

# FLASHLIGHT

The Magazine of the MOD Guard Service

Issue 44 Spring / Summer 2013



Mark Hutchinson,  
Chief Operating Officer of the DIO,  
sets out his vision for the MGS

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Minding the stores at LSC  
Donnington and DSDA Bicester



Speaking their language!  
Supporting the Americans at  
RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath



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# From the editor

## Mark Allen



**H**ello and welcome to issue 44 of Flashlight. It's been some nine months since the 20th Anniversary special issue hit the stands. It seems like an awfully long time ago now and a lot has changed both here at HQ and across the wider MGS during this period.

In April, the MGS joined the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), headed by its Chief Executive, Andrew Manley. In this issue Mark Hutchinson the Chief Operating Officer of the DIO,

who has overall responsibility for the MGS, talks candidly about his vision for the MGS.

I must thank everybody who contributed to the 20th Anniversary edition and made it a real bumper issue! The feedback has generally been very positive; the magazine certainly stimulated some interesting debate on a well known social media website!

I said in the last issue that I would be seeking articles from the 'coal face.' To this end I have been busy visiting sites and speaking to staff. You can read about the results on Pages 7 and 16.

Everybody I have met on my travels made me feel very welcome and were eager to share their experiences and views with me. What was only too apparent was the professionalism of the officers and their commitment to getting the job done.

The first female MGS conference was held in Glasgow.

Find out more on Page 13.

There are a large number of articles from Regions 1 and 5 in this issue. Some of you may feel too many. Well, I make no apologies for this. As I said in the last issue, Flashlight is largely driven by the contributions I receive, and I am therefore very grateful to those individuals in Regions 1 and 5 who are prepared to regularly give up their valuable time to write.

If you are interested in submitting an article or arranging a site visit then please do contact me.

I have been asked about setting up a 'marketplace' in the pages of Flashlight for MGS staff to sell / swap their unwanted belongings. If this is something that would be of interest to you, then please let me know.

I hope you enjoy this issue

Mark

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

*John F. Kennedy 35th president of the U.S.*



# Mark Hutchinson

## Chief Operating Officer Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)

***“My aim is to reinforce the MGS as a guard service that combines expertise and high productivity to form strong relationships built on confidence & trust with those it protects.”***

**Q** Mark, how do you see the MGS fitting into the wider DIO organisation?

**A** I don't in the short term! For the next 6-9 months my focus will be on standing up the new reshaped MOD Guard Service and equipping it to carry out its important work; ensuring it is adequately resourced to meet the required tasks, and also well skilled, productive and well led. There will be time after that to consider integrating it more fully within the wider DIO operation. There are some obvious areas where integration could have benefits - e.g. guarding could fit in alongside existing 'soft' Facility Management services or it could combine its services with those of the Security Systems Group. All of these possibilities will be considered in due course.

**Q** What is your vision for the MGS? Is outsourcing the only option for the future?

**A** My aim is to reinforce the MGS as a guard service that combines expertise and high productivity to form strong relationships built on confidence & trust with those it protects. Making the MGS a benchmark for quality guarding across the sector seems

to me to be the most effective way of ensuring it has a long term future and is able to address the inevitable challenges to prove its value in the years ahead. I am open-minded about its future status (in-house, partnership, outsourced). All options will undoubtedly be explored but the most important thing to my mind concerning the MGS's long term future is about how good it is, not how it is structured or owned.

**Q** What are the challenges facing the MGS?

**A** Bearing in mind that I am still learning about the MGS, my sense is that the most immediate challenges facing us are, first, addressing the human aspects of re-scaling the MGS operation; making sure people who leave the MGS are treated decently, fairly and helped to adjust to their future circumstances. Second, making sure those who stay with-and indeed those who join the re-shaped MGS feel a sense of new challenge and expectation. I don't see this as an exercise in downsizing, I see this as an opportunity to set up the MGS for FY14 / 15 onwards as something quite different to what has gone before. Setting out this future vision in a way that engages

and motivates people is the third challenge.

**Q** Do you intend to take a 'hands on' approach to the management of the MGS?

**A** Yes!

**Q** How can the MGS improve as an organisation?

**A** All organisations can improve but it would be premature for me to suggest I have the best insights into the MGS based on three months in charge. I also think it is important that any targets for self - improvement come from the workforce as a whole and are not set top - down. So I plan on a series of engagements and workshops across the MGS in the near future to help build a collective sense of how we want to shape the new MGS and what our targets for improvement / performance should be.

**Q** What are your views on the MGS within the broader - banded structure? Is there a case for creating a specific occupational group for the MGS?

**A** I simply don't know enough about the arguments for and against at this stage. I think it rather depends on which strategic



direction we take to build the MGS of the future – do we increasingly specialise as a niche supplier of high quality protective services or do we see merit in building guarding into a wider family of soft FM services to establishments? Both options are open at this stage.

**Q** How do we increase diversity in a male dominated 50+ environment?

**A** We may find the structural changes over the next 6-9 months

create greater diversity but we must also ensure the climate is open to, and encouraging of, a more diverse workforce. Shift patterns that discourage working mothers, for example, need looking at. I don't under - estimate how problematic this can be but a more diverse workforce is a critical component of our future success.

**Q** What are your interests and hobbies?

**A** I am married (to Sue – who

works at Bristol University) and have three children - Fiona, Laura and Chris – two of whom are out of university and entering the jobs market for the first time and one just about to start his studies at Sheffield. I enjoy their company most of the time! And I watch Bath Rugby with a mixed sense of hope and disappointment every season!

## Did you know?

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) was formed on 1 April 2011. It replaced the former Defence Estates and brings together property and infrastructure functions from across the Ministry of Defence. DIO manages the MOD's property infrastructure and ensures strategic management of the Defence estate as a whole, optimising investment and providing the best support possible to the military.

It is responsible for:

- Providing infrastructure support to establish stability in Afghanistan and other operations
- Providing effective, coherent and affordable infrastructure solutions to meet Defence needs
- Managing and delivering the Defence infrastructure efficiently and effectively
- Providing sustainable, safe and legally compliant infrastructure to Defence



## Topical News items from around the MOD Intranet

### Jon Thompson praises the work of civil servants

The MOD's Permanent Secretary has praised the work of civil servants while outlining some of the challenges the Department is facing.



Jon Thompson was making the keynote speech on the 3rd July, day three of Civil Service Live - Be Exceptional, which attracted over a 1000 civil servants from across the west to the event in Bristol.

"I have been really impressed with the qualities of the people I have met in the Civil Service," said Jon. "In the MOD more than 98 per cent of our civil servants don't work in traditional policy roles. They undertake roles in operational delivery, and work in science and technology to name just two, and outside this hall you will find some tremendous displays from the MOD which has a huge presence in Bristol."

Jon explained that transforming Defence was part of the biggest transformation programme in Europe and that the MOD was playing its part in the wider reform of the Civil Service.

Improving learning and development, attracting skilled programme and project managers, improving performance management, streamlining processes and helping people take more responsibility for their work were all aims of improving the service the MOD offered to the Armed Forces and the taxpayer. They would be reflected across the wider Civil Service.

From DE&S News, 10th July 2013

## "It's a small world..."

Following the anniversary issue of Flashlight, David Swaithe, former CSO3 and Area Co-ordinator sent the following by email:

Mark,

*"An excellent 20th Anniversary Issue of Flashlight with some interesting reading. One of the contributions that was of interest to me was the '50 Years and Counting' by Adrian Cross about Ken Drewery. I am an Ex Warrant Officer Royal Air Force Police who also specialised in Counter Intelligence. I knew Ken very well and to prove that point, the centre photo in the frame being presented to him was taken at the Sgts Mess at RAF Rheindahlen in Germany and I am standing to Ken's left. So of all the photos he must have, that one was chosen for his portfolio. I feel quite honoured. It is a small world."*

Regards

David Swaithe

It was lovely to hear from David. The picture David alludes to is reproduced below. David is standing in the back row, far right, with Ken to his right wearing the glasses.



David also sent in the picture below of the MGS Study Group which first appeared in Flashlight 5. The Group were tasked by 2nd PUS to design and cost a centralised MGS Corporate structure. November 1999 seems like an awfully long time ago, but lets not forget those colleagues pictured who are sadly no longer with us.



left to right:

**Back row:** David Swaithe, Russell Wyatt-Sugg, Tim Sheehan, Martin Gilbey, Jim Irvine, Jim Wilson, Steve Halsey, Richard Collins, Peter Jones. **Middle row:** Dave Hankins, Bill Bailey, N/K, Ian Jew, Les Bown, Vince Harrison, Mark Gosling, Harry Worth. **Front row:** Brian Hewitt, John Griffin, Peter Oakley, Mike Wright, Peter Simpson, Kevin Partridge, Peter Aitken, Doug Harding, Carl Stephens.

