

THE JOURNAL

OF THE
SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES
ASSOCIATION



RAF/SOAF/RAFO EXHIBITION RAF MUSEUM HENDON



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THE JOURNAL

OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES ASSOCIATION



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THE JOURNAL ONLINE

Visit the SAF Association website and see 'The Journal of the Sultan's Armed Forces Association' online using the latest page turning technology. Pass the link to this year's issue on to colleagues and friends.

www.oman.org.uk

ASSOCIATION NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASSOCIATION FINANCES

Thanks to a generous donation to our finances we are now in a position to be able to keep our costs at a realistic level for the various Association events, and the production of the Journal. This will enable us to maintain the original aims of the Association to the benefit of all our members.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 6 June 2014

SAF Association Cocktail Party, Army and Navy Club.

Monday 30 June 2014

SAF Association Golf Match, Dorset Golf and Country Club.

Wednesday 16 July 2014

Opening of RAF/SOAF/RAFO Exhibition at RAF Museum, Hendon.

Friday 28 November 2014

SAF Association Dinner, Army and Navy Club.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR JUND OMAN

For those who send contributions for Jund Oman please email them to: gondoman@omantel.net.om and copy to: Hassan al Mujaini at: haasoman@gmail.com

ASSOCIATION PLAQUES

SAF Association Plaques are available from Nigel Knocker, address page 3, at £30 each including p&p. Cheque payable to The SAF Association.

COPY FOR THE 2015 JOURNAL

Copy for the 2015 Journal to be with us by 1st December 2014 – preferably by email or on a disc please.

ASSOCIATION TIES

The Association has a range of four blade and one bow tie available for members.

Available from the Membership Secretary:
Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks,
Mayfield Fold, Burnley
BB11 2RN



They cost £25 for the blade and £14 for the bow including postage. Cheques should be made payable to the 'SAF Association'.

*** COPY FOR THE 2015 JOURNAL BY
1ST DECEMBER 2014 – PREFERABLY
BY EMAIL OR ON A DISC PLEASE ***

2015 VETERANS DAY WARNING ORDER!

Veterans Day in 2015 will be held in Oman to coincide with Armed Forces Day on 11 December 2015.

It is probable that thirty members of the Association will be invited to go to Oman. The programme will include Veteran's Day in Muscat, a visit to the Royal Opera House, and to the Musandam where there has been much development – and of course to Dhofar.

In order to plan would anyone interested in going on this visit please let **Nigel Knocker** know by 30 June 2014 if they would like to be considered.

COSSAF has indicated that preference should be given to those who have not been before, but this does not prevent you from applying. As usual the party will be a mix from all three services.

Only costs are air fares.

Nigel's email address is: nigel.knocker@btinternet.com

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SALALAH/DHOFAR REUNION DINNER

The Salalah/Dhofar Reunion Dinner was held in the Army & Navy Club on 13 September 2013. It was a Ladies Dinner Night and 40 sat down to dinner including some from overseas.

The next Salalah/Dhofar Reunion Dinner will be held on 12 September 2014, and again, it will be a Ladies Dinner Night. It will be held in the Army & Navy Club.

If anyone who is not on **George Correa's** database and requires details, please contact him on: georgecorrea@btinternet.com ■

SERVICE NOTES FOR SAF JOURNAL

Association Members are always keen to hear what is going on in SAF, and although photos are good, there needs to be some form of narrative as well. Ideally, as was done previously, each Service should provide some detail on :

1. Major activities during the year, particularly :
 - a. Exercises, major Omani ones and ones with foreign troops both in Oman and abroad.
 - b. Interesting Adventure Training, if applicable
 - c. Other major events attended by VIP's, eg Armed Forces Day, RAFO Day, RNO Day, Commissioning Parades, etc.
2. Details and pictures of new Equipment brought into Service.
3. Visits by Service Commanders abroad, and major visits to each Service from Foreign Dignitaries/Commanders.
4. Details/changes of Senior Officers' Appointments in each Service.
5. Any other info, such as New Barracks, New Units being established, that would be of interest to ex-members of SAF.

A variety of photos depicting the above events should be sent with the above narrative. The Journal Editors will then use the photos to illustrate the Service Notes. Not all will obviously be used because of space restrictions in the Magazine, but it gives the Editors flexibility in designing the pages.

Naturally Office of COSSAF will continue to report, as they do now, on their activities as well as HE the Ministers, as necessary, and Staff College, NDC and any other major Joint Service events, like National Days, Tattoos, Joint Exercises, etc. ■

SAF ASSOCIATION DINNER

The Annual Dinner will be held in the Army and Navy Club at 1900hrs to 2000hrs on Friday 28 November 2014.
See application form on page 74.

SOAF/RAFO EXHIBITION AT THE RAF MUSEUM HENDON

The RAF Museum is planning to hold a SOAF/RAFO Exhibition at the RAF Museum opening on 15 July 2014. The Exhibition will cover the early years (pre WW2) of RAF involvement in Oman before SOAF was created in 1959 and its expansion to the potent force it is today.

The Museum is calling for photographs, films, papers, maps, wall charts, personal gear and any other artefacts to borrow or transfer to their ownership.

Nobby Grey is the SAF Association point of contact although **Ross Mahoney**, the Resident Aviation Historian at the RAF Museum, is managing the project overall.

Please search all those boxes and papers which you may have and get in touch with either Nobby or Ross and let them know what might be of interest.

Their contact details are:

Denis Grey (aka Nobby) macmillangrey@blueyonder.co.uk

Ross Mahoney ross.mahoney@rafmuseum.org ■

ORAL HISTORIES OF OMAN AT WAR

Fiona Warton, widow of **Keith Warton** (SOAF 1966-68), has embarked on a project to record personal memories of former members of SAF at war.

The project started as a family affair, researching into Keith's papers and photographs. He was Detachment Commander SOAF, Salalah in January 1966, when the army commander there at the time, **Peter Raven**, was a company commander in MR. Not surprisingly, Peter was the first person she interviewed, not long before his untimely death. Since then, she has recorded another fascinating interview with **Major Gen Corran Purdon** (CSAF 1967-70).

She is currently concentrating on former members of SOAF so that the results can be available in time for the RAF/SOAF exhibition at the RAF Museum Hendon, which starts in July and continues for a year.

Although the project started as a family one, Fiona is pursuing it in a professional fashion. She has visited the Defence Academy Library Services to seek advice, spent time at the RAF Museum and been enrolled there as an official volunteer, and has undertaken training with the Oral History Society on their 'Focus on Lives' Course in London.

The SOAF recordings will be deposited at the RAF Museum, and copies of recordings will probably be deposited for posterity at St Anthony's College, Oxford, which is building up a major archive on Britain and Oman. ■



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THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES ASSOCIATION

Why we formed:

General Ken Perkins, the last CSAF, graphically described, in the 2008 Journal, the reasons for the Association and its remarkable spirit of comradeship and brotherhood which our service in Oman engendered and this is repeated below:

"Over thirty years ago a relative handful of individuals played a key role in saving the Strait of Hormuz for the Western World long before most of a gas guzzling civilization had ever heard of that supremely strategic waterway. Had Oman fallen to the communist onslaught during the Dhofar War, the world would not look as it does today. Fortunately Britain's connection with Oman was already well established when problems arose in Dhofar, as a few adventurous souls were already shepherding the Sultan's Armed Forces into the modern world and had taken part in the Jebel Akhdar campaign. It expanded during the war and continued afterwards when similarly minded individuals remained to help nurture the, by then experienced, counter revolutionary armed forces, into the outstandingly capable military organisation SAF is today, a bulwark of stability in an unreliable neighbourhood."

The individuals who served Oman were all volunteers. Some were seconded from the British armed forces, escaping the boredom of service on the North German Plain or repetitive tours in Northern Ireland. Some joined on contract having left the regular armed services and found their skills underutilised in a civilian world. There may have been one or two escaping an unsympathetic bank manager, a too demanding wife or an unduly persistent girl friend. But they all had one thing in common. No matter their widely varying backgrounds, they were all leaders seeking an exciting, responsible and worthwhile task.

In Oman they came together in a force where leadership counted more than rank. Their Omani and Baluch soldiers taught them that. It was a matter of "Follow me". It was a force where rank for rank there was more real responsibility than people had previously enjoyed and where substance counted more than style. Battalion helicopter operations needed no rehearsal, as at that time they did in NATO. (SOAF pilot, easing the collective up, "There are too many of you on board. Three of you jump out.") Dress was varied and beards and headdress were optional. Wives and girlfriends arrived from home and lived in the mess when battalions came north. CSAF staggered away carrying his ADC dripping blood after a brush with the adoo. Nowhere else did this amount and variety of military fun go with such a worthwhile job of work among a delightful indigenous population in a staggeringly beautiful country.

It was not surprising that friendships forged under such circumstances between like minded individuals should thrive. The Sultan's Armed Forces Association met for the first time at the Clachan Hotel in London on 2nd October 1968. (Life membership ten shillings. SAF silk tie one pound and eight shillings). Subsequently it has developed into as successful an ex-service association as any. Our links with Oman are stronger than ever and our annual gatherings go from strength to strength (though a good deal more sedate now we are older!). For a while our finances caused our committee

some concern but His Majesty the Sultan has since generously ensured that we are financially secure. Our numbers have swelled to over a thousand spread around the world in thirty two countries from the United States to Australia and from the Frozen North to South Africa. I count myself the most fortunate of soldiers to be a member.

Ken Perkins"

The Start up

In July 1968 the first circular creating the Association was sent out: SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP CIRCULAR LETTER NO 1 JULY 1968

The SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES ASSOCIATION is formed. Its aims at present are:

- To maintain the spirit of mutual friendship which existed among members of the Sultan's Armed Forces during their service in Muscat and Oman
- To meet in a congenial atmosphere
- To publish News Letters and Address Books for circulation to members
- To hold re-unions

Membership

The following are eligible for full membership of the association: British Officers and NCOs, Officers of the Defence Department and Engineers of Messrs Airwork Ltd, who have served or are serving on secondment or contract with the Sultan's Armed Forces.

