engineers (Volunteers) enjoyed an accurately descriptive title and was tasked to keep the airfield active in the event of an attack by the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. It was manned with an incredibly experienced and qualified team of Ex Royal Engineers and Civil Engineers of all trades and the skills breadth was such that virtually all tasks were well within the art of the possible. In addition to their primary role of maintaining what was then one of the three Quick Reaction Alert Airfields guarding the Southern United Kingdom between 1985 and 1993, the Squadron also busied themselves with many other engineering projects on the Station, several of which remain to this day. Whilst I passed the generic Military aspects of the selection with ease, I was woefully ill prepared for the vocational realities of service with this unit. Whilst I had some background with Tonka toys, Meccano and Lego in my youth, I had no discernible engineering experience, couldn’t operate Plant machinery and I had never worked in the construction Industry. I could however shovel aggregate, sweep gravel, make coffee, drink beer and sing songs with decidedly questionable lyrics at volume which secured my place. Thanks to previous Military service, I didn’t need to suffer the indignity of Basic Training again and so began my two-year odyssey as a part time Soldier. I could however shovel aggregate, sweep gravel, make coffee, drink beer and sing songs with decidedly questionable lyrics at volume which secured my place. Thanks to previous Military service, I didn’t need to suffer the indignity of Basic Training again and so began my two-year odyssey as a part time Soldier.

Over the next four years, I was fortunate enough to be assigned to a number of different Sections and within the roles they performed, this included long periods spent at the Battalions Headquarters. In 1991, I was posted to the Area Headquarters for a short tour during which I had the opportunity to work with many other engineering units. My tour ended in 1993 and I continued to work within the industry in various roles with the expectation of returning to the Reserve in 1999.

In 1997, I was posted to supervision roles within the construction plant industry. I could however shovel aggregate, sweep gravel, make coffee, drink beer and sing songs with decidedly questionable lyrics at volume which secured my place. Thanks to previous Military service, I didn’t need to suffer the indignity of Basic Training again and so began my two-year odyssey as a part time Soldier. I could however shovel aggregate, sweep gravel, make coffee, drink beer and sing songs with decidedly questionable lyrics at volume which secured my place. Thanks to previous Military service, I didn’t need to suffer the indignity of Basic Training again and so began my two-year odyssey as a part time Soldier. It took some adjusting to. The change in pace of life coupled with the new role kept me occupied for the next four years until a return to Wattisham with Headquarters Squadron 6 Regt AAC in October 2018. The more predictable working pattern provided a welcomed respite however, some say the devil makes work for idle hands and during an enjoyable and thankfully uneventful 2018 Christmas leave, Beulzebub seized his opportunity to play his hand. During a brief moment of nostalgic reflection, I went back in time to the 1980’s to remember my first period as a reservist. During that period of reflection, I contemplated the weekend in February 1988 when I arrived at what was then RAF Wattisham for the first time to complete a series of selection tests for the Territorial Army (TA) unit based there. 212 Field Squadron (Airfield Damage Repair) Royal Engineers (Volunteers) enjoyed an accurately descriptive title and was tasked to keep the airfield active in the event of an attack by the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. It was manned with an incredibly experienced and qualified team of Ex Royal Engineers and Civil Engineers of all trades and the skills breadth was such that virtually all tasks were well within the art of the possible. In addition to their primary role of maintaining what was then one of the three Quick Reaction Alert Airfields guarding the Southern United Kingdom between 1985 and 1993, the Squadron also busied themselves with many other engineering projects on the Station, several of which remain to this day. Whilst I passed the generic Military aspects of the selection with ease, I was woefully ill prepared for the vocational realities of service with this unit.

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The next destination was the scene of the majority of the Squadrons training during its tenure at Wattisham, the ‘disused’ runway. Having parked in the 7 Aviation Support Battalion REME car park, we observed as the Gun Run team were practicing their skills across the same stretch of runway that we regularly blasted, refilled and re-covered during the regular airfield bomb damage repair serials. Former SNCO, Geoff Burgess, was able to give an incredibly detailed account on activity there and, as he did so, the remainder recounted their own roles with startling clarity. The last visit before lunch was to the fishing lake deep in the dense woodland to the rear of what is...
now the Station Quartermasters. This facility was built by the unit, again at the bequest of the RAF, and it was with some sadness so see that it had clearly fallen into disuse becoming a shadow of its former glory.

Veterans after lunch outside the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess

We ventured along the Squadron Headquarters corridor and it proved difficult for the visitors to orientate themselves with the new layout of the offices as they are configured today. The Officer Commanding 656 Sqn AAC, Maj Raikes, welcomed the veterans and listened with interest to their accounts. Greeted by the Squadron signallers, we eventually reached the now enlarged room which once incorporated the Squadron Bar, the scene of many memories and anecdotes shared by the many and particularly Paul Marrs and me. Sadly, few of those stories are fit for publication here. Then it was onto the rooms which formed part of the accommodation and ablutions we utilised before we were relocated into the 'Temporary' accommodation behind the Medical Centre which have only recently been condemned. The old Plant and Fitter officers in the corner of the hangar were probably the least changed, and, appropriately, still housed the REME contingent as it had done all those years ago.