# Medic!

Your editor spoke to James Crawley CS05 who is based at Wyvern Barracks in Exeter, Devon

**Q** James, in your spare time you are a member of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAF Reserves) Would you like to tell me a bit about that?

**A** Yes, I have been a reservist for four years. I am a Senior Aircraftsman (SAC), specifically, a Flight Medic which could be described I suppose as a flying Health Care Assistant. My primary role, if deployed, would be to collect patients from foreign operational theatre and escort them back to the UK. I may for instance fly from RAF Brize Norton to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus to pick up patients arriving from Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. I have been to the Falklands and next year I may be deployed to Afghanistan.

Before the trip I have to ensure that all the medical supplies and relevant paperwork are correct as well as arrange a number of other logistical issues associated with the flight.

Once airborne, my responsibilities include carrying out in-flight observations on the patients and ensuring they are as comfortable as possible. Depending on the type of patients involved, I would always be supported either by a qualified nurse, doctor or mental health specialist.

I don't get involved with the critical care stuff which is when the plane is essentially a flying intensive

care unit. As a rule, the patients I care for will have been stabilised and not in a life-threatening condition - though they could of course deteriorate at any time, so I have to be prepared to deal with that.

It's quite humbling when you realise some of the things our



soldiers have done and how brave they are. I am proud of what I do in the knowledge that the clinical care I provide is in some way helping them.

Generally, I am committed to train for one weekend a month as well as attend a two-weeks (Annual Continuous Training) camp, but because I enjoy it so much I tend to do more days than I have to. We also have to complete fitness tests so I spend a lot of time (such as my lunch breaks) in the gym keeping myself fit.

After my initial recruit training at RAF Halton, I then had to complete two courses. The three week Ground Phase course taught me about the aircraft and helicopters and how to set them



up for patients. There was also a lot of clinical theory. I also spent time in the hyperbaric chamber to test how I would react in the event of an aircraft springing a leak!

The second course I completed was the Flying Phase course where I undertook aeromed flights with qualified personnel. I learnt how to prepare a Flight Folder which contains all the patient's details and signals from their units. From this information I ascertained their clinical needs (such as medications to be administered whilst on board), or having to book an ambulance to take the individual on to hospital once we have landed back in the UK. I also have to ensure that we have the relevant signal from the UK giving permission for the individual to fly.

Being a reservist has given me so much. I have been tested mentally and physically in ways I never thought possible. I have



learnt leadership skills which has given me more self-confidence. It's a rewarding experience. I recently completed the 'High Ropes course' designed to encourage team



working, building self-confidence and communication skills. I had to climb up a telegraph pole to a height of about 40 feet. I helped two other individuals up and then we



joined hands and leant out (similar to the picture above). It's something I thought I could never do.

Everyone here at Wyvern Barracks has been very helpful, even when they have been inconvenienced covering my shifts. My manager, Mark Furneaux, has also been especially supportive and I couldn't have done it without his help.

**Q** James, you were recently awarded an NVQ Level 3

### Qualification in Customer Services.

**A** Yes I was. I completed it through the MOD's Apprenticeship Scheme. I didn't realise at the time just how much work I would have to put in to gain the qualification, which included having to demonstrate a required level of competence in both English and Maths. I'm OK with the English, but the Maths element was particularly hard and I ended up going to night school to get the tuition I required. Wyvern Barracks is a singleton site so it was difficult to discuss with my assessor my qualification and at the same time deal with the demands of the day job.

I think that customer service is an underrated skill. The MGS is 'front of house' so it's very important that we communicate with people in the most appropriate way - whether they are senior military officers or members of the public. The qualification took me just over a year to complete.



Commanding Officer, Lt Col Neville Holmes MBE presents James with his NVQ Certificate

James has been in the MGS for nearly six years. He started at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and then transferred to Wyvern Barracks.

It was whilst he was at Wethersfield completing his Foundation Course that his interest in becoming a Flight Medic was stimulated by a colleague who was in the Auxiliary Air Force and had served in Iraq.

## Front Gate Views!



James Gilroy CSO5 sent the picture (left) of the view from the front gate at RAF Fylingdales, looking out across the beautiful North Yorkshire Moors. Can anyone better that? If you think you can, send your picture (by email or post) to the editor, contact details on the inside front cover.



# In Focus

Your editor visited the Joint Supply Chain Services base at Donnington in Shropshire, and the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency at Bicester

**M**artin Colclough is the Group Manager at Donnington.



**Q** Martin, could you tell me a little bit about Donnington?

**A** Donnington is part of the DE&S (Defence Equipment and Support). It's a stores and vehicle maintenance depot and supplies everything from nuts and bolts to aircraft parts. It also holds the gun metal used to make the Victoria Cross Medal. It's the largest weapons storage depot in the MOD.

**Q** What are the day-to-day challenges that you face?

**A** Meeting the customer tasking is always a challenge due to the current shortfalls and the ongoing PRO measures. I am pleased that, with the processes I implemented better roster management now takes place. On a more personal note, it's always a challenge trying to impress on people that there isn't always an ulterior motive with the decisions I make. Having to explain in detail what is expected can be very frustrating.

**Q** What do you enjoy most about the job?

**A** I enjoy working with people. I think my leadership style has helped me establish a very positive relationship with MGS staff and the customer which is built on trust and not betraying any individual confidences. I also think that dealing fairly with a number of difficult issues has earned me the respect of the staff.

**Q** Continuous Improvement (CI) is an important organisational initiative. What are you doing to support this?

**A** Through inclusive use of the Supervisors to actively manage the rosters. They are experienced and very capable individuals who are used to making sound decisions.

**Q** What has been your proudest moment in the MGS?

**A** I received a Chief Constable's Commendation in 2007 for managing the unit changeover between Stafford and Leek Training Camp. Passing the old D Band Assessment was also very satisfying.

**Q** What's the biggest challenges that face the MGS?

**A** Convincing people that any change is for the best. Uncertainty frightens people. To change the culture we have to get everyone on board.

Del Patten CSO5 has been in the MGS for 29 years. Del was formerly a patrolman based at Donnington. This was in the days when all contractors had to be escorted everywhere! So, if nothing else, it kept him fit! Del is 62 but has no plans to retire - he works to pay for his holidays! I spoke to him during a quieter moment at the visitor reception.



**Q** Del, what's the most challenging part of the job?

**A** The Sisys booking-in system is a relatively new initiative so it's been challenging to get to know how it works and to ensure it runs smoothly. When it's not working, or if there is only one of us on duty during a busy period, it can be demanding. I find having a laugh and joke with people helps.

**Q** Continuing in that vein then, do you have any interesting (printable) amusing stories you can tell me?

**A** People are very nervous about having their picture taken

with the Sisys for some reason. On one occasion a lady put her face far too close to the camera so all I got was a mouthful of teeth which would be great if I was a dentist, but not much use for anything else!

Tara Elliott who is working with Del at the reception today, has been in the MGS for nearly four years. She is a dayworker, based permanently at the visitor reception.



**Q** Tara, what's it like being stationed at the site's visitor reception point?

**A** It has its advantages, namely, I am very proficient with the Sisys and I have got to know the regulars very well, so I have a good rapport with them and it all helps to speed up the booking-in process. I have to think very carefully about my language and style of communication when dealing with rude or impatient people.

I was awarded a bonus from the customer for organising the reception area and putting in place a process by which we ensure agency workers on site have the correct clearance. The real challenge though is managing my time at work and caring for my young baby.

**Q** What do you enjoy most about the job?

**A** The teamwork. Del and I work well together. We share the workload, which can be

considerable at times, but we still find time to share stories!

Dave Beasley CSO5 also took some time out to speak to me during my visit. Dave has been in the MGS for six years.

**Q** Dave, what part of the job do you enjoy the most?

**A** I enjoy all of the job really. Meeting people, the camaraderie. I also enjoy being given the opportunity to coach new staff which has been particularly satisfying. We socialise a lot away from work - there are a lot of storytellers here who enjoy a good laugh!

The downside I suppose is

dealing with visitors who don't want to book in, or drivers who don't want to abide with unit policy.

I am the TU Representative for the site which has its challenges but I enjoy trying to deal with people's problems and building relationships.