The annual subscription is TEN Shillings and life membership is FIVE Guineas. SAF Ties are available: Silk – £18.0, Terylene – £13.0, Rayon – £0.17.0

Rendezvous

The central meeting place is:

THE CLACHAN HOTEL
34 KINGLEY STREET
LONDON W1

Officers of the Association

Chairman: Commander Sultan's Armed Forces

Hon Sec & Treasurer Muscat: **Captain MD Legg**, GS03, HQ SAF

Hon Sec & Treasurer UK: **Lt Col TG Alexander** OBE

General Developments

As can be seen it really started up as an Association for Expatriates who had served in SAF to get together, with a Central Meeting Place in London, originally 'The Clachan' in 1970, changing to 'The Crown' in High Street, Kensington in 1973 and then "Tattersall's Tavern" in Knightsbridge Green. Since that time the "Central Meeting Place" concept has fallen away. This has been replaced by Annual Dinners (now on the last Friday of November) and Cocktail Parties, usually in the first weekend of June. Members in other

places organise get togethers of former members, the best known being "the Scottish Dinner" and the "Wessex Lunch". A few years ago there was even a SAF Dinner of Association members in Hong Kong. The Armoured Car Sqn and Oman Artillery also hold their own reunions.

Originally CSAF was the Chairman, but in 1973 he became the President, and the Chairman, a former CSAF, ran things in the UK. This changed in 1976, when **HH Sayyid Fahr bin Taimur Al Said**, then the Deputy Minister of Defence, and later DPM for Defence and Security became President, a position he remained in until he sadly died in November 1997.

Since then, COSSAF has held the post of President of the Association, initially **Fareeq Rukn Khamis bin Humaid Al Kilbani**, and since 2003 **Fareeq Rukn Ahmed bin Harith Al Nabhani**. Both Sayyid Fahr and Fareeq Khamis until their deaths were active supporters of the Association and Fareeq Ahmed has continued to actively pursue this legacy. **General Tim Creasey** became Chairman in 1975 and remained so until 1987, he was succeeded by **Ken Perkins** until 1994, and since then **Nigel Knocker** has held the reins.

Through the generosity of His Majesty the Sultan and the Presidents, the Association have been able to make a number of tours to Oman, to both see where members served, and more particularly see the fantastic development that has occurred within the Sultanate. These visits not only enable members to see the changes, but also to meet up with old Omani friends with whom

they served (many of them are themselves members of the Association). As always during these trips the Omanis are the most generous of hosts.

The Journal

This started out as a typed Newsletter when the Association was formed, then progressed to a properly printed format. It became "The Journal" in 1992 and then in March 1993 was launched in a new format, which really enhanced its look, and the continued improvements since then have resulted in a highly professional looking Magazine, which is a credit to the Association.

Membership

Membership has had its ups and downs, but in recent years is on the increase. The present membership stands at:

UK: 781

Oman: 132

Rest of World: 111

Total: 1024

New members are always welcome.

In the UK apply to:

Lt Cdr Neil Fawcett RN

In the Oman apply to:

Colonel Hassan al Mujaini ■

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ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDALS

BRITISH ARMY PERSONNEL SERVING IN JEBEL AKHDAR CAMPAIGN AND DHOFAR WAR

Reference A: "Orders and Medals of the Sultanate of Oman (July 2010)"

JEBEL AKHDAR CAMPAIGN MEDAL

1. See Reference A (Page 46). This medal was instituted in 1959 and was only awarded to "Officers and trained soldiers serving with the Sultan's Armed Forces between 1st November 1958 and 1st February 1959". This applied to both British contract and seconded (Loan Service) personnel, actually on the posted strength of SAF.
2. Several British Units served in support of SAF at the time. These were:
 - a. Tactical HQ, A and D Squadrons 22 SAS.
 - b. D Squadron Life Guards (Ferret Armoured Cars)
 - c. C and D Squadron TOS (from Sharjah)
 - d. Detachment of Royal Marines
 - e. Detachment of Royal Signals
 - f. RAF elements based at Sharjah

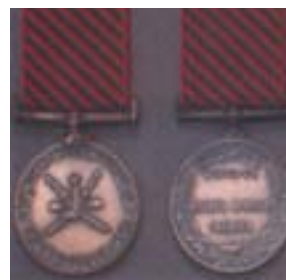
Personnel of these Units were not allowed by the British Forces Medal Office to be given the Omani Jebel Akhdar Campaign Medal, but instead were awarded the British Army General Service Medal, with the clasp "Arabian Peninsula". In fact, even British personnel seconded to SAF, although awarded the medal were not allowed to wear it according to the British Forces Medal Office. [A lot did after they had retired from the British Army]

MEDALS DURING THE DHOFAR WAR (1965-1975)

1. The Medals over this period that it was possible to be awarded were:
 - a. The General Service Medal (Ref A – Page 46)
 - b. The Accession Medal (Ref A – Page 48)
 - c. The As Sumood Medal (Ref A – Page 47)
2. **The General Service Medal**
 - a. Awards of this medal went to "All entitled Sultan's Armed Forces personnel (including British seconded) as well as Imperial Iranian and Royal Jordanian Forces taking part in the War. Enlisted civilians of SAF also qualified, as did employees of Airwork Services Limited in Dhofar. The qualifying dates were 23rd May 1965 to 30th June 1976 and 14 days had to be served in the specified Dhofar Area.
 - b. Serving former British units that operated in Dhofar were not entitled to Omani Medals. Instead, they were issued the British General Service Medal with the clasp "Dhofar". These Units were:
 - (1) 22 SAS (Operating as BATT)
 - (2) Cracker Battery of the Royal Artillery
 - (3) Royal Engineer Squadrons
 - (4) Field Surgical Team (RAMC)
 - (5) RAF and RAF Regiment personnel manning Salalah Airbase

3. **The Accession Medal.** This award was only made to all members of the Sultan's Armed Forces (including British seconded personnel), Oman Police, Oman Intelligence Services, Airwork Services Limited, The Defence Department and the Sultan's Retainers, serving on the 23 July 1970.

4. **The As Sumood Medal.** This was awarded to the same personnel as stipulated for the General Services Medal (Para 2 a above) who served 30 days in Oman in the period 23rd May 1965 to 2nd December 1975 inclusive.



Jebel Akhdar Campaign Medal



The General Service Medal (with Dhofar Bar)



The Accession Medal



The As Sumood Medal

CLAIMS FOR OMANI MEDALS

by Ian Buttenshaw

In the last few years, several people have written querying their eligibility to be issued Omani Medals. Mostly these have been for the Dhofar War, but recently there has been one requesting a Jebel Akhdar Medal!!

These enquiries normally come through the Oman Embassy in London, who send them on to Central Records Office, who have to investigate each case. As the writer was responsible for the last update of the last Oman Medals Book, these enquiries normally end up on my desk. Most of the enquires to date have resulted in a negative response being passed back to the person concerned through the Oman Embassy in London.

In order that everyone knows who is eligible for Medals, the above document, which is now held by Central Records Office, can provide information with regard to the award of Omani Medals for Jebel Akhdar and Dhofar. ■

43RD NATIONAL DAY

On the Occasion of the 43rd Glorious National Day, **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said**, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, presides over the military parade held at the parade ground of Royal Guard of Oman HQ on 18 November 2013. ■



The military parade held at the parade ground of Royal Guard of Oman HQ



NEWS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFENCE AFFAIRS (MRDA) - 2013

*In all notes of the meetings that have been held with visiting dignitaries, to save space and repetition, **HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi**, Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs, is shown as His Excellency the MRDA. Similarly, except where shown, meetings reviewed and discussed matters of common interest.*

His Excellency the MRDA receiving **General Sir Richard Barrons**, Commander of UK Joint Forces Command on 6 February 2013.



His Excellency the MRDA receiving **Lord Astor**, Under-Secretary of State and Spokesman on Defence on 7 October 2013.



.....
His Excellency the MRDA receiving **Air Chief Marshal Francisco Javier Garcia**, Chief of Spanish Air Force on 11 February 2013.



.....
His Excellency the MRDA receiving **General Sir Peter Wall**, Chief of the General Staff on 4 June 2013.



.....
His Excellency the MRDA attending Langkawi International Maritime and Air Show during the period 24-30 February 2013.



.....
His Excellency the MRDA honouring the Military Football Team, the winners of Asian Military Tournament (The Asian Qualifiers for the World Military Cup) on 1 April 2013.





The Military Football Team ranked second in the CISM World Military Football Trophy 2013

In an unprecedented achievement in the sport history of SAF, the Military Football Team ranked second in the CISM World Military Football Trophy 2013 in Azerbaijan's Capital Baku after vying for the trophy with the Iraqi team who won 3-2 in the last minute on 14 July 2013.

Royal grant to the National and SAF Shooting Teams and to the Military Football Team in recognition of their splendid creditable records and achievements in regional and international competitions presented by **His Excellency the MRDA** on 26 December 2013.



.....
His Excellency the MRDA unveiling the opening of the building of MOD Pension Fund on 16 June 2013.



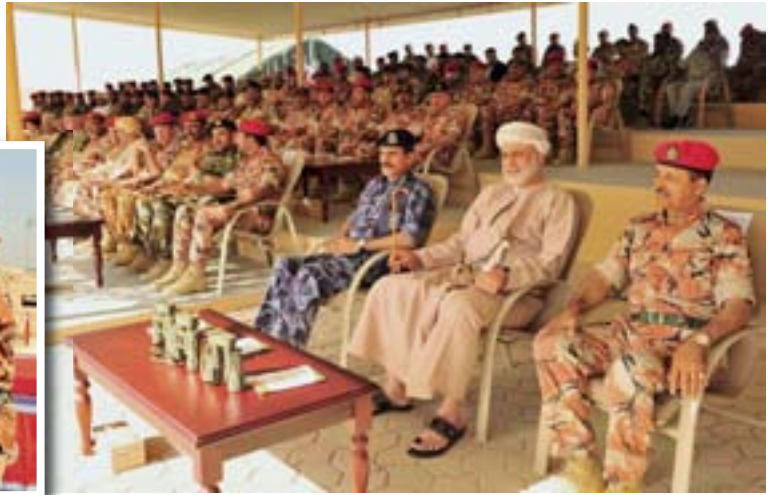
.....
SAF Museum celebrating 25 years (Silver Jubilee) since officially inaugurated on 11 December 1988 by **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos**, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. ■



NEWS OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES (COSSAF)

In all notes of the meetings that Lt Gen Ahmed bin Harith Al Nabhani has held with visiting dignitaries, to save repetition he is shown as COSSAF. Similarly, except where shown, meetings reviewed military cooperation between the countries concerned and matters of common interest were discussed.