Outside the airside entrance to Hangar 2 with the old Squadron sign

The penultimate location was the old Squadron sign incorporated the Squadron Bar, we returned to the hangar floor for a tour of an Apache along with the obligatory photo opportunity. Tony Dixon was particularly impressed with the capability and quantity of the wire cutters. This hangar was once a dark environment filled with Haulamatic trucks, Heavy Wheeled Tractors and other huge Plant vehicles. One of the veterans, Andy Glynn, had obtained the original Squadron Sign bought by another member at a Military fair some years previously. It was collectively agreed that it would be nice to take the chance to have the photo taken with it in its original location. It is hoped that in due course, this sign along with the formal history of the Squadron, will be donated to the Wattisham Station Museum.

The veterans at the Fishing Lake

With plenty to discuss, we retired to the Mess for a relaxed lunch accompanied by long discussions. Thoughts inevitably turned to the memory of former comrades no longer with us and those unable to join us for the visit. Suitably refreshed, stepping out of the mess, we were greeted with the anticipated rain which would attempt, and fail, to blight the remainder of the day instigating the ‘Wet Weather’ Plan. Once again, SSgt Masikau greeted us at what was once our Squadron location, hangar 2 (then hangar 1), and, following a safety briefing and issue of ear defence, welcomed us into a hangar that had changed immeasurably since the Cold War Days. Fortunately, given my long association with this hangar during the transformation, I was able to add some context and substance. Gone were the rows of bunk beds, WW2 era ablution facilities and cracked windows. The countless wire mesh cages spread across the hangar floor and noisy birds’ nests in the rafters were also gone, along with the collateral damage to the floor that birds predictably bring. The smell of Diesel smoke, oil products, tentage and GI098 stores familiar to any Soldier, had been replaced with an almost neutral and sterile environment.

With an AH in Hangar 2

After a visit to the old classroom, now part of the new Squadron Bar, we returned to the hangar floor for a tour of an Apache along with the obligatory photo opportunity. Tony Dixon was particularly impressed with the capability and quantity of the wire cutters. This hangar was once a dark environment filled with Haulamatic trucks, Heavy Wheeled Tractors and other huge Plant vehicles. One of the veterans, Andy Glynn, had obtained the original Squadron Sign bought by another member at a Military fair some years previously. It was collectively agreed that it would be nice to take the chance to have the photo taken with it in its original location. It is hoped that in due course, this sign along with the formal history of the Squadron, will be donated to the Wattisham Station Museum.

Veterans at the Memorial Garden

This time was used to reflect on the day and to consider future events. We all returned to the Ringshall village hall car park where we said our goodbyes, exchanged contact details and vowed not to leave it another thirty years before seeing each other again. With the typical dark humour, we had enjoyed all day, I was reminded that, as the youngest of the Squadrons veterans, I may well be the only one left!

WO2 Rob Drake
STATION WELFARE DEPARTMENTS

3 Regiment AHF/Welfare Team

UWO: Capt C Pickett
UWVO: WO2 O’Leary P

Office Number: 01449 728321
Emergency Number: 01449 728220
Email: aac3_weloffr@hotmail.com

4 Regiment Welfare Team

UWO: Capt J Rees
UVWO: WO2 Tabuasei W

Office Number: 01449 728421
Emergency Number: 01449 728220
Email: welfare_house@hotmail.co.uk

7 Avn Sp Bn Welfare Team

UWO: Capt C Eastman
UVWO: WO2 Killick D
UWNSCO: SSgt Booth R

Office Number: 01449 728721
Emergency Number: 07976 176732
Email: sevenwelfare@gmail.com

Wattisham Welfare Coord Team

WISC Coord: Mrs C Morrin
WISC Receptionist: Mrs A Douglas

Reception Number: 01449 728361
WISC Coordinator: 01449 728358
HIVE: 01449 728263

THE EAGLE | 24
Mobile Library

We have a mobile library which visits on a regular basis. If it is your first visit, please bring I.D with you to register. You can borrow books, audio books, CDs, DVDs and computer games. You can request stock from any library in Suffolk from our online catalogue and pick it up from the mobile library.

**Next visit:** 26 Mar, 23 Apr, 21 May, 18 Jun, 16 Jul, 13 Aug, 10 Sep.

**Time:** 13:45 – 14:15

**Venue:** Old Premier Shop Car Park

Contact House

The Contact House is a three-bedroom house based on the patch at Wattisham. It is administered by the WISC for use by soldiers and their families. Current cost is £30 per night with a minimum charge of £60. To find out more information or make a booking please contact Angie on Tel: 01449 728621/8358 Mil: 94674 8621/8358.