**Q** What other challenges do you face?

**A** When the visitor reception is not staffed by one of the regulars the Sisys can be a challenge to get up to speed. In the wider context staff are naturally worried about possible redundancies in the current climate. It's also important that staff are up-to-date with their functional training with regards to the policies and procedures.

Colin Fern CSO5 on duty at the West Gate



Flashlight

## Meanwhile at DSDA Bicester in Region 4...



DSDA Bicester is big sprawling site. In fact it's very big! It consists of two main garrisons, five miles apart, and has a fence line of 26 miles. (See map, above).

Situated North of Oxford, some 20 miles West of Aylesbury in the Oxfordshire countryside, it's role is to store, maintain, issue, process and distribute material for the MOD and other designated users.

The current MGS team is 1 CSO3, 10 CSO4s, 30 CSO5s and 5 Dog Handlers. The CSO5s work a 3 shift pattern (earlys, lates and nights) and due to the sprawling nature of the site and its complexities, spend around a month on each static (gate) post. They are supported by five control room based CSO4s, five mobile CSO4s and the dog section.



Ralph Ainsworth CSO5 has been in the MGS for nearly 22 years. He started his MGS career at MOD Main Building, then moved to Stanmore where he worked for nearly five years, before moving to PJHQ Northwood. Ralph then transferred to Fulwood Barracks, Preston before going back down south. He spent a short time at Bicester before transferring to RAF Halton. The withdrawal of the MGS from the site sees Ralph back at Bicester. He told me the most interesting part of his career was whilst he was at Northwood working with the NATO forces.

Prior to joining the MGS, Ralph worked in private security for a local firm in Watford. He was in charge of security at the Harlequin shopping centre but got bored with this so joined the MGS.

Today, Ralph is carrying out access control duties at E7 Gate which is one of the busier posts. Vehicles of all shapes and sizes regularly come and go. Visitors and contractors have to be booked in and issued with the relevant passes.

In his spare time, Ralph likes swimming and he also watches his fair share of sport on TV. Ralph admitted to being an Arsenal fan which probably goes some way to explain why Ralph prefers to watch non mainstream sports such as squash! He also has a keen interest in wildlife and in particular birds of prey. He is considering buying his own bird of prey when he knows enough about the subject to keep one.

Bicester, which is surrounded by countryside is the ideal place it seems to see a wide and varied range of animals in their natural habitat. Ralph particularly likes his drive to work (up the A41) in the summer months and often sees deer, rabbits, foxes and birds of prey such as Kites.

Below: Ralph (left) and Steve on duty at E7 Gate



Samer Haddad (left) and Darren Yates on duty at C North Gate



Steve Smith CSO5 has been at Bicester since June 1991 and was a patrolman at the site prior to joining the MGS. He has fond memories of the original MGS team and spoke highly of their loyalty.

“They all came from different backgrounds but were of a similar age. The camaraderie was really strong. Many of them worked here until they retired. Unfortunately, the PRO measures have really affected us as we haven’t been able to replace them as they left. What we really miss though, is their experience and familiarity of the site.”

Steve particularly likes the opportunity that the shift roster allows for him to work with different people.

“Dealing with the day-to-day problems that crop up is also a challenge. These include providing tourists with local information to dealing with chemical spills, asbestos contaminations and vehicle accidents (many with a blue light response). All of these issues require some form of MGS intervention. We are lucky that we have the Defence Fire Service on site.”

Steve reckons it took him the best part of two years to become completely familiar with the site.

“In those days we covered more of the site than we do now. Following a proper induction period, with someone who is willing to learn, I think it would take me around three months to get a new starter fully up to speed now.”

In his spare time Steve owned up to doing all the usual ‘man things’ like watching football (he supports Aston Villa) and drinking alcohol. His two boys (aged 12 and 9 who watch and play football, but don’t drink alcohol) take up most of his remaining spare time, though he does manage to squeeze in the odd holiday to one of his two favourite destinations, Egypt or New York. The attraction is the sun and food, though Steve also enjoys watching the New York Yankees baseball team.

Coincidentally, Steve’s family hail from Telford in Shropshire and many of them worked at Donnington. His father was subsequently posted to Bicester, where Steve’s story starts.



From left to right: Andy (caption competition pending!). Arthur Weightman, CSO4 & TLO. John Wynne, Dog Section and Steve Earnshaw CSO4

Andy Boyling is the Group Manager for the site. He has worked at Bicester since 2006. Andy joined the MOD as a D Band in 2001 and was the Submarine Navigational Safety Officer, based at Northwood Submarine Command. Prior to this, Andy spent 25 years as a submariner with the Royal Navy. He saw service predominantly at Plymouth, Gosport and Portsmouth on operational duties with both the diesel and nuclear fleet.

Andy’s post at Northwood was about to be ‘computerised’ so he applied for the Group Manager’s job at Bicester. He felt that his Armed Forces background and his experience of dealing with security related matters whilst at Northwood would be ideally suited to a life in the MGS.

“Because Bicester is now the main hub for all MOD logistics, whether it’s stores from Donnington or equipment bound for the operational theatre, dealing effectively with the amount of container traffic (and their contents) coming into the site is a real challenge.

There’s a film called the 13th Warrior. In it there’s a line from one of the Vikings who states “*You couldn’t keep a cow out of this place,*” and that’s precisely what we found wandering around E Site having entered through a part of the fence that was damaged!”

From an early age Andy has had an interest in painting toy soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars.

“I think it was the splendour of the uniforms that attracted me initially, but as I got older I become more interested in the tactics and strategies of the units and their commanders.”

The Battle of Waterloo, (the 200th anniversary of which is in 2015), holds a particular fascination for Andy and he would love, sometime in the future, to visit the battlefield.

# Stag on!

## A Regional Manager gets a taste of the sharp end, again!

**W**hen I agreed during the HMNB Clyde 'Wellbeing Audit' that all of the managers in Region I should do a 'back to the shop floor' day in May 2012 it seemed like a good idea! The temperature then was a balmy 20 degrees (warm for Scotland) and I hadn't actually anticipated or considered that my day on the gate would be in the depths of the winter. However, from a personal perspective I decided that if I was going to do it, I was sure that I was going to do it right. I could have opted for a summer's day or I could have opted for a reception area or a control room but I thought that the most challenging job for the MGS officer in Scotland was dealing with adverse weather, whilst at the same time trying to control traffic and check passes. This is why I chose the Inner and Outer Kibble and Main Gate at RNAD Coulpport. For anyone who doesn't know Coulpport, (see map above) or the west of Scotland, these are arguably the two most



exposed MGS dispositions in the whole of Region I. I did not select these locations to become some sort of hero, but instead I wanted to appreciate the worst elements of being a MOD Guard in Scotland.

I arrived on site at 06.50 hrs on 12 February and met up with my two colleagues for the first part of the day – CSO5s George Robertson and Robert Neil. Both had apparently volunteered to work with me. My two colleagues briefed me on what I should expect from the day and explained the work routine. It was evident that the real work would not start until approximately 07.30 hrs when the civilian staff and contractors started to arrive.

I was aware that it had been rumoured that I was doing a day on the gate to try and establish whether we could reduce the number of guards on the gates at Coulpport, but I made it clear from the outset that this was not the case. I explained that

my day on the gate was effectively a reality check and to ensure that I had not lost touch with the 'sharp end' of the MGS business.

I had started out in the MGS as a CSO5 in 1993 so I had worked on the gates on numerous occasions, but I did have to point out to my colleagues that I had never actually spent 12 hours on the gate because when I was a CSO5 the shift pattern was based on 8.24 hours days. Also, that I had never actually worked at Coulpport in an operational role so effectively I was a 'new start'.

My two mentors (George and Robert), to their credit, took me under their wing and explained how the day would pan out. They explained that initially we would be required to maintain two guards on the gate to deal with the in-muster but as the morning wore on this could be reduced to one to allow us to take a break and grab a welcoming cup of tea.

Generally I was extremely fortunate with the weather;



although the temperature was hovering around freezing, it was dry and there was no wind. Coulport is notorious for its wet, windy and freezing conditions (and that's normally July!) So to get a cold, crisp day was a real bonus.

After five hours on Outer Kibble I decided to move to Inner Kibble. This is the gate that effectively creates and maintains a "sterile area" at Coulport. At this gate I was met by CSO5s Janice Wilson and Anne Connolly. One of the main tasks at Inner Kibble is vehicle searching. This was going to be a busy part of the day. Janice and Anne were very cheery and I was both amused and pleased to witness the rapport they exchanged with the various contractors coming in and out of the gate. However, despite this positive rapport they still didn't manage to get any scented candles (private joke)!