H.E. Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili,
Minister of Justice presiding over the SAF Annual
Marksmanship Competition on 4 March 2013.



SAF participating in the GCC joint exercise of "Dir'a Aljazeera 9" in Kuwait during the period 5-26 February 2013. **COSSAF** attending the naval exercise and demonstration of fire power on the final day of the joint exercise.



*Meetings reviewed military cooperation
between the countries concerned and matters
of common interest were discussed.*



COSSAF receiving **General Sir Richard Barrons**, Commander of Joint Forces Command on 5 February 2013.



COSSAF witnessing the demonstration of power of "Dir'a Alwatan 1" (Homeland Shield) exercise executed by MSO on 27 February 2013.



In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Developments, Office of COSSAF organises a symposium on Children's Rights and International Treaties on 25 March 2013.



COSSAF receiving **Vice Admiral Rinaldo Veri**, Commander of the Naval Forces of NATO Allied Joint Force Command on 10 February 2013.



SAF Combat Shooting Team achieving first places in most competitions of the 2013 British Army Shooting Championship in Bisley collecting diverse cups and medals during the period 24 June - 26 July 2013.



OFFICE OF COSSAF

Command and Staff College celebrating the graduation of the 26th batch under the auspices of **H.E. Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Al Sami**, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs on 22 July 2013.



Social Welfare Services at the Office of COSSAF organising a venue for MOD disabled ex-servicemen on 29 May 2013.



COSSAF receiving **General Sir David Richards**, Chief of the UK Defence Staff on 15 April 2013.



Social Welfare Services at the Office of COSSAF organising a voyage for MOD disabled ex-servicemen on 29 May 2013.



COSSAF receiving **Lord Astor**, Under-Secretary of State and the UK Lords spokesman on Defence on 7 October 2013.



COSSAF receiving **Lt. General Simon Mayall**, Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East on 23 February 2013.



MOD and SAF celebrating the official inauguration of the National Defence College under the auspices of **H.H. Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimor Al Said**, Adviser to **His Majesty The Sultan** on 11 December 2013 (Armed Forces Day). The Occasion was attended by **H.E. MRDA** and **COSSAF**, Chairman of College Board.



MOD and SAF win first place in the competition of Road Traffic Safety held by Royal Oman Police.



COSSAF honouring the officers, non-commissioned officers and personnel of the Office of COSSAF for their distinguished services on 30 December 2013. ■





ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN (RAO)

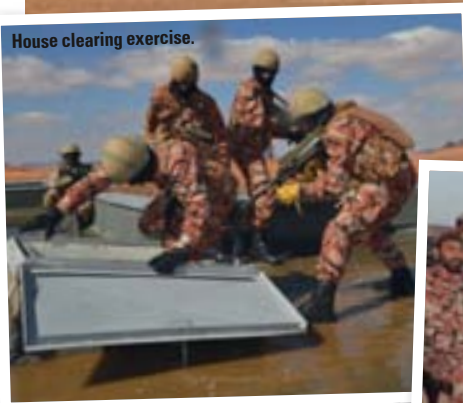
RAO welcomed 2013 in with a new Army Commander, **Liwa Rukn Matar bin Salim bin Rashid Al Baluchi**, which was reported in last year's edition. As in 2012 RAO continued to participate in overseas exercises.

The First was in January – Exercise Jebel 13 in Saudi Arabia between 26 January and 5 February 2013 where elements of SOP were exercised in Tabuk with Airborne and Special Forces Units of the Royal Saudi Land Forces.

Heliborn Ops.



House clearing exercise.



Para Drop.



Saudi and Omani troops.



CRAO and Saudi
Commander
watch Demo.



Heli Insertion.



Opening Ceremony , Saudi Major Gen and CO SOP.

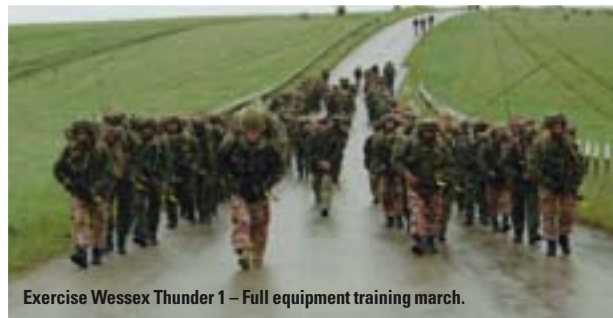
The next was Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 in the UK, on Salisbury Plain between 5-19 June where a company of WFR exercised with a company from 2 Para. Another Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 was again held on Salisbury Plain later in 2013 from 4 November to 4 December, this time involving a NFR Company and again a Company from 2 Para. This exercise was visited by CRAO.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 – Clearing building training.



Opening Ceremony.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 – Full equipment training march.



Practising firing anti tank weapon.



Heli drills.



SOP troops on exercise.



SOP troops on exercise.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 – Omani troops crossing obstacle.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 – British Para Company clearing an obstacle.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – Operations in built up areas.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 – Training on clearing sewers.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – Defence in wooded areas.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – Operations in built up areas.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – Orders group.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 1 –
Preparing for a briefing.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – Comd 23 Inf Bde being briefed during Ex visit.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – House clearing.



Deploying by vehicle.



Exercise Wessex Thunder 2 – House clearing.

In between these two exercises Exercise Pashtun Dawn was held on Salisbury Plain where a Company of FF participated with elements of both 2 Para and 2 Yorks, in an exercise practicing Operations in Built up Areas.



Practising patrol skills.



Practising patrol skills in Cophill Down.



Initial Planning Conference.



On exercise.



CO FF on initial recce.

ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN

All were a success and are very good in keeping RAO current with the latest tactics coming out of Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Adventure training continued to be an integral part of the training cycle with a New Adventure Training Section running 10 day courses comprising 3 days Sea Kayaking, 3 days Climbing and 3 days Walking/Caving. Over 400 individuals completed the courses this year, all getting recognised military qualifications.



As in previous years skiing trips were part of the overseas adventure training. From 3-17 January a team went to Austria, to participate in the British Army Ski Telemark Championships. This was followed by another ski exercise in Germany where the team participated in the RCC Championships.





The main expedition this year was to Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa from 13-27 October, where the team successfully reached the summit.



ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN



CRAO made three visits abroad during the year, one to visit the Joint Exercise in Saudi Arabia in February, another to visit the Joint Exercise in UK in November, and an official 3 day visit to Italy in March.



CRAO, Fareeq Sultan al Numani, Liwa Mahad, visiting locations along Yemen Border.



CRAO briefing Fareeq Sultan and others in Sarfait area.



CRAO welcoming Fareeq Sultan at UAG Officers Mess.



Above: CRAO inspecting Officer Cadets.

Right: CRAO meeting Italian COS during visit to Italy.



The Band made no overseas visits this year apart from the Annual Competition of the Pipes and Drums in Scotland, There they did well, with the Drum Major coming first in the Edinburgh Competition. The main activity of the Band this year was the creation of the RAO Women's Band. They are now undergoing basic music training and doing very well. It is hoped that they will be ready to start performing in early 2015.



The appointment of DG Observations and Inspection reported in the last Journal did not take place as **Ameed Hamed bin Nassir Al Nabhani** was transferred to the Royal Office instead and the post is vacant at present. The previously vacant post of DG Org/Plans is now filled by **Ameed Rukn Salim bin Khamis Al Abri** (SAFE). All the other appointments are as reported in the last Journal, and additionally the new Commander FQ Forces is **Ameed Rukn Awadh bin Ali Al Nazwani** (MSO). The new Commander Border Guard Brigade is **Ameed Rukn Masoud bin Ali Al Hatali** (NFR, CO DR, Comd FQ Forces, latterly Dep Comd 23 Inf Bde).

The year concluded with the normal busy December, Armed Forces Day on 11 December, with the celebrations held at SAFTR under the auspices of **HE Abdullah bin Nassir Al Harasi**, Head of the General Authority for Television and Radio, with demonstrations by the RAO Band, drill squads, MSO Cavalry, SOP Para Motors and a combined Male/Female Free Fall Drop.





This was followed by the KSQA Commissioning Parade in MAM on 25 December 2012 under the patronage of **HE Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi**, Minister of the Interior.



RAO celebrating the graduation of new batch of cadets under the auspices of **H.E. Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi**, Minister of Interior on 25 December 2013.



Graduation of new tactical parachutists of RAO cadets course on 3 July 2013.



RAO celebrating the graduation of the second batch of female recruits on 26 June 2013.



RAO organising a number of activities for the Traffic Week for SAF on 12 March 2013.



H.E. Nasser bin Hamoud Al Kindi, Secretary General of Royal Court Affairs presiding over the demonstration of power of KSQA cadets concluding exercise 10 October 2013.



SAF Medical Services launching the electronic linkage system with the Council of Scientific Research on 9 April 2013. ■





ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN (RAFO)

Last year proved yet another busy one for RAFO capability development with personnel and equipment being at the forefront of our growth.



RAFO receiving the second batch of NH 90s on 23 March 2013.

CRAFO receiving Air Chief Marshal Francisco Javier Garcia, Chief of Spanish Air Force on 12 February 2013.



Training continues apace with the graduation of a new batch of pilots and cadets under the auspices of **H.E. Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi**, Minister of Diwan of Royal Court on 6 February 2013.



SAF hosting the meeting of chiefs of air forces and air defence forces of GCC states on 1 May 2013.



RAFO organises a conference on Air Traffic Safety in the Middle East on 28 February 2013.



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CRAFO was the Reviewing Officer for the 26 September 2013 cadet graduation at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell in the UK.

Super Lynx helicopters from 15 Sqn, commanded by **Mqm Rukn Tay Abdulhakeem bin Hilal Al Maa'ni**, participated in a number of maritime exercises involving other nations including India, America, France and the UK. This involved embarkations on both *RNOV Muazzar* and *RNOV Nasr Al Bahr* whilst also carrying out deck landings on various foreign warships. These have ranged in size from Corvettes up to Aircraft Carriers which was excellent training for the Omani crews. RAFO helicopters also took part in a GCC Exercise in Kuwait, deploying 4 aircraft with associated aircrew and engineers.



