



9 Regiment Army Air Corps

# DISHFORTH FLYER



MARCH 2012 EDITION

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Christmas has passed and 9 Regiment has not missed a beat, 9 Regiment is as busy as ever as we continue to support operations both abroad as well as a multitude of training and tasking around the UK. I'd like to welcome you all back after what was a well deserved break and I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I'd especially like to convey my thanks to the members of the REME detachment who were in work over Christmas ensuring aircraft were ready to fly when the regiment returned to work.

672 Sqn group have returned from a very successful HERRICK tour and are now enjoying some well deserved post operational leave. 9 Regiment was able to combine 672 Sqn's post exercise briefing with a Lynx Force meeting and dinner which enabled the whole Lynx force, including Brigadier Ellis from JHC, to receive the most up to date information about current operations on Lynx Mk9A and life in theatre. This has proved invaluable to the other Squadrons from both 1 Regiment and 9 Regiment as well as 847 Naval Air Squadron, all of whom will be deploying in the next 12 months.

All too quickly though 659 Sqn group have deployed and reports back thus far have been very positive. The squadron has settled into operations quickly with a smooth hand over from 672 Sqn and, now the weather has warmed up and the rain has finally stopped, the Squadron has been very busy with plenty of tasking whilst the ground crew and engineers have been diligently producing serviceable aircraft in testing conditions.

Back at home the welfare office have run a number of events, including day trips and coffee mornings for the partners of deployed personnel - I would encourage those who haven't yet tried them to make the most of these great days out. This will culminate at Easter with an Easter Egg hunt, please contact the HIVE or welfare office for details.

In January we 9 Regiment also hosted the High Sheriff of N. Yorkshire, Mrs Alexandra Holford, who was our guest of honour for a Regimental medals parade. Congratulations to all those who received medals, Mrs Holford was very impressed with the turnout of

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the Regiment and it was an important day in cementing the continued relationship 9 Regiment has with the people of Yorkshire whom she represents.

The pace has not slackened with 669 Sqn now well into their MST on Salisbury Plain and the rest of their pre-deployment training before heading out to El-Centro later this month before taking over from 659 Sqn in HERRICK in May. I know that in many ways the pre-deployment period is almost as difficult for families as the deployment itself as partners are often away working to busy training schedule. However, this training is a vital part to the build up to operations to ensure each Squadron is at the very top of their game when they depart.

With the operational focus of the Regiment one would have thought there would be little time for adventurous training. This has not been the case and there have been some superb expeditions organised this winter. Adventurous Training is an important aspect of regimental life, increasing morale as well as giving individuals the opportunities to try new experiences and build on their teamwork and leadership skills. Of note, the 9 Regiment ski team performed admirably in the Alps at the Corps Championships, also qualifying for the Army Championships. There has also been scuba diving, wind-surfing and recreational skiing trips over the past couple of months. I would like to extend my personal thanks to those who have to put immense effort into planning and delivering these expeditions.

As always, our thoughts are with members of 9 Regiment who continue to serve on operations as well as their families back home. Life in 9 Regiment will continue to be busy for a while yet with the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and Olympics taking place in London this summer alongside the continued aviation support to troops on the ground in Afghanistan over the relentless summer fighting season. I encourage you all to keep up the hard work, enjoy the opportunities these busy times bring and continue striving to keep 9 Regiment at the forefront of UK helicopter operations. Finally, may I also take this opportunity to thank the families for the vital role they play in enabling the members of the regiment to do what we do.

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## **659 Squadron Nighthawks**

As the new year dawns, it found 659 Squadron in the last throes of preparations for Afghanistan. Everyone returned from Christmas leave well rested and with a sense of urgency and excitement at the prospect of deploying at the end of the month, mixed with the knowledge that we will all be apart from our loved ones for the next four and a bit months. But at the end of the day, this is just another part of our job and what we spend years training for.