After two hours at Inner Kibble I decided to move to the Coulport Main Gate. This is the access point that leads you into the main site. Here, I was met by CSO5s Ronnie Cochrane, Robert Wood, Tina McColl and Alan McKillop. This was

another busy access control point. The security posture for Coulport means that the main gate has to be closed unless anyone is entering or exiting the site. Whilst this obviously makes sense and enhances security, it was evident that this was a real mute point for the guards and something that caused real consternation.

Having spent three hours on the main gate I decided to return to Outer Kibble for the remainder of the shift. It was now 16.00 hrs and I was mindful that out muster was fast approaching – it was also getting colder and the effects of standing on the gate for nine hours were starting to take their toll. I am not suggesting that I was struggling

but I knew that I had worked a shift!

Possibly the most amusing part of the day was witnessing the night shift arriving and all the cars slowing down to ask George and Robert how their day had been with the Regional Manager only to hear Robert and George say "Ask him yourself, he's standing over there," because apparently most reckoned that I wouldn't see out the full 12 hours!

My day on the gate was enlightening and enjoyable. I am not suggesting that I have learnt anything new but it was a stark reminder of how tough it can be checking passes and standing on the gate in the depths of winter.



## Did you know?



The Royal Naval Armaments Depot (RNAD) at Coulport, Loch Long stores conventional armaments for Royal Navy vessels but is best known for its role in the Trident missile system.



Initial construction took place between 1963 and 1968.



Along with HMNB Faslane, RNAD Coulport is part of HMNB Clyde.



# E&D Matters...

## First conference for female MGS staff takes place at Glasgow

Article by Kathryn Malough, Regional Manager Region 5



If you ever thought that the MGS is an almost exclusively male preserve you are not far wrong, but there are signs of increasing female numbers and as if to prove the point on 22 February the MGS held its first female officers conference at APC Glasgow. Only two men were allowed – John Egan, the Regional Manager – we had to let him in because he was the host and Derek Carrie, a genial chap with the MGS at Kentigern House, who is the Chair of the local MGS Equality & Diversity Forum. Other than that it was women only.

Following John's stirring opening address I took to the floor, being the most senior female in the MGS. I think I must have bored people with my career history but there seemed to be a lot of interest in my various experiences since joining the Department. You would not

expect a lady to say when and give a clue as to her age would you?!

Being amongst friends I felt able to speak candidly of an occasion when I had effectively been stalked by a line manager and how I had dealt with the situation. In those days there was very little support and my immediate line manager was hopeless, even though I kept him informed of the situation. Basically, I dealt with the situation on my own and discussed it at home on a daily basis but I was young and naïve and, in retrospect, I should have really blown the whistle. If anything like this ever happens to my daughters, I'd be in there with the rules. Somewhat unnervingly my story seemed to strike a chord with a number of the delegates.

I reflected on how times had changed in the Department and I had seen more of a lean towards

family friendly policies and how these had enabled females to balance both a career and a family life at the same time.

Marie Harding, a newly promoted manager from my Region spoke about her recent experiences as a new manager within the MGS. Although some of Marie's experiences were far from pleasant, it was interesting to hear how she had dealt with, and reacted, to a number of testing situations.

In the afternoon the delegates broke into three separate groups with each group being asked to consider what short-term, medium-term and long-term changes could be enacted to improve the working conditions and environment for females in the MGS. Generally, the main areas of concern centred on uniform, the cleanliness of the working environment and management inconsistency. At the end of this session John Egan agreed to draw up an action plan to take the various issues forward.

While it might seem a contradiction at a women's conference but the highlight of the day was the talk by Derek Carrie – a man!! Derek regaled us with stories and anecdotes about things he had done in what was clearly a very colourful previous life but most interesting were his reflections on his time as an NHS nurse in Fife. He explained that Nursing was

effectively the opposite of the MGS in that nursing was predominantly an environment dominated by females whereas the MGS is predominantly male orientated. Derek was able to explain some of the difficulties he had encountered during his career and how he could see similar difficulties for female MGS officers within the MGS. This was largely due to combining family commitments with leave and training courses and just having to cope.

We finished with an open

forum. Nearly every delegate commented that the conference had been extremely worthwhile and that the aim of the conference to improve networking had been achieved; there was also a real sense that issues were being highlighted and addressed. A good deal of enthusiasm for a follow-up event means we will be pursuing that with the sort of insistence and perseverance for which the female of the species is famous.



Kathryn and Marie discussing next years conference?!

## An alternative view from a Region 5 jet - setter!

Article by Brenda Mitchell CSO5, Corsham

**O**n a cold and damp morning, the Region 5 MGS Easy Jet Setters, (Kathryn, Marie and I), arrived at Bristol Airport eager to board our flight to Glasgow. Marie looking and acting suspiciously, was stopped and searched. She was 100ml of fluid over the limit, but after saying goodbye to her shower gel, we all swiftly embarked onto the plane. The flight soon passed and we landed at Glasgow. Kathryn rushed ahead to beat the taxi queue - eager to get to the hotel and in from the cold!

After arriving at our hotel, we dumped our bags and went to see the town. Then it was back to the

hotel for a wee chat about the conference tomorrow and a jug of Pimms.

John Egan spoke at some length regarding the issues affecting the MGS and the challenging times affecting all of us.

Kathryn's presentation was a very open and sincere account of the situations she had found herself in. Many of the female officers felt they could relate to the issues that Kathryn raised.

A light lunch gave an opportunity for networking. John and Derek were the only two men in the room but coped very well! After lunch a short syndicate exercise took place with John and Kathryn answering

our questions.

The view from the delegates was all very positive. The conference had provided an opportunity to discuss and raise awareness of female work issues which was very important. Hopefully as a result, it will encourage more networking amongst female MGS officers.

Och aye the noo!



Derek Carrie

Following the conference, your editor asked the delegates to say a little more...

Firstly, Kirsteen McKay a CSO5 at HMNB Clyde:

"It was extremely important to hold the conference. Females are in the minority in the MGS and it was good to get together with women from other Regions to share points of view.

It gave us the opportunity to meet in a relaxed environment, as there isn't much of a chance to do so at work. We were able to discuss female related issues without feeling that we were just complaining.

I wanted to attend to meet others in the same situation as myself and to help in any way that I could. The conference could have been a bit longer and a follow up would be useful."

More on the next page...

## Marie Harding added the following:

"I feel it was very important to raise equality and diversity issues for women. The MGS has always been a very male dominated place and this conference afforded women with the opportunity to discuss openly. I was asked to speak and share my experiences with the group. I also had the opportunity to listen to others and realise that I am not the only one with similar concerns. My objective was to network and find out what issues were arising within the MGS specific to women and the problems they face.

Problems affecting women included a lack of consistency with male Group Managers when following policy, uniform and welfare facilities in toilets.

It would be good to have an MGS women's association. It could be set up in a similar fashion to the Equality and Diversity Panel or the CI Focal Points whereby a number of volunteer contacts can listen to issues and bring them forward to be discussed at regular meetings. These could then be pushed through the chain of command and considered to see if any actions can be put in place to alleviate the problems.

I believe that the conference would benefit if it was moved around the regions to allow others to attend."

## I put the following questions to Debbie Kenwright, Group Manager Region 3,

**Q** Why was it important to hold the conference?

**A** I think it is very important for women in the MGS to liaise, meet with and network with other females. Often the women in the MGS feel that they are the only ones who have issues until they meet and talk to other women. It also helped those females who have overcome certain difficulties to share their experiences with others.

**Q** What did it give you the opportunity to do?

**A** It gave me the opportunity to assess the problems encountered by junior members of staff that do not directly report to me. It showed me that my female staff, seem to be far better informed and equipped to deal with issues perceived by other

women in the service as a male only environment.

**Q** Why did you attend? Did you have a specific objective?

**A** I attended to act as a guide for my own female staff; to get to know other females within my own Region and to try to assist them in any difficulties that they may have encountered.

**Q** What are the key issues affecting women in the MGS?

**A** One of the key issues that was raised at the conference was the female MGS Uniform, which is not considered equal to our male counterparts. There is a need for a real debate on this subject. There was also a suggestion of favouritism being shown from some Male managers to male staff (not

something I have ever encountered).

Another aspect concerns female staff who are unable to go to their male managers to discuss delicate female issues.