RAFO Super Lynx on the heli deck of RNOV Muazzar.

The first RAFO C130 aircraft to undergo a 'glass cockpit' upgrade in Singapore has returned to Oman. Aircrew and engineers of 16 Sqn (OC **Mqm Rukn Tay Khalifa bin Mohammed Al Abdali**) have completed training on the upgrade which has upgraded instrumentation and navigation equipment to the latest standards available. The remaining 2 C130H aircraft will complete the upgrade during 2014. Towards the end of 2013, crews and engineers deployed to the USA to conduct training on the C130J aircraft, the first of which is due to be delivered in Spring 2014.



RAFO C130H 'glass cockpit' upgrade.

In October 2013, RAFO took delivery of its first of eight CASA C-295 tactical transport aircraft as part of Project Jabreen, being managed by **Aqd Rukn Tay Mohammed bin Salim al Kathiri** who then took command of RAFO Musanan on his promotion to Ameer at the beginning of 2014. 5 Sqn, commanded by **Mqm Rukn Tay Saeed bin Hamed Al Abdali**, will manage the aircraft's entry into RAFO service. Operational capability across fast jet, multi-engine and rotary wing platforms in various roles will be continued throughout 2014.

RAFO's first CASA C-295 on the apron at RAFO Seeb.



1 Sqn, commanded by **Mqm Rukn Tay Saeed bin Abdullah Al Bimani**, graduated qualified pilots from 51 Cse in May 2013 and began training student pilots of 52 Cse in August. Unfortunately corrosion was discovered on all the PC-9Ms and the fleet was grounded in September 2013. RAFO is working very closely with Pilatus in order to return the aircraft flying as soon as possible. In the meantime 1 Sqn is flying No. 53 Cse (32 students) to assess their suitability for continued flying training (screening), using the PAK Super Mushak aircraft.



RAFO PAK Super Mushak aircraft in formation over Masirah Island.



Major fighter exercise participation included the annual Exercise MAGIC CARPET which saw RAF Typhoons return to RAFO Thumrait in addition to an E3A and DA20 aircraft. In October 2013, Indian Air Force aircraft deployed to RAFO Masirah for Exercise EASTERN BRIDGE. RAFO supported the exercise with Masirah based Hawk 103 and 203 aircraft, and Jaguars deployed from RAFO Thumrait.

During March 2013, RAFO hosted a team of RAF personnel lead by CFS on the biannual 'trappers' visit. The Team flew with instructors and operational aircrew of most RAFO aircraft types providing an overall assessment of RAFO's pure and applied flying skills. The visit provided RAFO with a valuable opportunity to measure its performance against the RAF's 'yardstick'. ■

THE LOST PROVOST

by Sqn Ldr Michael Sabine RAF
SOAF September '61 – May '63

Date: 20 March 1963

Time: 0700hrs

Place: Coastal strip south of As Sifah

That day a SOAF pilot was practising his general handling of a Piston Provost aircraft down south of Muscat in brilliantly clear weather. He saw something unusual going on at the south end of the crescent shaped coastal strip in the As Sifah area and he flew down to investigate. A small dhow had nosed onto the stony foreshore where a load of people were climbing out and beginning to head towards the high ridge to the west. The pilot climbed up to make VHF radio contact with Bait-al-Falaj to report the sighting and then kept a wary eye on the landing activity.

CO SOAF, **Sqn Ldr John Horrell**, ordered a pair of Provosts to be armed (Browning .303 machine guns) and readied for flight. The first Provost had returned and as the pair were not ready he decided to send another Provost off immediately to update the situation. **Flt Lt Mike Telford** had just landed in a Beaver on return from an overnight stay upcountry. He was quickly briefed, changed into his blue flying suit and promptly got airborne. Not long after the pair took off with myself as wingman – hence first logbook entry.



NAME	IN	OUT	REMARKS	TIME	DATE
Mike	10	10	Provost downed on beach	10	20/3/63
John	10	10	Provost downed on beach	10	20/3/63

When we came over the ridge Mike Telford was low down at the landing site and he reported that the dhow was heading out to sea in an easterly direction. This was relayed to Bait and we received the order to divert the dhow to Muscat harbour. We flew out to sea and encouraged the reluctant skipper to turn north with several bursts of machine gun fire. We continued the escort until the Navy dhow appeared heading south. We had no contact with Mike Telford and, on landing back, were surprised to find that he had not returned.

Now a systematic search was started using the Beavers. After a while a crash site was found high up on the south side of the most southerly ravine coming down steeply from the near vertical mass of the Selma Plateau. There were no signs of the pilot; the search continued all day. Late afternoon I was detailed – second logbook entry – to act as a contact post with the Navy dhow which had gone down to the site with a search party and **Dr Butch Quereshi**. My brief was to fly over the plateau, descend on a line between the crash site and the dhow and fire a Verey signal when over the crash to enable a bearing to be taken. This I did in a steep descent from 3,500ft. When low down approaching the dhow I glanced up the beach into the westering sun and I saw three figures silhouetted in the distance. A low pass showed Mike Telford in his tatty blue suit supported by two boys staggering along the stony foreshore.



Mike was taken back to Bait suffering from burns particularly to his hands, bruising and heat exhaustion. He had unfortunately left his cape leather flying gloves in the Beaver where they stayed in his scramble to get airborne in the Provost. He was not in good shape and we sat with him through the night before he was casevaced to Bahrain at first light when a Pembroke arrived at Bait.

All he said about the crash was that he had flown really low with his left wing down counting the strung out landing party and, inadvertently, had turned into the entrance of the ravine. Unable to out climb or out turn the jagged shoulders rising on both sides with a sheer wall ahead he had pancaked the aircraft onto the hillside. The Provost caught fire on impact as the fuel collector box was located under the lefthand seat and – believe it or not – made of magnesium alloy.

I left SOAF two months later so knew nothing of subsequent crash investigation or Board of Inquiry results. I did hear that Mike Telford recovered but lost his piano playing ability which was a high price for a classical pianist to pay for leaving off his gloves. My logbook records armed recce of 'Pilgrims'. Those landing were in fact Hadjis from Pakistan who were told by the dhow operator that Mecca lay just over the hill – that's the 3,500ft plateau towards which they were struggling despite the rugged terrain, and a mere 1000 nms short of target. The owner ended up in Jalali and SOAF were awarded his dhow by the Governor of Muscat.

Date: 6 November 2013

Time: Noon

Place: Entrance to the Ravine

A small reconnaissance party comprised of **Major Mohammed Othman Al Balushi, Keith Brown** of the Oman National Survey Authority and myself approached the entrance to the ravine in the rather vague hope that we might emulate 'The Raiders of the Lost Past' in a search for the crashed Provost.

During a previous visit to Muscat I had mentioned to Mohammed that a Provost had crashed exactly 50 years ago south of Muscat. He expressed great surprise at this. Subsequent brief research showed that the aircraft had been written off by the Air Ministry when given to the Foreign Office. The Board of Inquiry would have been shredded after 40 years so I became the only person, interested in Omani air matters, who knew the circumstances surrounding the crash and the probable location.

Mohammed and I failed to enter the ravine but Keith penetrated a short distance until blocked by enormous boulders. He declared that we needed either a team of well equipped climbers or a helicopter. The light grey colour of the boulders in the ravine and the rocks strewn down the wadi bed to the sea are evidence of



the tremendous force of the water flow off the plateau. Any aircraft wreckage must have washed off the upper slope though our residual feeling is that the engine with the propellor attached would not have carried down the ravine. The terrain is awesomely rugged which begs the question of how Mike Telford survived. The shepherd boys would have been outside the entrance so when they found Mike is conjectural. It is beyond doubt that without their help he may not have survived the ordeal which does have an air of the miraculous about it.

ADVANCE NOTICE



Limited Edition Aviation Print

This print will be published in early summer to mark the friendship between the Royal Air Force and the Royal Air Force of Oman.

The original painting by world renowned aviation artist Mike Rondot is a unique historical record of early flying days in Oman. Painted in 1973 the picture is the artist's first ever large oil painting.

Histories of the Piston Provost, the artist and the painting together with details of how to acquire a certified limited edition print can be found after 1 May 2014 at:

www.wingsoveroman.com

At press time the search for the wreckage and the 'dramatis personae' or their descendants continues. Hopefully a concluding report can be made through the SAF website before the start of the RAF/RAFO Exhibition at RAF Museum, Hendon in July this year.

For those interested in flying, or anyone curious to know more about the capability of a great little aircraft, there is an excellent 3:06 film clip of a Provost in SOAF colours on You Tube at 'Percival Piston Provost at Classic Fighters 2005'. ■

2014 SAF ASSOCIATION COCKTAIL PARTY

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SAF Association Plaques are available from Nigel Knocker, address page 3, at £30 each including p&p. Cheque payable to The SAF Association.