With the fast approaching deployment now looming, this month has been spent getting everything ready at home and at work and just tying up all the loose ends before we go. There were many people who needed some last-minute flying, in order to keep currencies in date for the deployment including a whole host of check rides, but as usual, we managed to pull it out of the bag and achieve everything we needed to despite issues with the aircraft serviceability and still had time for a week of pre-tour leave. The only fly in the ointment was the lack of clothing and equipment for several members of the Squadron Group. However, thanks to a last minute effort from the QM's department, most people got everything they required (albeit, at the last minute!) before deploying.

The advance elements of the Squadron Group deployed to Afghanistan via Akrotiri, Cyprus without incident and are currently working with 672 Squadron to begin the handover, takeover procedure. However, at the time of writing, the main body of the flying squadron are stranded in Cyprus due to a combination of poor weather and aircraft unserviceability. It looks like they will end up being two days late, so there will be quite a bit to catch up on when they finally arrive!

In the next few weeks the Squadron is going to be extremely busy with all of the mandatory theatre briefs, plus just getting used to life in Camp Bastion, which will be home sweet home for the next four and a half months!

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We will all miss those of our family and friends that we left behind in the UK, but are looking forward to the task at hand and getting down to work. Over the coming months, the support of our loved ones back home will prove invaluable and will help us get through when times are hard.

As well as our friends and families we also leave behind several members of the Squadron, who become part of CR flight and/or move onto pastures greener. SSM Webster is heading over to temporarily become SSM of Workshops and we wish him all the best going from a Squadron of 20 something people where the lowest rank is lance corporal, to a much bigger Squadron where he will actually have to do some work! Sergeant Hall has moved slightly further away, initially to Middle Wallop to convert onto the 212 before heading to Brunei to face new challenges. Captains Lyne and Lee-Smith along with Sergeants Thomas and Simpson are now fully establish as the main part of CR flight and we wish them well as they take on the majority of the Regiment's UK tasking while 659 and 672 Squadrons are away and 669 Squadron focuses on conversion to mark in its build up for operations.

A busy start to 2012 and it's only set to get more hectic for the next few months, but we be sending regular updates back from theatre via the welfare centre, not to mention the Dishforth Flyer. So until then, let us just hope that the main body actually ever makes it off Cyprus!!

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## **669 SQN 'Coyotes'**

The New Year has started with a bang and the tempo has gone through the roof. The first 2 weeks back after leave saw part of the SQN based down at Castle Martin ranges in South Wales for live firing in support of 3 mechanised brigade. Two crews were due to deploy on the Sunday but unfortunately the weather was too poor, so they had to delay until the Monday morning. Sgt Tomas was in very high spirits for the whole week as he got the much needed chance to train with some of his old shippers. The second week saw new front-seaters arrive including Capt Roberts who gave a guided tour of Tenby life boat station on a day off from flying due to poor weather yet again. All the guys managed to make it back to sunny Dishforth at the end of week 2 but some later than others.

After a short weekend the SQN then boarded the dreaded restricted minibuses and their way to RAF Cranwell for a 2 day compressed Electro Optics course. The accommodation was great and the food even better which made it quite a comfortable experience. The course itself was very interesting with some very funny comments made by Sgt Carr. Apparently we could have filled the line book twice over, from his comments alone. Once again we boarded the dreaded minibuses and made our way back to Dishforth to start an MX10 course the next day. The rest of week 3 consisted of training using our new MX10 camera system whilst flying in circles overhead Ripon resulting in most of the squadron receiving a tick in the box and a mention on the local radio station!

The SQN now looks forward to a very busy year starting with an MRX, shortly followed by a trip to El Centro in California and the much awaited deployment to Afghanistan some time in May. The SQN would like to congratulate SSgt (Norman Wisdom) Loudon on a very well deserved promotion to WO2. Well done Sir!

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## **Ex NORTHERN FLEDGLING OSPREY – SCUBA EXPEDITION TO ASCENSION ISLAND**

**By LCpl Bell, HQ Sqn.**

When I first learned of Capt Hammond's intention to go Scuba Diving to Ascension Island my first question was: "Where's that?"

Ascension Island is an isolated volcanic island in the equatorial waters of the South Atlantic Ocean, where temperatures can vary between 20 and 31 Celsius, with December being one of the hottest months. Now, with the expedition being planed in Nov/Dec time this sounded good – very good, in fact too good to be true, surely the cost would be astronomical?