**Q** What could the MGS do to meet the needs of its female staff?

**A** A regular MGS newsletter specifically for female staff or a women's staff association like the one the MDP have.

**Q** How could the conference be improved?

**A** Just like we have run at the manager's conference; it might be an idea to run scenario based learning sessions, such as dealing with aggressive males, (it may be a work colleague or a customer) or how to approach a male manager to discuss the types of issues I raised in my previous question.

Thanks to Debbie, Marie and Kirsteen for their comments.

I'll leave it to Marilyn Monroe for the final word...

**"Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition."**



# In Focus

Your editor visited RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath, close to the Suffolk / Cambridgeshire border

Firstly, I was met by Dave Rayner, Group Manager at Mildenhall who explained the unit's role: "Although the unit is an RAF station,



it is currently the home of the 100th Air Refuelling Wing, United States Air Force (USAF). It supports USAF operations at a number of units, including RAF Lakenheath, which is just up the road."

Dave has been at Mildenhall since October last year. He told me that his new role has been a challenge, but the two most satisfying aspects have been the relationship he has established with the customer and the close working relationship the MGS team have with the unit's American Station (Security) Forces (SFS). This has been achieved, he feels, by being up front and honest and having the ability to listen.

Dave also admitted to supporting Liverpool FC (his words: "the only true team in the world") in his spare time as well as enjoying a spot of gardening, running and watching sport.



Lee (left), Bernie and Alan pose for the camera

Lee Lawrence CSO5 is 19 and has been with the MGS at Mildenhall since he left school. He's looking forward to a long and successful career in the MGS,

**Q** Lee, What do you like most about the job?

**A** I love the job. The people I work with; meeting the public; the new faces and getting to know the regulars. There's always plenty of banter!



TEAM=Together Everyone Achieves More

**Q** What's the relationship like with the Americans?

**A** It works very well, they're very supportive, friendly - they are just very nice people.

**Q** The search barn seems to be a hive of activity?

**A** In the mornings it's always very busy, often with long queues outside. The delivery vehicles come in all shapes and sizes, including articulated lorries. These can be a challenge!

**Q** What other tasking do you undertake?

**A** The visitors centre, issuing passes using the booking in system.

**Q** What interests do you have away from work?

**A** I have a SCUBA licence so I enjoy diving when I can. Mostly around the UK, but I have dived in Turkey.

Bernie Campey CSO5 has been at Mildenhall for seven years. He admitted to being one of the older members of the team but wouldn't divulge his true age!

He spent 30 years in the police, in various roles including traffic and CID, and on his retirement from the Suffolk Force joined the MGS, because, he said; "I'm not ready to curl up and die". He's happy to share his (vast) experience with the younger members of the team.

He also stated:

"It's a good team, thoroughly enjoyable to work with. Both the MGS and the Americans take the security of the site very seriously."

In his spare time Bernie enjoys watching golf and motor racing and doing a bit of gardening.

Paul Snelling CSO4



Alan Bond CSO4 has been in the MGS for 17 years. He recently transferred to Mildenhall from Colchester, where he was based for ten years. Alan's varied career has also seen him do time at Sandhurst and Wattisham.

**Q** Alan, What's the most challenging part of being a CSO4?

**A** Getting the guys to work as I want them to is the most challenging. I have found that the best way to achieve this is to only ask them to do what I would be prepared to do myself. Every situation is different, so it's a learning curve. You have to *sit back* watch and learn. That way you get everyone in your team working for you. The search barn can be very busy so it's important that everyone works as a team.

Whilst I was there Alan was supervising some on-job refresher training in the search barn with James Andrews CSO5 who is on detached duty from Wattisham. James pointed out that both sites require a high level of security but Mildenhall's search regime is very challenging. He said: "It's been a steep learning curve but having Alan close at hand to make decisions and support the team is very important."

**Q** What's the biggest challenge for the MGS in the months ahead?

**A** The saddest is the loss of sites and the people. For those that are staying I think they are fairly happy with their lot. I thought I would wait and see what was likely to happen before I made a decision. I have tended to take each day as it

comes.

**Q** What do you do in your spare time?

**A** Spending time with my family, watching rugby, in particular the recent British Lions tour and I am also looking forward to the Army v Navy match at Twickenham next year.

Once James had completed his training I spoke to him about life in the MGS. James is 27 and has been in the MGS for nearly six years. He is enjoying his new job immensely and finds the American attitude to security refreshing.

"They appear to have had the need for security drummed in to them and don't see security as a chore."

He told me he enjoys the mix of old and young in the team which strengthens the camaraderie. He was given the opportunity of an E2 job at Wattisham but preferred to stay in the MGS. With a young family to support, as well as moving into a new house (two days before he started at Mildenhall!) he needed to ensure that their quality of life wasn't adversely affected.

"It's a new start and a new challenge. I'd like to stay in the MGS and given the opportunity be a CSO4 by the age of 30."

In his spare time James is an Ipswich Town (*Tractor Boy!*) season ticket holder.

Sam Bannister CSO5



Christine Holt is a CSO5 who has been in the MGS for 13 years. She told me the job is always interesting because no two days are the same. It may be problems with IT, or having to search a car that the owner's dogs have peed in. Also, many of the visitors to the site can't speak English. We get a lot of German truck drivers so I decided to undertake a Rosetta Stone German course to help me out with the job.

The most enjoyable part of the job is the people. The Americans are very friendly (Christine is married to an American). In my previous job at HQ DTE Stanta the people tended to be a lot more reserved.

I lived in Idaho for ten years. I worked in Police records and my job was to check to see if individuals stopped by officers, were wanted in any other States. When you are checking FBI files and such like it makes for a very interesting job! I am a very big team player. I prefer to be in the background, helping to make everything tick.

In her spare time Christine enjoys on-line computer gaming and cross-stitching (something you can do whilst watching tv) and listening to music.

## And at RAF Lakenheath, just up the road from RAF Mildenhall...

I was met by Debbie Kenwright, Group Manager at the site. She told me a little bit about herself:

"I joined the MGS in 1999 as a CSO5 based in what is now Region 5. I subsequently gained promotion to CSO4 and in 2004 to CSO3 and moved to York. I was there about 18 months during which time I also deputised as a CSO2.

I was asked (mid-2005) to set up a new Group at the two American bases in Suffolk. This seemed like a real challenge and it was something that appealed to me. Looking back, it did indeed prove a challenge. It took a long time to recruit officers, to get them security cleared and to get them uniforms. There was no stores facility on site so I set up a small stores team and we obtained the necessary clothing either from Bicester or Wethersfield.

The Americans expected everything to be ready by May 2006 which was always going to be very difficult, especially as the officers still had to attend and pass the Foundation Course before they could be let loose at the two sites. Therefore, in the interim I initiated a training programme and trained all the officers in the Foundation principles. The MGS trainers were fantastic and helped me out no end. This enabled me to put the officers on the gates until such time as they attended the Foundation Course (which they all subsequently

breezed through I might add).

As a result of an organisational reorganisation earlier this year, I handed Mildenhall over to Dave Rayner.

The relationship with the Americans has taken a long time to establish because their command structure changes every two years and we have to brief the new staff about our role, and what we can do and can't do. My staff have a really good rapport with them - especially when it comes to teaching them the English banter! There's also a very good social scene which helps strengthen the team ethos.

The Americans willingness to try and meet our needs, work with us and their generosity is something which has always stood out."



Plym (left) and Roger with Tech Sgt Jean Denis



Roger Beeby CSO5 has been in the MGS for nearly six years. He explained to me his role:

"With the other officers, I undertake all the search procedures here, which includes intercontinental lorries, HGV's, MOD and USAF vehicles. Most of the time it's very busy, but many of the drivers are used to the routine so help us immensely.

We don't know who we are going to meet from one day to the next. It could be a Lt Col, a VIP or a member of the public. This is what makes the job so interesting."

Before Roger joined the MGS he used to drive the bendy buses at Stansted Airport, which was interesting. But he wanted to do something that stimulated his brain and so opted for the MGS. He explained that things generally go very smoothly, but the language barrier can often cause problems. "English isn't the first language of many of the drivers so it can be quite difficult to make ourselves understood. Hand gestures and pointing usually works!"

Roger's hobbies include DIY and moving house (after a bit of property development) and watching sport.

A highlight for Roger was being given a limited edition special commemorative coin whilst at Mildenhall by a Lt Col who was about to depart for the USA, as a thank you for the first-class service that Roger had provided.