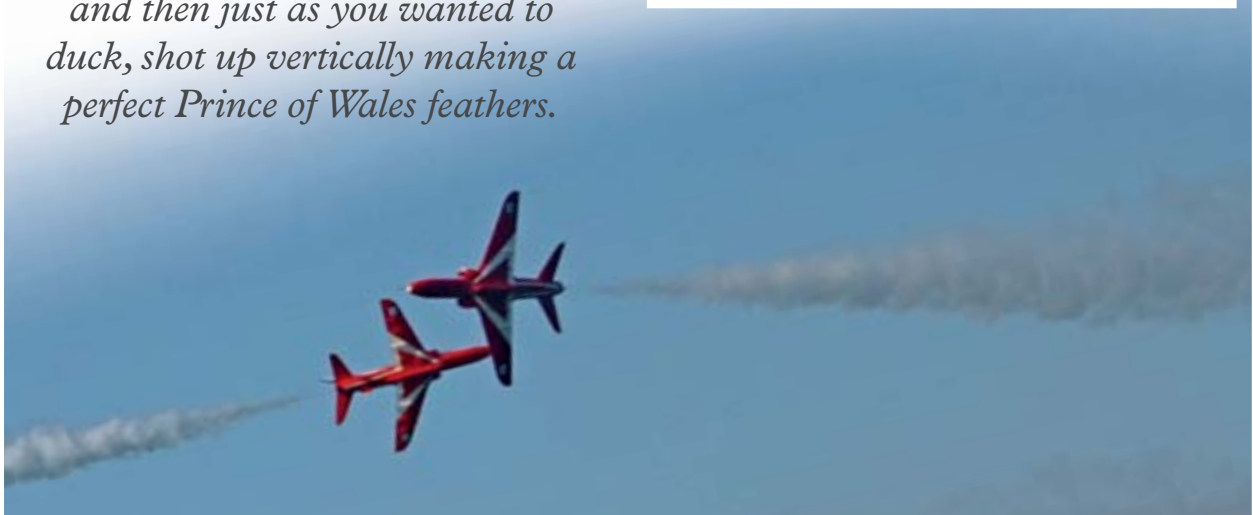
THE RED ARROWS IN MUSCAT

The Red Arrows performed over the Intercon Beach on Wednesday 13 November as part of the 43rd National Day build up. They then moved on to the Dubai Air Show as well as Qatar and Kuwait. The following quote is from an eye witness:

"The first picture is particularly pleasing – even so it leaves a gap between it and the real thing yesterday – as for instance when all 9 suddenly appeared about 2 miles out and came straight at you at sea level with their lights on and then just as you wanted to duck, shot up vertically making a perfect Prince of Wales feathers – breathtaking and very 'proud of Britain' making! The best show I have seen to date – Lots of Omanis on the beach with us. (Commentator said that it is very rare that they fly at sea level ie: about 50ft.)" ■



All 9 suddenly appeared about 2 miles out and came straight at you at sea level with their lights on and then just as you wanted to duck, shot up vertically making a perfect Prince of Wales feathers.





ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN (RNO)

The RNO have had a busy year with sometimes up to seven ships deployed operationally at sea at any one time. This is quite a high percentage for a small navy. As well as the normal operational deployments, annual exercises took place often with participants from Regional Navies.

During 2013 the first of the three larger new Corvettes, RNOV Al Shamikh, arrived after some delays and the crew are now undergoing training. The remaining two should arrive in the near future.

To give the Navy more flexibility in deployments along the Oman littoral, RNO are to start building a new Naval Base in Dhofar. It is to be sited to the east of Mirbat, so now with this base and the arrival of the new larger Corvettes it will allow RNO to maintain a constant presence in Dhofari Waters throughout the Khareef.

The present Senior Officer appointments in RNO are as follows:

PSO: Ameer Rukn Bah Rasheed bin Taj Mohammad Al Raisi

DG Ops/Plans: Ameer Rukn Bah Mahfoodh bin Hamood Al Wahaibi

DG Support: Ameer Rukn Bah Khalifa bin Hamed Al Qasmi

DG Admin/Fin: Ameer Rukn Abdullah bin Issa Al Baluchi

CO SBS Naval Base: Ameer Rukn Bah Haider bin Ahmed Al Zadjali

Comd Naval Academy: Ameer Rukn Said bin Abdullah Al Saadi



RNO executing
naval exercise "Asad
Albahar" (Sea Lion)
during the period
30 March - 10 April 2013.



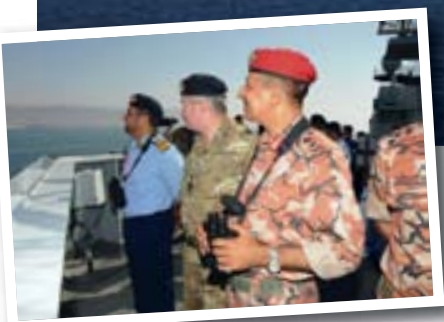
RNO Shabab Oman Vessel participating in the Festival of Rouen Armada in France and Den Helder in Netherlands during the period 6-16 2013.

ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN

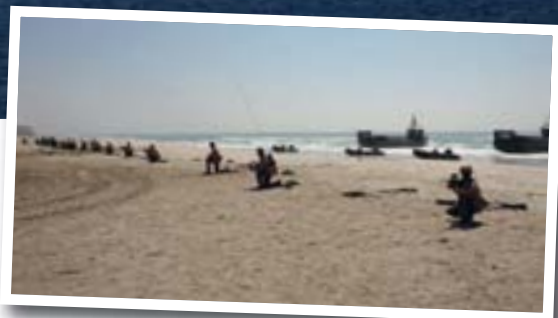
RNO executing the naval exercise "Khanjar Had" (Sharp Dagger) during the period 5-8 May 2013.



Security and Military Services, in cooperation with governmental bodies, executed the Security Maritime Exercise "Dhat Al-Sawari" (Battle of Phoenix) during the period 6-10 April 2013.



SAF and UK Royal Navy conclude the joint naval exercise Cougar on 28 October 2013.



RNO celebrates the receiving of "Alshamikh", the first vessel of project Khareef on 26 June 2013 and "Alrahmani", the second vessel of the three vessel project Khareef on 30 October 2013.



RNO executing the joint combined exercise "Naseem Albahar" (Sea Breeze) with the participation of MSO and Indian Navy during the period 22-26 September 2013.



The Sultan Qaboos Trophy for outstanding services to sail training for young people was presented this year (2013) in Denmark to Sail Training Association Finland on the occasion of the organisation's 40th Anniversary on 7 November 2013.



RNO celebrating Annual Day on 3 November 2013 under the auspices of **H.E. Abdulmunim bin Mansour Al Hasani**, Minister of Information.



ROYAL NAVY INITIAL NAVAL TRAINING COURSE

Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis bin Abdullah Al-Raisi, Commander Royal Navy of Oman, inspected the 78 young officers on parade at Dartmouth to mark the successful completion of their Royal Navy Initial Naval Training course.

While the majority of the Cadets completing the 30-week intensive course were members of the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, 16 were from overseas Navies, including seven from the Royal Navy of Oman.

Captain Jerry Kyd, the Commanding Officer of BRNC, said: "Cadets from the Royal Navy of Oman have been coming to BRNC for training for around 20 years to the mutual benefit of both countries.

"We were very pleased that Rear Admiral Al-Raisi was able to join us as the guest of honour. During his time here he was able to meet 15 Officer Cadets from his Navy who are currently undergoing training with us.

"All the Cadets completing training this time have undergone an intensive period of training which is designed to prepare them for the rigours of modern operations.

"They have undertaken exercises on the River Dart, which mimic as far as possible the operations the Royal Navy is engaged in all over the world, and served at sea on board *HMS Illustrious* and *HMS Bulwark*.

"They should be proud of their achievements and I wish them success in their future careers."

Over 100 other Service personnel also took part in the parade including Cadets at varying stages of their training and the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth, who provided the musical accompaniment.

Oman is one of around 20 different nations who regularly send their Cadets to BRNC for training. Other countries, whose future Naval leaders are trained alongside their UK counterparts, include Yemen, Singapore, Kuwait and Nigeria. ■



SHABAB OMAN

I served in the Royal Navy of Oman from 1980 to 1991 and now reside in Malta.

Shabab Oman called at Malta on the 12 & 13 September 2013. Malta was her last Mediterranean port of call before proceeding to Oman for decommissioning. During her short stay in Malta I entertained her Captain, **Muqaddam Bahriya Saif bin Nassir Bin Mohsin al Rahbi**. I understand that eventually the ship will be laid up on shore as a maritime museum.


I sailed on the Shabab Oman several times during my time in Oman and on one occasion took all my family (wife and two daughters) out on her for a day cruise. A new Shabab Oman is being built in the Netherlands and is due to commission in 2015.

Roger Baldacchino

I sailed on the Shabab Oman several times during my time in Oman and on one occasion took all my family (wife and two daughters) out on her for a day cruise




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ROYAL HORSE RACE FESTIVAL



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said patronizing the Annual Royal Horse Race Festival organised by the Royal Court Affairs (Royal Cavalry) at Madinat Al'Adiat in the Wilayat of Al Seeb on 1 January 2014. ■



WESSEX LUNCH

At the end of July 2013, some thirty members, together with wives and guests, were at The Camelot in Somerset for another excellent annual Wessex Lunch. Among those present were:



Nick Holbrook and John Kirkham (the organisers).



Philip Horniblow.



Hugh Colley and Jane Hanley.



Mike Lobb.



Nick Mander and Roger Woodiwiss.



'Richard Wood and Mike Lobb.

2014 WESSEX LUNCH

This year's Wessex Lunch will again be held at the Camelot (under new management), South Cadbury, Somerset BA22 7EX, on **Sunday 27 July**. The cost will remain at £25 per head. As usual the numbers will be restricted so early booking is suggested. Those who wish to book places please send a cheque payable to 'Wessex Lunch', to **John Kirkham, The Old Rectory, Oake, Taunton, Somerset TA41AR**. Cheques will be acknowledged together with directions.

FORCES MEDICAL SERVICES NURSES REUNION

by Penny Lobb

On a beautiful June morning one Saturday in 2013, anyone wandering through Queen's Square in Bath would have been aware of the excited clamour of female voices emanating from the elegant interior of the Francis Hotel. The occasion was the first ever reunion of the Ladies of FMS and I think the main question being asked was "Why have we never done this before?"

The amazing thing was that we did it at all, and this stems from the seed sown by **Mqm Luttfia Kharusi** (retired Director of Nursing) at the Wessex Luncheon in 2012 when the idea was suggested to **Mul/1 Gwen Davies**. Gwen planted it and handed it over to **Nqb Angela Roddis** to nurture; Angela was assisted in her efforts by **Nqb Kate Easthope** and the result was an amazing flowering into the reunion which took place in Bath; close to 40 ex-FMS hands were present. They had come not only from all over the country but also other parts of the world. Hopefully, should there be another reunion we may be joined by ex FMS staff from Oman. That would be very special.