House Repairs (24 hours)

- **Wattisham Station**
  via Amey
  0800 707 6000, option 3

- **Hadleigh and Ipswich**
  via Flagship
  0203 6039472

Styling the Station: Opening Hours

**Mon-Thurs:** 0900–1730 hrs  
**Fri:** 0900–1430 hrs  
No appointment necessary  
After hours appointments are available

Chantelle: 01449 728634

Responsibility for Home Insurance for Service Family Accommodation (SFA) Licence Holder

As per the SFA Licence Agreement, Home insurance and home contents insurance is the responsibility of the licence holder of SFA. Home insurance must cover “Licence to Occupy insurance” to a minimum of £20,000. This specialist insurance covers your potential liability incurred as a result of damage to your SFA caused by you or your family – and would provide you cover up to the required £20,000. This would include things like damage caused by kitchen fires, or flood damage as a result of failing to adequately protect and heat your home in winter. Claims for damage can only be made to Amey if they are at fault. Amey will only provide the second-hand value of any item, not the replacement costs.

Wattisham Station Community Centre

The Community Centre is widely used for parties, meetings, training, clubs and social events.

**Weekend/Party Hire of the Community Centre**  
(includes Windsor/Cambridge/Kitchen/Conservatory)  
**can be booked at a cost of £40 plus £50 refundable deposit**

For further information and bookings, please contact Angie on, Tel: 01449 728621/8358, Mil: 94674 8621/8358.

Wattisham Station Youth Club

After the Christmas break, our Wattisham Station Youth Group opened its doors again to the young people here at Wattisham, welcoming both military and civilian families. After settling back in on week one, the children have baked cakes, made slime and took part in team games. The Youth Club is a safe environment which young people can come together, work as team or individually to improve confidence and have fun. Running for 18 months the club has been a great success. If you are interested in joining us our sessions run every Tuesday (during term time) as follows:

- 6 – 11 Year Olds – 1700 – 1830 hrs (Juniors)
- 12 – 16 Year Olds – 1845 – 2015 hrs (Seniors)

£1 per session

Paperwork needs to be completed before registration, please contact Clare on 01449 728358.
It is not recommended that children are taken out of school for holiday purposes as this disrupts their education and can be very unsettling for the child. Any holidays taken during term-time will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school should be notified of any holidays in writing, well in advance, and a form is available from the school office on request. Each notification will be assessed on its merits and the parents informed.

If there are exceptional circumstances for your child to be absent during term time, please speak to your child’s school as soon as possible. Your welfare department is also available to offer support to families.

The Garden project will be broken down into two parts;

**Part one** will be similar to an allotment, a plot will be allocated to those that request it (Depending on availability) for a very small annual fee. This will help to maintain the larger project as a whole. Plots will be allocated on a yearly basis and selected by the committee from the requests received.

**Part two** of the project will be a mental health well-being garden. This will be an area that is available for everyone in the community to take time out of their busy lives and relax close to nature. There will be an area allocated to host outdoor BBQ’s on request, Seating areas and some features that will be revealed on opening day.

The main purpose of the garden will be to help support the treatment of mental ill health and to aid in the recovery of Service Personnel recovering from physical and mental ill health.

Along with socially prescribed individuals the Garden project is looking for volunteers to help maintain and grow the garden all year round. We are also looking for volunteers to help build the structures and facilities that will go to create the Community Garden here at Wattisham. **No experience required** in either Gardening or DIY. Any assistance will be greatly received.

If you want to volunteer as either a Gardener or just to help create the facility then please see the contact details below.

To Register your details speak to either;
Capt Chris Pickett 3AAC-UWO Christopher.Pickett361@mod.gov.uk
WO2 Waga Tabuasei 4AAC-UWO-WO Waqa.Tabuasei160@mod.gov.uk
01449 72 8321 01449 72 8421

This is just some of the Benefits to Gardening:

- Developing social support and social skills.
- A great use of leisure time.
- Decreased stress and pain.
- Better diet and lifestyle.
- A greater sense of security.
- Happiness.
- Enhanced self-esteem.
HIVE Information Centres support the chain of command and service communities through the provision of up-to-date and relevant information worldwide. The HIVE offer an extensive range of information on relocation, local unit and civilian facilities, places of interest, forces discounts, schools and further education, accommodation, healthcare, employment and training opportunities as well as discounts, deployment, transition, resettlement, welfare signposting and financial information.

HIVE Blog

HIVE blogs are continuously updated to provide the very latest information on a range of topics including:

- **What’s on** - events and activities
- **Notice Board** - latest news & Information
- **Discounts** - local discounts for you
- **Employment** - opportunities for training or employment
- **Accommodation** - information from providers
- **Welfare** - support agencies
- **Health** - Current information

Sign up to follow the HIVE blog for all the latest news and items of interest to families, serving personnel and veterans.

A list of all HIVE locations can be found at: www.army.mod.uk/hives

DISCOUNTS

Local and National discounts are available to view on the HIVE blog.

The Defence Discount Service is the only official MOD Forces Discount.

Service available for all members of the Defence Community including Serving Personnel, Spouses/Partners, Veterans, MOD Civil Servants, Cadet Forces (over 16) and NATO personnel in the UK.

www.defencediscountservice.co.uk
Every great solution begins with a great idea. Boeing is proud to partner with the British Army to provide attack helicopter training solutions for aircrew, groundcrew and maintenance. Together, we’ll engineer ideas that change the world.