Ian Towlson CSO4 (or Plym to his friends, due to him hailing from Plymouth) joined the MGS in 1993 after leaving the RAF. He served 22 years as an Aircraft Technician at Brize Norton, but also saw service at RAF Wyton (whilst still a flying station) and RAF Wattisham where he finished his service with the RAF and joined the MGS. At Wyton, Plym worked alongside the Navy on electronic counter - measure Aircraft and he worked on the Phantom aircraft whilst at Wattisham until they were scrapped in 1992.

In the RAF, Plym was a very keen sportsman and represented Plymouth at athletics, and cross country and also represented the RAF youth at football. He played football at Station level for over ten years (and won many trophies, including the prestigious London League three years running) until a couple of knee injuries forced him to slow down a bit. Plym was also offered an apprenticeship with Plymouth Argyle but chose the RAF as he felt realistically that he wouldn't make the grade. He only found out later that Birmingham City were prepared to also offer him an apprenticeship the day before he joined the RAF.

Plym played alongside (and was good friends with) a certain Trevor Francis who played for Birmingham and became Britain's first million pound footballer. In one season Trevor scored over 80 goals for their team and everyone that knew him recognised he was a special player and destined for bigger things.



*Trevor chose not to join the MGS*

Plym's appointment with the MGS coincided with the RAF vacating Wattisham and the Army moving in from Germany. He explained that a certain amount of 're - training' was required but the 15 strong MGS team largely consisting of ex SNCOs (with an average of more than 15 years service) brought them around to their way of thinking rather than the methods that they were used to in Germany. Plym left Wattisham in 2003 and moved to Colchester Garrison as a CSO4, where similar challenges existed due to the Army being used to guarding themselves (*green on green*).

Plym has now been at Lakenheath for around seven months and has nothing but praise for the Americans and the MGS team. He recalled an incident involving Mick Bailey CSO5 who was searching a vehicle from Germany when he saw two faces appear from a side locker where pallets would normally be kept. His immediate reaction was to slam the door shut, whilst the police and the American security forces were called. Mick's quick actions ensured the incident was contained and speedily dealt with.

He feels that in many respects the MGS are one big family and he will always be grateful for all the fantastic support he got from the MGS teams at Colchester and Lakenheath when his wife was ill.



Plym, busy in the search barn



One that almost got away



Left: images of Lakenheath

# Regional Matters...

## An update from around the Regions

### Region 4

#### HUG Commendations for seven officers at Portsmouth

**T**revor McKinnon MGS B2 CD&C presented the awards to the officers and thanked them for all their efforts. Pictured below are the officers proudly showing of their awards.



Left to right: Michael Hosey CSO4, Edward Bentley CSO4, Adrian White CSO5, Shaun Anders CSO5, Steve Wetherill CSO5, Paul Green CSO5 and Peter Green CSO5.

### Region 5

#### Tony Amscombe CSO3 retires with our thanks

Region 5 wished Tony Amscombe a happy retirement after almost 40 years unbroken service with the MOD. Tony has been with the MGS since it was formed in 1992 and had the privilege, amongst numerous other highlights, of bringing the first Military Working Dog (Rupert) to Bovington. A memory tinged with sadness as a few days before his retirement he had overseen the closure of the MGS Dog Section he

had started.

Leading the retirement wishes, Kathryn Malough reminded everyone present that Tony's enjoyment of the Little Chef "Olympic Breakfast" was legendary so Tony was clearly overjoyed to be presented with his personal framed copy of a Little Chef menu by Derek Halford and a model "Olympic Breakfast" by Simon Ruddick.

Tony wishes to pass on his



thanks to everyone for their good wishes and lovely gifts, which also included a substantial amount of John Lewis vouchers and an excellent caricature.

## Region 2

Email forwarded by Ray Flannery, Group Manager, Grantham

### A word of thanks from the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham

Ray,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for their excellent support and understanding during the Op OLYMPICS training that took place here. To deal with up to 600 people booking in and out per night and that fact that many were inebriated on their return is credit to them. We are all aware that the current situation we find ourselves in is far from ideal and that what we do achieve here is down to the good-will and positive working relationship between the MGS and us as the customer, in particular the Provo. I'm sure that in the coming months the situation will get worse but judging on the past few months it will be managed in the best possible way.

Once again my thanks to you and your team for your efforts.

Regards

*Ben*

Capt Ben Jackson RLC

Adjutant

5 Training Regiment RLC

## Region 1

### Duke of Rothesay meets Region 1 management team

On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June a contingent from the Region 1 MGS management team were invited to a reception to meet His Royal Highness the Duke of Rothesay (Prince Charles' Scottish Title) at HMNB Clyde.



The Prince was visiting the Base to meet and congratulate the crew of HMS Bangor, which had recently returned from a lengthy mine clearing operation in the Persian Gulf. The Prince also took time out during his busy schedule to meet a cross section of the Base workforce in the Warrant Officer and Senior Rates Mess. The Prince spent over five minutes speaking, in a casual and informal manner, with the MGS contingent and it was evident that

he had some knowledge of our role. He was interested in why the MGS were not armed; whether the shift working arrangements were 'family friendly'; how we engaged with the MDP and why the senior managers did not wear a uniform! John Egan, who led the MGS group, commented; "This was a fantastic opportunity to meet the Heir to the Throne, we all found him charming, engaging and genuinely interested in what the MGS do".





# The closure of the

## Reminiscences and thank

Article by Kathryn Malough, Regional Manager Region 5

**F**riday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012 was a sad day for all of us at Foxhill.

There were no Christmas parties or mince pies. In fact, nobody felt much like celebrating. We were too busy anyway, doing a final clear-up of the MGS Regional Office before closing its doors for the last time.

In June 2011, a ministerial decision was announced confirming the closure of the MOD Bath Sites and that all the staff would move to Abbey Wood in Bristol by March 2013. The decision was met with a lot of anger and dismay in the city, not just from civil servants but from local businesses as well who think the negative impact will outweigh the projected savings of £40 million.

Personally, I believe the removal of 2,600 Civil Servants can not be good for the Bath economy and, as a result, Bath will be almost entirely dependent on tourism and education. Shops, cafes, hotels, taxis, and house buying will all be severely affected by the movement of the Civil Service to Bristol. Whilst I find this very sad, I do have some understanding of the reasoning behind the decision.

From the time the Admiralty moved there in 1944 the local area has thrived. The pubs, cafes, shops and newsagents were always busy with Civil Servants. The canteen at Foxhill seemed like the centre of the universe with book sales, sports and debating societies. The Civil Service Club, which is situated near Foxhill, was also a very lively

place with sports, children's parties, dancing classes, Sunday lunches and weddings.

Foxhill has always been a special place for me. My father worked there between 1967 and 1986. He was the Security Officer for the Chief Polaris Executive. In those days, most of my school friends had fathers (this was a time before mothers went out to work) who also worked for the MOD, so there was always a strong bond between us and a real sense of identity amongst the MOD community. It was not uncommon for families who had moved away (due to work or domestic commitments) to come back to Bath to settle down.

Warminster Road (the pay office) has now closed and Ensleigh is employing only a token number of staff. All sites (unless bought by other Government departments) will be sold for housing and Bath will change dramatically for good. Life for everyone will be very different. Still, out with the old and in with the new and Bristol will benefit from all the business transferred from its neighbouring city.

So December 21<sup>st</sup> 2012 was in fact a sad day, not just for me personally, not just for the MGS Team, but for Bath as a whole.

Rest in Peace MOD Bath.

How the local press announced

## MOD land 'could be for successful Bath s

One of Bath's most popular and successful in size as part of the regeneration plans for Bath and North East Somerset Council has of the land at Ensleigh, Warminster Road at Bristol.

Bath Chronicle, Thursday, September 13,



# MOD Bath sites

s for a job well done

the news...

## used as a new site school'

primary schools could move and double the city's Ministry of Defence sites.

drawn up outline proposals for the future and Foxhill, as the MOD moves its staff to

2012



Article by Simon Ruddick, Area Manager Region 5

The physical security of the three Bath establishments was undertaken by 95 MGS Officers who provided a 24/7 security guarding service. In addition to undertaking their routine security duties the officers supported the Nuclear Accident Response Group (NARG) which was based at Ensleigh. This involved the officers attending an Air 184 helicopter marshalling and fire fighting course so as to provide a 24/7 helicopter landing facility at Ensleigh, in the event of the NARG team being deployed for a

nuclear accident or emergency.

In 2003 the officers provided security at Exercise 'Dimming Sun'. This was held on Stanford Training area in Norfolk. It was a large-scale joint UK / US exercise to test the response in the event of a nuclear weapons accident involving the Army, Royal Air Force Police, the United States Air Force Police, Ministry of Defence Police and East Anglia Regional and the Local Authorities.