This led on to my second question of: "How much?" One hundred quid, bargain – Boss count me in, I'm there. Now having never Scuba Dived in my life this meant that there had to be some sort of training put in place so that LCpl Lloyd and I were not such complete novices upon arrival. After a training package involving Capt Hammond & SSgt Magee as instructors, and the pools at Catterick and Harrogate used for the extra depth, we completed our drills and theory work and were ready for the challenges of open water diving and the sights and depths that come with it.

We traveled from Dishforth down to RAF Brize Norton for our 8 hour flight; it was a day of waiting which being seasoned squaddies we were all well used to. After arriving at Ascension we had to sit through the customary briefs, and then we were ushered round to our accommodation.

That, you may think, was that for Day One/Two with all the traveling, but oh no! We went off and had our first open water dive of the expedition, entering via the shore – which to any spectator must have been an interesting sight as the waves tried (and sometimes succeeded) to put us back on the beach. After finally breaking through the waves and into calmer waters we descended in our little group of 4, lead by our instructor Sgt Lynne "Permanent Send" Forsyth. We descended to a depth of around 10 meters, which was by far the deep-

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est depth we had dived to, but the sights! Amazing, truly mesmerizing – the waters are so clear around Ascension that visibility is easily up to around 20 meters as the sun penetrates the water all the way to 30 meters plus. Then there's the marine life, which there is plenty of. During my time underwater I saw an array of various types of fish, crabs, crayfish, sharks, and even a giant turtle!

During our time on Ascension Island we amassed an impressive array of dives, including wreck dives and night dives –diving from the shore and boats. I gained my BSAC Ocean diver qualification whilst there enabling me to dive to a depth of 20m with a partner and supervised, and I took full advantage of the depth! On the final dive LCpl Lloyd and I (both newly qualified) were let off the lead and had our first dive as a buddy pair with no-one following us!

The night dives are incredible, as just when you think you have seen it all you gain a completely different perspective – there is virtually no visibility whatsoever, so you are completely dependent on torch-light, which means that your skills and drills have to be spot on. All the marine life and corals look completely different when night diving too – the blue tinge you often get during the daytime is gone and you get to see the vivid colours that the sunlight just doesn't do justice to.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the expedition and would relish the chance to return, given the opportunity. Diving aside, Ascension Island itself is a very intriguing place, which we got to explore in more detail on the last day when we were "Off Gassing" before our return journey. A special word of thanks to Capt Hammond & SSgt Magee for all their hard work, putting it all together and for making it such a great exped, the 10 days we were away for really felt like it was a lot longer, (and I believe we all wished was longer still!). So just a few points to summarize with: a fantastic opportunity seized – if you ever get the chance to go, then go for it. When painting a mural for an exped don't let LCpl Lloyd anywhere near it! And on a final note, if you gulp air like its going out of fashion then use a twin set, or a bigger cylinder, or just don't over weight your belt! (Me).

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THE HUB, ALANBROOKE BARRACKS, THIRSK, YO7 3EY

## Topcliffe Learning Centre Newsletter



01845 595230 / 94712 5230

[topclifferra@alc.detsa.co.uk](mailto:topclifferra@alc.detsa.co.uk)

Spring 2012

### £ EARN WHILE YOU LEARN £ - ASK FOR DETAILS IN THE

#### UPDATE

2011 was another fantastic year for the LC, achieving yet again the award of 'Overall Best Centre' in the Army and Navy, (3rd time!). Thank you all for your support in enabling us to be once again, the most successful learning centre.

As from 1st Jan the opening times have been amended and the LC will now not be open until 1800 on Tuesday and Thursday, if you wish to work late on those days please make a request via 5230.

The Personal Finance course has been re launched and is now linked to a level 1 qualification, call in for more information. The next course will be **12-14 March**.

#### Rose

Learning Centre Manager

#### SKILLS FOR LIFE

Courses in **English** and

#### Maths:

Do you need English and maths to qualify for promotion, attend a CLM course or add a qualification to your CV? Flexi learning or set courses.