Amongst those attending were:

Dorrie Anderson, Maureen Atwood (Holden), Karen Butler, Liz Butler, Suan Moi Chong, Sally Cox (Probert), Gwen Davis, Lois Drainer, Kate Easthope (Clark), Carmel Fairfax, Kathy Fisher (Mendez), Elaine Galbraith, Alison Guile, Margo Hathorn, Karen Jones (John), Luttfia Kharusi, Maryam Kharusi, Kathy Kirby (Bryan-Peach), Kate Lear (Lamb), Marie Lewis, Penny Lobb (Skae), Kim Lonsdale (Trennery), Angela Lovegrove (Roddis), Sally (Rudd) Ludlow, Marilyn Newhill, Gill Parker, Carol Pritchard, Linda Rondeau, Denise Rudgley (Rufinac), Melanie Sims, Pandora Slinger, Pat Wilks and Sarah Wright.



We were all so pleased that Lottie was able to preside over the event. She graciously proposed the toast to His Majesty and drew the first name out of the hat for our raffle which was organised by Nqb Penny Lobb. We were extremely grateful to our most generous of sponsors **Charles Kendall Group** for the star prize and for the support and sponsorship from the SAF Association which meant that our raffle was really rather spectacular.

The winner of the star prize was Marie Lewis. Unfortunately, she was unable to take up the offer of a return ticket to Oman. It was therefore decided to ask the Charles Kendall Group to make a donation on our behalf to Macmillan Nurses as many of our number have benefitted from their help and we felt that it was such a worthy cause.

During the course of a delicious luncheon, email addresses and telephone numbers were exchanged and everyone tried to catch up with as many people as possible. Has ever the phrase "Do you remember...?" been so overworked! It was a day for recapturing those memories, a little sadness for absent friends but much happiness too. There were floral tributes for Lottie and for Angela Lovegrove and cards were signed sending kind thoughts to those who were unable to attend for health reasons.

We were lucky that the weather was so kind to us. I am sure all left the event with the warm blanket of convivial company, good food and happy thoughts nurturing them on their journeys home.

Many of our number had been unaware that the SAF Association was open to them so it is to be hoped that in the future SAF Dinners will be graced with a similar flowering, at least on one table. ■

I am sure all left the event with the warm blanket of convivial company, good food and happy thoughts nurturing them on their journeys home.



ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION

11 DECEMBER 2013

The Armed Forces Day reception was held at the Jumeirah Carlton Towers, London on 11 December 2013.

Many Association members attended.



Top Right: Air Commodore Ibrahim Bin Ali Al Farsi with Peter Isaacs.

Above: Air Commodore Ibrahim Bin Ali Al Farsi with Mike Hardy.

Below right: Air Commodore Ibrahim Bin Ali Al Farsi with Ivan Houghton.



COMMEMORATIVE SAF PICTURE IN THE SPECIAL FORCES CLUB

As some may know there is now a commemorative picture in the Special Forces Club right beside the entrance to the bar (how appropriate!) showing the three people awarded the Sultan's Gallantry Medal; **Paul Wright**, **Peter Hulme** and **Johnny Bradell-Smith**.

This photograph shows **Hermione Ruddle**, Johnnie's sister, and her husband **Mike** with the picture. Hermione makes regular visits to Oman to pay her respects to Johnnie's grave in the PDO cemetery. ■



SAF ASSOCIATION GOLF MATCH 2013

EIGHTEENTH ANNIVERSARY MATCH

***Wednesday 12 June 2013 at
Dorset Golf and Country Club – Near Wareham, Dorset***

What can I say but we were battered with wave after wave of sometimes very heavy rain and the conditions were the worst that we had played in during the last eighteen years. Somehow though everyone kept going as we all fully entered into the spirit of the occasion whether scoring well or not. The course was in good condition although the bunkers provided a considerable challenge to those not used to flooded concrete floors! The occasion was truly celebrated with an excellent lunch featuring Thai fishcakes followed by a lamb shank with vegetables which concluded a challenging but most enjoyable day. This fixture is for those who have served in a military or civilian capacity in, or have a strong affection for the Sultanate of Oman or adjacent countries in the Middle East, and private guests with a military/police background. Ladies are most welcome to attend either as players or for the lunch only. This year we had 21 players with one extra lady for lunch and we were pleased to see three lady players out for the first time.

Players ventured out from 1100 in six groups. The match was followed by lunch where **Captain John De Winton** (Ex Chief of Staff for the Sultan of Oman's Navy) kindly presented the prizes.

The 21 competitors were: **Jonathan Adams** (Ex Police), **Alec Armitage** (British Army), **Clive Brennan** (SOLF/British Army), **Ted Brown** (Guest), **Honor Brown** (Guest), **Mike Carter** (27 years RNVR), **Graham Cross** (SOAF/Royal Flight), **Robin Gainsford** (Royal Navy/SON/Ministry of Environment), **Robin Graham** (Ex Army), **Antony King** (SON/Royal Navy), **Martin Plant** (Royal Navy/SON), **Anne Quarrie** (Guest), **Patrick Sheahan** (British Army/Iran), **Robin Snaith** (Military Insurance Broker), **Frank Stanton** (Royal Navy), **Marian Stanton** (Guest), **Sammy Stubbs** (Royal Navy/SON), **Philip Sevier-Summers** (British Army), **Martin Waterhouse** (Royal Navy), **Mark Whitley** (Royal Navy/Gulf LCTs), **John De Winton** (SON/Royal Navy).

It was nice to see some new faces attending our gathering for the first time. They were Robin Graham and Jonathan Adams (Ex Army and Police) both guests of Martin Plant and Martin Waterhouse (Ex Submariner) and Seniors Captain at the Club, guest of Robin Gainsford. It would be nice to make it 30 competitors next year and please bring wife, girlfriend, partner for lunch and perhaps to drive home

We had some very good scores but the same winner this year, Martin Waterhouse (Royal Navy) who had a most creditable score of 37 points. Second was Antony King (Royal Navy) on 33 points. Third was Graham Cross (SOAF and Royal Flight) on 31 points. Joint Fourth was Alec Armitage (British Army) and John De Winton (SON/Royal Navy). Longest drive was achieved by Martin Plant (SON/Royal Navy) and the nearest the pin was Graham Cross (SOAF/Royal Flight).

Everyone had a very enjoyable day despite the atrocious weather. There is plenty of room for others to join us and let's try

and make the next occasion up to 30 competitors, especially with more lady players and guests for lunch on 30 June 2014. There will be plenty of prizes. The cost will only increase by one pound to £46.00. It would be particularly nice to see some of the old faces who have played before returning and challenging the Winner. Do encourage all your eligible friends to join in. Please, to show interest, e-mail me if you have not already done so and I will put you on my e-mail dist. If you would like to stay at the club hotel, we can offer Bed & Breakfast for £40.00 per person and you could have another round the next day at 50% green fees. ■

Robin Gainsford – 01929 471419 – robingainsford@hotmail.com

JOINED THE ASSOCIATION IN 2013

Denise Rudgley (<i>nee Rouffignac</i>)	FMS 87-98
Marilyn Newhill	FMS 94-2000
Les Phipps	CSOAF 73-75
Brendan O'Brien	Airworks 88-90
Simon Poynder	SOAF 79-82
Edwin Comer	BAe Khassab – current
Richard Jeremy	SON - 87-91
Penny Lobb	PA to DMS 82-86
Roger Williams	SAFTR 71-72
Peter Williams	ROP Air Wing 78-96

MISSING IN 2013

E Buck	Clitheroe	
Peter Clayton	Saltash	
KW Cook	Basildon	
Tim Finneron	Marlow	SOAF
DE Hammond	Alphington	SOLF 83-86
JRG Hunter	Apperley	
W Liddle	Thetford	SOAF
A Moin	Addlestone	RAO 80-85
M Walters	York	SOAF 72/73 & BAF 96-99
JAM Trape	Canada	
KJ Conners	Australia	SOAF 74-78

LIVES REMEMBERED

The following deaths have been recorded:

- 21 Feb 13 **Capt Michael Kane**, late RGJ 1955-77; SAF, (Force Ordnance Services) 1980-87. He retired from the British Army as WO 1 (RSM). His final appointment was with the Army Work Study Group in BAOR, which fitted him for his work in the FOS as a Work Study Officer. He also served as Senior Stores Officer in BOD and as SO2 Quality Assurance at HQ FOS. In his spare time Mike was a popular member of the Ghallah Wentworth Golf Club, the Muscat Hash House Harriers and the Muscat Road Runners. Mike was a popular and well respected officer and he will be missed by all who knew him. Our sympathies are with his wife **Joan**, their daughters **Anthea** and **Maxine** and their families.
- 23 Mar 13 **Flt Lt David N Coulter**, RAF; Skyvan pilot SOAF 1973-78.
- 5 Apr 13 **Colonel Stuart A Green**, OBE, late Royal Anglian. Stuart was the Loan Service GSO1 in HQ SAF from 1973 to 1975, becoming the Principal Staff Officer when that post was created in April 1975. He left Oman in August 1975.
- 31 May 13 **Sqn Ldr Alan Butcher**, late RAF, Supply Officer SOAF 1975-77.
- 9 Jun 13 **Major Stan Swain**, WKHM, late REME, joined SAF on contract in 1982. His first post was OC MAM Workshop, followed in 1992 by OC the Force Mobile Workshops, and finally he joined HQ FEME, where, among things, he was responsible for sorting out the debacle of the Tank Transporters for the Challenger 2 Tanks. As an off-duty pastime he formed and successfully ran, for nineteen years, the Workshop fitness gym, which was used by all ranks, both military and civilian, and he had a big hand in designing the RAO Mess Gym complex. Stan was awarded HM The Sultan's Commendation Medal in 1996 and the WKHM in 2000. He finally left SAF in 2001.
- 2 Jul 13 **Major JRE (Bertie) Bowes**, R Anglian (Leicester); MR 1961-62. He was an enthusiastic and generous supporter of the SAF Memorial at the Arboretum.
- 12 Sep 13 **Christopher (Trigger) Rodgers**, late DLI/3LI; SAFTR Aydim, 1983/4.
- 22 Dec 13 **Sqn Ldr Ted Wood**, late RAF; SOAF 1980-86. Ted was an RAF fighter pilot and a qualified flying instructor. He initially flew Hunters at Thumrait, before moving to Salalah to fly the Skyvan and Defender, where his extensive experience and natural talent as a flying instructor was put to good use.
- 27 Jan 14 **Lt Col John A Williams**, late RA and AAC; SAF 1982-87. In the British Army, John served initially in the Royal Artillery, qualifying as both a fixed wing and a helicopter pilot. He then transferred to the



AAC, commanding a squadron and then a regiment. His final appointment was as SO1 Aviation in Northern Ireland. He represented the Army at Rugby. He joined SAF in 1982 as SO2 Ops at HQ SOA, Izki, moving as SO2 Artillery to HQ SOLF in early 1983. He was appointed SO1 Logistics HQ SOLF as Muqaddam in March 1984, a job he remained in until leaving Oman in March 1987. In 1986 he was awarded HM the Sultan's Commendation. On returning to the UK John became Secretary to the Society of St George in London. He then joined Devon County Council as an Emergency Planning Officer, and after retirement spent time in Bosnia during the crisis there, running airfields. Our condolences go to **Paula**, who he married in Oman, and to his two daughters.