The Bath team were also influential in developing the MGS surge protocol by instigating and developing 'Operation Defender'. This involved the officers providing a MGS surge capability to the Sea Mounting Centre (SMC) at Marchwood which, incidentally, drew the unwelcome attention of Greenpeace during 'Op' TELIC' and 'Op' FRESCO'. The officers were also deployed to Main Building London, to support the G8 Conference.

For all their efforts and professionalism the Bath MGS Officers were awarded a commendation from the Chief Executive of the Warship Support Agency for their 'Will

do attitude' which included providing First Aid cover to the Bath sites, acquiring ISO 9002 Accreditation, and undertaking Health & Safety tasks which helped to enhance the security profile of the Bath sites. The officers also demonstrated a commitment to their continuing professional development by achieving NVQ Qualifications in Security, Information Technology and Customer Service. The commendation recognised the officers for:

*"Performing significantly above their normal duties, their positive attitude to change and their willingness to adapt to new areas of work and for all of the additional support that they provided to the MOD Bath Estate as a whole."*

For all the MGS Officers who have worked at Bath I thank you. Your place in MGS history is assured. You should be proud of what you achieved and the reputation you built. We should also remember our dear colleagues that we have sadly lost over the years. A special thank you also to Danny McGauley CSO2 who will be leaving the department in September. He was the Area Manager (1991 – 2008) responsible for leading the team through so many achievements.



**End of an era.** MGS Group Managers pose with the HoE's for Warminster Road and Foxhill. (from left to right, Clive Parfitt, Sarah Roper (Warminster), Dan McGauley, Marie McCarthy (Foxhill) & Robert Cowe.

## Region 5

### Obituary: Tam Connell

Article by Vic Christopher MBE, RTO Region 5.

In December 2012 we received the sad news that Tam Connell had lost his long fight against cancer. Tam was born in 1964 in the small Scottish village of California, just outside Falkirk between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In 2004, after moving down south with his family, he started work with the MGS at RAF High Wycombe and Aborfield. He then moved to Yeovilton in the West Country in 2006.

After separating from his wife they remained friends and he continued to be a good father to his children until his death.

Tam was well liked and respected amongst his colleagues at Yeovilton. He is remembered particularly as someone who would always go out of his way to help others. He was a quiet person, and preferred especially during the later stages of his illness to keep himself to himself rather than burden others with his problems.

The funeral took place in Yeovil with a good gathering of family and colleagues to send him on his way. No doubt Tam would have approved. "Here's to you old fella."

## Region 5

### View from the North Devon Coast

Article by Mark Perrin CSO4, Region 5.

One of those sites that at first glance appears to be a bit of a sleepy hollow, (whose nearest military neighbour is a camel's hike away), is in the village of Instow on the North Devon Coast at the estuary where the rivers Taw and Torridge meet.

It is home to 11 Amphibious and Trials and Training (ATT) Squadron Royal Marines (RM), part of 1 Assault Group RM.

The location is ideal for amphibious trials & training as the beach and surrounding

areas have varying gradients where vehicles and landing craft of all types can be put through their paces. Also, because the estuary is tidal, it's ideal for conducting training both by day and night. Much of the training for the Normandy landings during World War 2 were conducted

on Instow Beach and along the surrounding coastal area.

Just about any vehicle which is in military service, or is likely to be accepted into service and may have to bridge a water gap, is

Challenger 2).

In November 2008 the Unit hosted Top Gear, the well known BBC TV programme. The day of filming included around 30 Marines and two Lynx helicopters who

carried out an amphibious assault. Jeremy Clarkson stormed ashore alongside the Marines, but in a specially prepared waterproofed yellow Ford Fiesta!

The MGS tasks at the unit are wide-ranging. We operate VHF maritime communications, monitor digital

CCTV as well as carry out all the usual MGS tasks such as access control. We also monitor (by CCTV and patrols) the craft located at Zeta Berth, which is a remote jetty.

We are all familiar with the amphibious training at the unit and assist with this. We monitor



Mark, Kathryn and Fritz Waldron watching Top Gear!!

waterproofed and then tested in the sea. Therefore we get to see all types of military vehicles here, some of which are quite unusual.

The Marines also run Landing craft courses at the unit. Some of these craft are capable of carrying a main battle tank (such as the





maritime VHF radio when trials and training are taking place and are often asked to pass messages and help where we can if necessary.

The MGS staff at the unit have a wide and varied range of experience and talents with a mix of former Armed Forces as well as civilian staff. We have a former Merchant Navy communications officer, an ex paramedic, IT engineer and fireman to name but a few.

## Region 5

Article by Vic Christopher MBE, RTO Region 5.

**D**riving through the South Devon countryside, recently, in company with the Regional Manager and that stalwart of all things Region 5, Pam Hughes, it was mentioned that we'll be making a stop at Mike Brailey's country pad to deliver some paperwork. Just hearing that name rekindled numerous fond memories of Mike's antics and mannerisms.

We duly arrived at his abode to find him attired, as the photograph shows, in nothing like the pristine MGS uniform we normally associated with the former Soldier we all knew and loved. But Mike, always jack the lad, was as scruffy as a wayward pup, but obviously enjoying life to the full!

"Yes retirement is treating me well" he said, "and I should have done it years ago."

We have an excellent working relationship with the customer and they consider us part of the unit. Out of hours we are the only staff on site so it's very important that the OC and Sergeant Major know that the site is in safe hands. MGS officers on site have demonstrated that they can deal effectively with a wide range of challenging situations. In the past we have dealt with flooding, power failures, ice, snow and other severe weather related incidents when no one else could get to the site. In the winter of 2010 - 2011 the MGS staff, despite a soaking, managed to isolate water supplies to buildings where pipes had frozen and began clean up operations as road closures meant that maintenance staff were unable

## Where are they now?

We spent some time in the company of Mike and his dear lady; cup of 'char' in hand, reminiscing and soaking up the late autumn sunshine, before saying our goodbyes and heading west.

Meeting Mike away from the surrounds of the MGS set the grey matter working. I began to wonder about one or two individuals that I have met over the years in the MGS.

Twenty or so years ago I started at DERA Portsmouth, which overlooks Portsmouth Harbour. Bill Will (ex Army) worked there but left us and went across to the German Guard Service. I have always wondered what ever happened to Bill and hope that life has treated him well.

What about Tom Lyons? We first met as young matelots over 40 years ago aboard HMS Vernon.

to reach the site.



Sleepy hollow? I don't think so!!



Mike and his wife Sally, with Kathryn (right) and Pam (left)

He was a CSO4 in Devonport until retirement.

Eva (whose surname escapes me) was one of the original MGS RTO's. She left us to join Defence Estates, has anyone seen anything of her recently?

Steve Creighton and I were PT Instructors together at HMS Daedalus, he moved on from the MGS in the late 90's from Yeovilton - is he still in the area?

Phil Searle and Nigel Snook from Abbey Wood, Ryan Smith from Culdrose, Simon Bond from South Cerney and my old Regional training mucker Rachel McEwan who left us to start a family. Where are they all now?

# Charity News

## Giving someone the hope of life

By Dave Keown CSO5

An unusual letter arrived at home some time ago, one that could, with a little luck, save the life of someone who urgently needed my help. The letter was from the Anthony Nolan Charity and they wanted to confirm a few important details about me and whether I was still interested in becoming a bone marrow donor.

Some 15 years prior to this, following a recruitment drive by Strathclyde Fire Brigade, where I was working as a Retained Fire-fighter, I had volunteered a blood sample and was put on the list of potential donors.

I called the number and spoke to one of the coordinators who explained the entire process. A detailed health questionnaire, and blood for tissue typing were required from me as soon as possible. Another telephone call a week later and they required more blood samples; a nerve-racking wait followed. I wondered if the detailed analysis of my blood had revealed something was wrong with me. Good news followed, I was required to travel to London's University College Hospital for a full medical, and more blood samples, this time for exact tissue typing for the intended recipient.

Several weeks passed, the letter arrived, I was fit and healthy and the recipient would be told that the Anthony Nolan Charity had identified a good match. Arrangements were made so that

both parties would be prepared for the donation. I was to receive a course of hormone injections at home over three days. These left me with flu like symptoms and feeling extremely sore in my sternum and hips, apparently this was normal and would not last too long. The injections would help my body produce and release stem cells into my blood. The recipient had to start an intensive course of chemotherapy, there was no changing my mind from now on, as the recipient was hoping that their life might be saved.