Contact Rose for more details, book a course or more information about these qualifications at level 1 and 2.

**IT COURSES**  
**ITQ**  
**(Information Technology Qualification)**  
Level 1 (Award & Certificate)  
(£45 - £50 back on completion)  
Level 2 (Certificate)  
(£45 - £50 back on completion)  
Level 3 (BCS FRM Qual)  
(£220 - £175 SLC + Regtice 11th)

**OTHER COURSES IN THE RALC:**  
NVQ's (Level 2 & 3)  
**Business & Admin**  
**Customer Service**  
**Management**  
£60 each  
(£100 cash back on completion)  
Business courses  
Typing qualifications  
ILM Certificate in Team Leading (Level 2)

#### BOOK YOUR COURSE NOW!

#### Fork Lift Truck Operators Courses

FLT + PMO NVQ  
£225 - (£175 from SLC) + (£50 cash back) on completion  
**26 - 30 March**  
**9 - 13 July**



#### TYPING QUALIFICATIONS (£50 - £100 if using SLC)

This is a top quality qualification which will enable you to type proficiently by achieving a Bronze (20 wpm), Silver (40 wpm) or Gold award (60 wpm). Useful for the next Op tour.

#### PERSONAL FINANCE RE LAUNCH — LEVEL 1 IFS (£45 - £90 if using SLC)

BUDGETING \* SAVING \* BORROWING

A course (free to RA cap badge only) to help you learn more about managing your money.

#### STANDARD LEARNING CREDITS

Do you know that you have £175 per year to pay for your education! You can claim 80% of the total cost of a course. 1 April — 31 March, use it or lose it! See Rose (5230) or Stu (5281) for more information.

#### DEPENDANTS

All dependants are eligible to use the RALC and take advantage of most of the courses on offer. There may be a small charge for some qualifications however, there is a huge reduction compared to local Colleges.

**For more information about any of the courses and opening times  
call the Learning Centre on ext 5230 or visit the website**

[www.racpd.org.uk](http://www.racpd.org.uk)

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(Information Qualification) Level (£45 Level - £50 1 (£220 (£45 Level - - £175 £50 ITQ

#### Technology

(Award back back 3 SLC 2

(BCS (Certificate) on on + & completion) Regt completion) Certificate)

Flexiqua)

incentive)

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Rose Learning Centre Manager

**www.racpd.org.uk**

**OTHER Business Customer NVQ's Management THE COURSES (Level RALC: & Service Admin**

2 & 3)

IN

ILM (£100 Typing Leading Certificate Business cash qualifications £60 back) (Level each

on courses in completion Team

2)

**BOOK BOOK BOOK YOUR YOUR YOUR COURSE COURSE COURSE NOW! NOW! NOW!**

Fork Lift Truck Operators Courses

FLT + PMO NVQ £225 - (£175 from SLC) + (£50 cash back) on completion

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Newsletter

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### **PERSONAL FINANCE**

**RE LAUNCH —**

#### **LEVEL 1 IFS**

(£45 - £9 if using SLC) BUDGETING \* SAVING \* BORROWING A course (free to RA cap badge only) to help you learn more about managing your money.

STANDARD LEARNING CREDITS Do you know that you have £175 per year to pay for your education! You can claim 80% of the total cost of a course. 1 April — 31 March, use it or lose it! See Rose (5230) or Stu (5281) for more information.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE  
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**MAY 2012**

ARTICLES MUST BE SUBMIT-  
TED NO LATER THAN  
30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2012 TO:

**THE HIVE  
64A, COMMUNITY CEN-  
TRE**

**DISHFORTH AIRFIELD**  
[dishforthhive@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:dishforthhive@armymail.mod.uk)

*Thank you for your co-operation*

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The display of any advertisement in the Dishforth Flyer does not constitute a seal of approval regarding the item or service displayed.

The content of any advertisement does not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of HM Government or the Ministry of Defence.

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2012 ARTICLES MUST BE  
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THAN 30th APRIL 2012 TO:  
THE HIVE 64A,  
COMMUNITY CEN- TRE  
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