8 Mar 14 It is with sadness that we announce the death on Saturday 8 March of **Nick Harrison**. Although Nick was not a serving member of SAF, he will be remembered with affection as Manager of BBME in the early '70s and for his close association with many serving SAF members. He regularly supported the SAF Golfing Day. Our thoughts are with his widow, **Susie** and their daughter, **Claire**.

Major D. John Goddard, RE and Queen's Gurkha Engineers

John Goddard died on 16th August 2013. He served with distinction in Germany, Austria, Malaya, Aden and Hong Kong with the Royal Engineers, Gurkha Engineers and Parachute Engineers, as well as a spell attached to the French Army in Indochina.

He arrived in Oman in 1958 where he served as Brigade Major to **David Smiley**, who described him on their first meeting as 'thin, taciturn and smart'; later qualifying his first impressions by adding "he was a most efficient and conscientious officer who knew his job thoroughly and despite his dour temperament I found him invaluable." Together with **Sayed Tarik**, Goddard was charged with gathering intelligence on the Jebel Akhdar and with training Omani troops. Amongst his other responsibilities were controlling and guarding the headquarters at Bait al Falaj and securing Royalist outposts. Although he was not able to persuade the Sultan to part with 400 antique live cannonballs that he was afraid would blow up the fort, he was able to prevent a mutiny of Pakistani troops who had lost a football match, and ensure good relations between contract and seconded British Officers and their Omani counterparts. Goddard was involved in every assault against the Saudi backed rebel bases on the Jebel, including with 22nd SAS Regiment in Jan 1959, which ended in the successful capture of all their objectives.

Goddard left Oman in 1960 and in 1976 became an early member of the Anglo Omani Society which had been formed by **Donald Hawley**. His affectionate respect for the Omani people, including those he fought against, meant that he viewed his years in Oman as amongst the most fulfilling of his career, naming his son after his good friend, Sayed Tarik.

Lt Col John Gordon-Taylor (aka Black John) WKHM

Black John's reputation, like a reliable wine, travelled well. He arrived in Oman in 1972 on contract as a Captain from the Parachute Regiment, as an experienced instructor in platoon tactics and infantry weapon handling and he did not disappoint. He started life in OG and was posted in March 1973 to the newly formed Frontier Force at Raysut as 2ic. In 1975 he was promoted to Lt Colonel and given command of the Southern Regiment (KJ), another newly formed Baluch battalion permanently based in Arzat. In addition he was made responsible for organising and commanding recruiting visits to Gwadar for Baluch soldiers for SAF. These month long visits took place twice a year. In May 1981 he was appointed Commandant of the Baluch Training Centre at Aydim, where he stayed until leaving SAF in 1986.



On first meeting he could appear shy but soon he became the life and a soul of a party. Many members of Taylor Woodrow Tawell, building and road contractors in Dhofar, quickly found their way to KJ Officers' Mess where John's hospitality resulted in unofficial enhancements to the mess such as a bar, ready for restocking, a patio, a BBQ area, swimming pool, rugger pitches and the like and also a private airstrip for Defenders and Skyvans. Behind the façade of a "Hack 'em down mercenary" he was a kind, entertaining, well read and generous man. Despite injuries caused by the odd hard landing in a previous incarnation he did much to encourage sports such as Rugger and participated in the "Great Dhofar Chariot Race" using a borrowed Royal Jordanian Engineers 4 ton truck. The jury is still out on the result of the race.

On the purely military side 'Black John' preferred action on the jebel, and for major operations his briefing technique was unusual. He would give to the assembled sub-unit commanders a brief inspirational vision of his concept of operations and how they meshed in with his view of the world situation. Then, with a "My staff will now give you the detail", he would turn on his heel and leave his staff to it. On one particular occasion, he eventually arrived at KJ Tac HQ on the Jebel Arum at H hr+6.

When John left SAF in 1986 he retired to Paphos in Cyprus where he kept quite a low profile particularly when ex members of SAF tried to run him to ground. But when they did he was generosity itself and clearly wished he was back in the bar at Arzat allowing "Mess Guests" to take the strain.

Douglas McCully

Major Graeme Smyth-Piggott

Graeme served as a Captain in NFR during the Dhofar war. He was a popular figure with all ranks, always cheerful and a great boost for everyone's morale. There was, however, very much more to this man than being 'a good chap at a party'. Graeme was a brave and efficient soldier, his courage being proved in contacts with the adoo on many a jebel patrol. I recall in particular two operations in which he played a significant part.

The first was the action to take possession of the dominant hill feature between the SAF position at Sarfait and the sea, known as 'Capstan'. At dusk on 23 May 2 'B' Company NFR, commanded by **Major Tresham Gregg**, with Graeme as his second-in-command, and Red Company DR, commanded by **Major Ben Hodgson**, roped themselves down the Sarfait escarpment and, after a long and arduous approach through extremely difficult country, established themselves on the top of Capstan by first light. The enemy reacted swiftly and attacked that morning in strength, inflicting casualties on the two SAF Companies. It was a long and bloody fight. Throughout that operation Graeme encouraged the men with his unfailing cheerfulness and wit. In his radio communication with Sarfait HQ that morning a cool Graeme, true to form, included a rather rude joke! He was a good soldier.

Lt Col Bryan Ray, CO NFR

Ian Gordon writes:

I first met Graeme in July 1972, in the officers' mess at Um al Ghwarif. He had just come back from Mirbat where he had commanded the half company of NFR that assisted G Squadron SAS in the relief of the small garrison at the famous battle that was to become recognised as the military turning point of the war and at which he is alleged to have been given by BATT the nickname by which he was known thereafter by all.

Three months before Mirbat, Graeme had been at the critical battle to establish the positions at Sarfait on the border with Yemen. **Colonel Nigel Knocker**, commanding the operation, was impressed with Smash's cheery optimism as he greeted him in his inimitable style, raising a mug of tea, that Nigel suspected might contain more than tea, he called out a cheery "Good morning Squire, I mean Colonel."

Later, when Smash joined the Firgat, he rapidly formed a cricket team to take on all-comers in Salalah. He had a passionate sense of fair play and could get grouchy with players who cheated too outrageously. He always had a good eye for the ball, and as in golf, he played well. However our success invariably required us to win the toss and bat first with him as an opener. Otherwise, in the hot sun the need to keep refreshed while fielding, the temptations of the cold box by square leg umpire would take their toll and the subsequent batting suffered.

Smash was a man of infinite generosity, unfailing kindness and memorable hospitality. A man who made richer, more memorable and more fun the lives of everyone around him. He was taken too early from us.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR JUND OMAN

For those who send contributions for Jund Oman please email them to: gondoman@omantel.net.om and copy to: Hassan al Mujaini at: haasoman@gmail.com

Lt Col/Wing Commander Andrew Kirk, WKHM, late RAEC, Force Director of Education Services 1973-88

Andrew Kirk, who died on 9th June 2013, joined SAF in 1973, as a Loan Service Lt Col, at a critical point in its expansion, when the educational needs of the three Services outstripped civil Government's ability to provide sufficient recruits who were literate enough to undergo training. Andrew expanded the Arabic teaching capacity all over SAF and especially at the main education centre at Ghala. Those who had Arabic and were destined for more technical roles needed to learn English through similar intensive three month courses at each level. The establishment of the Sultan's Armed Forces Boys School at Ghala enabled bright youngsters to enter intensive education alongside basic military training, leading to a commission in one of the three Services.

In 1975 he was awarded the Sultan's Distinguished Service Medal. Not long after, when SOAF (as it then was) became the single service manager for SAF education, Andrew changed into blue uniform though he never forgot his Army roots.

Andrew had a superlative knowledge of Arabic and at one stage he ran one-to-one lessons for contract officers who had not had the benefit of training at Beaconsfield. Whilst modestly denying he ever spoke the language, for many years he was the final arbiter and quality controller for all official translations from English into Arabic regardless of the nationality of the translator.

His quiet demeanour of one who wouldn't suffer fools gladly masked a gentle and kind nature of one who would help anyone with any kind of problem. His wit as a raconteur at dinner parties was legendary, but it was his gentle manner that gained the respect of all who dealt with him, regardless of nationality. He left SAF in September 1988.

Perhaps not known by many people, he was an accomplished painter and graphic artist, whose work ranged from Arabic calligraphy to wild flowers, people and

most significantly the design of all the regimental cap badges of SAF. Whilst in Oman he took a great interest in Medal Design and was responsible for designing five Omani Medals of which he was entitled to three. His first two, whilst in HQ SAF, were the Sultan's Commendation Medal and the As Sumood Medal, and after transferring to SOAF, he was responsible for the design of the Oman Peace Medal, the original Sultan's Medal for Shooting and the 15th National Day Medal. He also served for many years as a committee member of the Historical Association of Oman. He was a passionate music lover who amassed a fine collection of recordings of classical music.

His wife **Dorothy** died in the 1980s and he is survived by their three children **Philippa, Stuart** and **Chris**.

David Insall

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LIVES REMEMBERED

Major Tim Michels, DR, WFR, SSF

Tim Michels lost his brave fight with lung cancer on 19 February 2013. He was born on 26 October 1938 in Ceylon where his father was a tea planter. Tim attended Malvern College and then went out to Rhodesia, completed basic training and eventually became an NCO in the Rhodesian Staff Corps. He returned to UK in 1960 and after Mons was commissioned into the GLOSTERS. Service in Cyprus and Libya followed and Tim established his credentials as a serious athlete, running for the Army and Combined Services. Later he was seconded to 2nd Battalion the Zambia Regiment where he served for 3 years. Between 1968-1979, Tim served in Germany and several tours in Northern Ireland, but routine soldiering was not his style. In 1979 he arrived in Salalah as the seconded 21C of the Desert Regt under **Muqqadam (later Liwaa) Ali Rashid Mohammed al Kilbani**.