The last of the hormone injections were timed to be given in London at the brand new purpose built University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre. I flew down the day before from Glasgow to Heathrow and then caught the train and underground to Euston Square. The journey had left me extremely drained. I was surprised just how sore I felt, being unable to walk any great distance. An early night in a nearby hotel was very welcome.

I arrived at the Hospital at 8am for my stem cell donation. The medical team put me at ease and they could not do enough for me and made the whole experience stress-free. My stem cells were to be collected by the Peripheral blood stem cell collection method, which involved collecting them from a small tube from a vein in my arm, and the cells are donated by passing



the blood through a specialist machine. Although I was unable to move for six hours the time quickly passed chatting to friendly staff and patients. The stem cells do not look much in the collection bag but to the recipient they are a life saver, as within a matter of hours they are being used. I was told the age and sex of the recipient but that's it as confidentiality is maintained by both parties and is strictly enforced by the Charity.

After the successful harvesting of my stem cells, I had a visit from the Welfare Officer from the Anthony Nolan Charity to verify everything was well and to answer any questions. I opted to allow contact from the recipient after two years, and hopefully I will have good news from them, that they have survived their cancer and are enjoying life to the full. There is a possibility that the recipient will require a further donation of stem cells or white blood cells from me in the coming months. All I really wanted after the donation was a



decent lunch and some rest before travelling back to Scotland.

Before flying home I met with Lord Jack McConnell, Baron McConnell of Glenscorrodale,



and First Minister of Scotland from 2001/2007, at the Houses of Parliament who had kindly agreed

to promote the work of Anthony Nolan on his Facebook page and stood with me for a photograph outside the House of Lords.

I received a simple thank you card via the Charity's Welfare Officer. It was hand written by my recipient and it contained just a few lines of thanks. It finally struck home just how much my stem cell donation had meant to the participant, desperately ill with cancer, and their family. It is something I treasure very much.

Dave is based at Coulport in Scotland. He would like to pass on his thanks to his line manager, Robert Williamson CSO3 for all his support.

For those folk who would like to be on the Anthony Nolan register it's very easy to join up; just visit [www.anthonynolan.org](http://www.anthonynolan.org) and fill out the form or telephone them on 0303 303 0303. You could save a life. For many people suffering from blood cancer, a blood stem cell transplant it just may be their last chance of life.



## Children's festive fun at Faslane

Reported by the Lennox Herald, 21/12/12

**S**anta came early to Faslane when he dropped in on visiting kids from Robin House in Balloch.

Six children and their carers were there to see members of the Guard Service Yellow Shift whose recent charity drive raised £2,000 (see panel) for the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS).

The five big-hearted guards pictured bottom right are: Steve Pursley, Betty McArthur, Karen Kelly, John McDermid, and Ruth Duff, had visited Robin House in October to present their cheque and returned the favour by inviting the kids to the Base.

They were treated to a buffet lunch followed by a tour of the fire station and dog section. AND...Santa Claus with gifts. Yellow Shift have organised a fundraiser for CHAS for the past three years, raising £7,000 for Robin House.

Lillian Stewart, of Robin House, said: "Without the support of people like those from Yellow Shift, we simply couldn't do what we do for the kids."

Story supplied by Steve Pursley CSO5.



CHAS provides the only Hospice services in Scotland for children and young people with life - shortening conditions. The hospices support the whole family by offering short breaks, emergency support, end of life care and bereavement services. The services are free to families who need them and are funded mainly through the generosity of the many supporters who help raise over £6 million each year. The MGS have been backing this very worthwhile charity for a number of years.





# More Charity News

## From the Editor...

It's been some 10 months since the MGS adopted H4H as their Charity of the Year. MGS staff continue to support H4H but there is still far more that we need to do. The battles our wounded face will not disappear and they need our help to ensure there is a support network for them for life.

There are many ways you can get involved. If you are interested, contact me or visit the H4H website:

<http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-involved/index.html>



**HELP** *for*  
**HEROES**  
CHARITY OF THE YEAR

## The Charity for Civil Servants

The Charity for Civil Servants has been providing help, advice and support to current, former, and retired Civil Servants since 1886. Since their start, the Charity has been there for tens of thousands of people across the country, many of whom had nowhere else to turn. Simply put, the Charity provides support and advice for thousands of people when they need it.

In 2012 alone, they provided £3.9 million in direct financial assistance in circumstances; dealing with situations as diverse as providing respite care to helping people seek emergency accommodation following last year's riots. The Charity prides itself on being there when you need it, no matter where you are in the UK.

If you wish to donate to the Charity, visit their website using the link below, for details as to how you can do this.

<http://www.foryoubyyou.org.uk/who-we-are>

If you need help you can apply on line or phone FREEPHONE: 0800 056 2424

# For Sale!

The following discontinued lines of MGS memorabilia are still available. If you are interested in purchasing any of them contact, Lynn Rudd on 01371 85 4142

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Wooden Plaque    | £20   |
| Document Folder  | £10   |
| Glass Tankard    | £10   |
| Ceramic Mug      | £5    |
| Thermal Mug      | £4    |
| Small Teddy Bear | £1.25 |
| Tie              | 75p   |
| Tie Pin          | £1.25 |
| Key Fob          | 75p   |

You could advertise here  
see Page 1 for details!

# Coffee break

Time to put your feet up!

## Sudoku



\* A prize of an MGS paperweight will be awarded to the sender of the first correctly completed Sudoku AND crossword puzzles. If you don't want to tear your copy of Flashlight you may send a photocopy of this page to the editor, to the address on the inside front cover.

Dave Beasley CSO5, based at Donnington in Region 3 was first with the correct answers to the puzzles in the last issue. Dave is pictured below with his paperweight



|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 8 |   |
|   | 7 |   | 5 |   | 8 |   |   |   |
| 6 | 9 |   | 2 |   |   | 4 |   |   |
|   | 5 |   |   | 8 |   |   | 1 |   |
|   | 2 | 3 | 4 |   | 7 | 9 | 5 |   |
|   | 4 |   |   | 2 |   |   | 6 |   |
|   |   | 1 |   |   | 2 |   | 3 | 7 |
|   |   |   | 8 |   | 1 |   | 9 |   |
|   | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Flashlight 43 Sudoku solution.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| 7 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 |
| 2 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 6 |
| 8 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 1 |
| 6 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| 1 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 9 |
| 9 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 8 |

Flashlight 43 crossword solution. Across: 1. Blancmange, 8. Florist, 9. Abate, 10. Iran, 11. Plot, 12. Elm, 14. Muesli, 15. Ribbon, 18. Tom, 20. Pole, 21. Fast, 23. Villa, 24. Morello, 25. Asphyxiate. Down: 1. Brocade, 2. Asia, 3. Cattle, 4. Abattoir, 5. Grace, 6. Affirmative, 7. Germination, 13. Slapdash, 16. Braille, 17. Climax, 19. Mills, 22. Orca.

## Crossword

|    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
|----|----|---|--|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|
| 1  |    |   |  | 2  |    |    | 3  | 4  |  |    |  | 5  |
|    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
| 6  |    |   |  |    |    |    | 7  |    |  |    |  |    |
|    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
| 8  |    | 9 |  |    |    | 10 | 11 |    |  | 12 |  |    |
|    |    |   |  |    | 13 |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
|    | 14 |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
| 15 |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  | 16 |
| 17 |    |   |  | 18 |    |    |    | 19 |  |    |  |    |
|    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
| 20 |    |   |  |    |    |    | 21 |    |  |    |  |    |
|    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |  |    |
| 22 |    |   |  |    |    |    | 23 |    |  |    |  |    |

### Across

1. Seize in transit (6)
3. Ham - fisted (6)
6. Actor, -----Day - Lewis (6)
7. Snooker rest (6)
8. Type of adhesive resin (5)
10. Flair, Style (7)
14. Extinct flying reptile (11)
17. Atrocity (7)
19. Inexpensive (5)
20. Finest (anag) (6)
21. Fabric decoration (6)
22. Scandinavian nation (6)
23. Fastened (6)

### Down

1. Concealed (6)
2. Actor, -----Chase (5)
4. Tall flower (5)
5. Ball pitched at batsman's feet (6)
9. Eight musicians (5)
11. Cry of pity (4)
12. Scottish river (5)
13. King ----, monster film (4)
15. Magical brew (6)
16. Unwrapped (6)
18. Sailing! (2, 3)
19. Pancake delicacy, ----- suzette (5)

Answers in the next issue!