In 1983 Tim became a contract officer and served for 3 years in Thumrait with WFR, followed by 3 years as a squadron commander with SSF. He left Oman in 1990. Thereafter, he did a variety of jobs, working in the South Luangwa National Park, running a Leopard Survey in Wadi Arah (back in Oman) and election monitoring in the Balkans, Hungary and Kazakhstan. Tim was an accomplished fisherman, a fine shot, a brilliant photographer and ran almost every day until his health deteriorated. A regular competitor in the Dhofar Road Race he also ran the London Marathon in his sixties! There was standing room only at St Mary's Alderbury and a fine wake was held afterwards at the family home.

ASSOCIATION TIES

The Association has a range of four blade and one bow tie available for members.

Available from the
Membership Secretary:
Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks,
Mayfield Fold, Burnley
BB11 2RN



They cost £25 for the blade and £14 for the bow including postage. Cheques should be made payable to the 'SAF Association'.

Major Peter J Raven, WB

Richard John writes:

Peter Raven was commissioned into the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1951 and joined SAF on secondment in April 1965 as Commander of C Company the Muscat Regiment, stationed in Nizwa. It would appear from the picture below that at sometime before he came to Oman he had served with 22 SAS as he is wearing their wings.



In May 1965 MR, then commanded by **Lt Col Trevor Alexander**, was tasked to move to Salalah as the rebels had started to cause trouble again. A Coy, under **Richard John** and B Coy under **David Dickins**, plus half of HQ Coy travelled across the desert to Salalah with Peter Raven remaining in Nizwa, until they were flown to Salalah in June for a Cordon and Search operation on the Salalah Plain. The move was carried out by the RAF as SOAF did not have sufficient transport capacity at that time. C Coy's operation was very successful and eleven ringleaders plus some thirty other adoo were taken which had a dampening effect on other cells and groups. It also raised morale among the supporters of the Sultan and showed that SAF was a force to be reckoned with. C Coy returned to Nizwa after this operation.

When the complete regiment returned to Salalah in 1967, Peter operated very capably on the jebel and had many skirmishes with the adoo. His previous experience with guerilla operations had taught him a number of lessons and these were passed on to the other companies.

His main claim to fame in Oman was his suggestion, to put an end to the recurrent problem of SAF being ambushed every time it attempted to ascend the Midway Road from the inland side, of establishing a Company position above the ramp at 'Aqbat al-Hatab' and just outside the Monsoon line. This position gave visibility down the adjacent wadis, and a 75mm pack howitzer positioned there could engage adoo well out of small arms range. The position he established with his Company became known as "Raven's Roost" (now Qayrun Hayriti) and was used throughout the war and even marked as such on maps.

Peter was a hard, tough, experienced infantryman who inspired confidence in his troops and was awarded the Sultan's Bravery Medal (WB) in 1968. He left SAF in late 1968, retiring from the British Army and taking up pig farming.

Lt Col Len Mallett, SAF 1969 – 1978

Len Mallett joined SAF as the Force Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (FEME) in 1969 and retired in 1978 as the Director EME Services. His service in the British Army began in 1934 when he joined the Royal Artillery, as a Boy Soldier, and was trained as a 'Tiffy RA', the forerunners of the REME Craftsmen of today. He remained a Gunner until transferring first to the RAOC and then to the newly-formed REME in 1942. He was casevaced over the beach from Dunkirk after being badly wounded by shrapnel from a shell blast that killed the man to whom he was talking. After returning to his unit he then served in Algeria (OP Torch) and Italy. Postwar he served for some years in Hong Kong and in Cyprus during the Eoka period. During this time Len was involved in the formation of unit LADs and Workshops and in training their soldiers in all aspects of the maintenance and repair of guns, small arms and vehicles of all makes. He was commissioned and retired in 1968 as a Major.

As a result of answering an advertisement on an officers' mess notice board Len was accepted for service in Oman as the Force EME and joined in October 1969. At the time the only workshop was very primitive and largely in the open air at Bait al Falaj, with a staff of Britons, Pakistanis, Baluchis, Indians and Omanis, the latter with only a little on-the-job training. Len set up formal training for Omani recruits from SAFTR and also formed LADs for the Oman Artillery, and when the first Saladin Armoured Cars arrived in 1970, he formed the first Armoured Workshop at Midway (later Thumrait). It was soon after this time that he selected a number of Omani recruits who were under training to go to the UK for both advanced technical and then officer training. The expansion of SAF and the increased scale of EME services was such that a major workshop, with its associated ordnance depot became necessary both in Dhofar as well as at Muaskar al Murtafa'a. This expansion was made easier by the output of technically trained Omani officers and craftsmen. In 2003 he was invited to Oman by the then DEME Aqeed **Muhannah bin Saif al Nabhani**. A report of his extensive visit is on pp25/26 of the 2003 SAF Journal.



Four DEMEs: Abdullah bin Jumail al Quraini, Majid bin Hilal al Mailly, Len Mallett, Muhannah bin Saif al Nabhani.

In recognition of all that Len did to provide such a high degree of technical support and training he was awarded HM the Sultan's Commendation medal in 1975 and on his retirement from SAF in 1978 he was awarded the WKhM. Len died on 21st November 2013.

FAREWELL TO 'Z' CONTRACTS

'Z'OOMING INTO HISTORY

by Ian Buttenshaw

'Z' Contracts finally ended, not by the last officer leaving, but by being computerised! ZSCOs and XSCOs became "D6s" and YSCOs "D1s", in mid 2013.

However, the writer, who was the last uniformed 'Z/D6' in RAO, effectively ended Uniformed 'Z' Contract Officers, by being given the privilege of becoming an Omani Citizen in October 2013 and becoming a 'D1'. This ended an era of Army Contract Officers who have loyally served the Sultanate since the 1950s.

With the disappearance of the Uniformed 'Z' Contract Officer, it is worth looking back into the history of Contract Officers.

From the formation of Oman's first Uniformed Force in April 1921, Officers for the Muscat Levy Corps (MLC) later Muscat Infantry (MI), came from the British Indian Army on secondment. This continued until Indian Independence in 1947, and then the OCs of the Muscat Infantry, still former British Indian Army Officers were employed, but paid directly by the Sultanate to whom they were contracted.

This system continued, and with the expansion of the Army following the Buraimi Crisis, by the creation of the Batinah Force (BF) under **Major Colin Maxwell** with **Capt St John Armitage** as his 2IC, the first true contract officers appeared. This was followed by the creation of Muscat and Oman Field Force (MOFF) initially under **Lt Col Percy Coriat** (later **Lt Col 'Zola' Cheesman**), and yet more contract officers appeared. By this time (1953) **Lt Col Pat Waterfield** had arrived to command the MI.

These three Forces worked independently, so in April 1955, to try and get some administrative control over the Force, the Muscat Armed Forces (MAF) were formed, with an Administrative Commandant (later COS) at BAF. This was Lt Col (later Col) Pat Waterfield who also remained CO MI until 1957, when it became Muscat Regiment (MR).

It was at this stage, because of differing pay scales that the X,Y,Z Contracts were created.

X: For members from the Indian sub-continent

Y: Local Officers

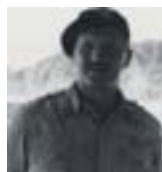
Z: British Officers

Although by this stage, Colin Maxwell was the longest serving contract officer, he was only a Major, whereas the COs of MI and MOFF were Lt Cols thus the initial membering was as follows:

ZSCO-0001

Lt Col (later Brig) PRM (Pat) Waterfield

Originally CO MI, then COS MAF and from April 1958, Military Secretary (retired 1 Feb 70)



ZSCO-0002

Lt Col WA (Zola) Cheesman

CO MOFF from Nov 1954, departed August 1957 on the disbandment of the Oman Regiment



ZSCO-0003

Maj (later Amed) CC Colin Maxwell

Originally OC BF, later CO NFR and from April 1958 to April 1977, DCSAF, then Advisor to DPM for Def & Sec until 18 Aug 1988



ZSCO-0004

Maj (later Lt Col) FW (Frank) Haugh

Originally 2IC MOFF, 1954 until 1956, then 2IC MR becoming CO in Mar 1957, leaving in Mar 1958



ZSCO-0005

Major EDM (Mike) O'Kelly

Originally Coy Comd in MOFF from 1954, left September 1957



ZSCO-0006

Capt (later Maj) DC Pope

Took over as 2IC BF in late 1954, remained as 2IC NFR, left 17 Jan 1958

ZSCO-0007

Capt (later Maj) DGH "The Drum" Anderson

Originally a Capt in MOFF from mid 1954. Moved to MR as Coy Comd in 1957 and later to Gar Comd BAF until leaving SAF on 20 Dec 1972



ZSCO-0008

Capt (later Amed) MG (Malcon Dennison)

Originally the Force Recruiting (Int) Officer from 1956, set up the SAF Intelligence organisation. Left SAF in Mar 1971 to form the new Oman Research Dept, eventually became Advisor to HM on Security Matters. Left Oman in 1983



(Note: Although **Major St John Armitage** had been in Oman since Jan 1953 and remained until 1959, he was never given a 'ZSCO' Number as he transferred to the Dhofar Force in Jan 1955, which were not part of MAF/SAF). Contract Officers have continued to serve since that time, and on the formation of SAF in April 1958 were joined by a seconded CSAF and an initial 23 other seconded officers. The combination of seconded officers (now Loan Service) and the longer serving 'Z' Contract Officers worked well, particularly during the Dhofar conflict, and later in building up and helping to Omanise the Force, to the position we are in today with a very efficient and almost totally Omanised Army. "Abu Jaysh" Colin Maxwell who served in SAF from October 1952 until April 1977 (25 years) and then a further 10 as Advisor to HH the Dep PM for Def and Security, giving him a total of 35 years service, was the longest serving ZSCO, but was closely followed by **Muqaddam Mikey Wilson**, who arrived in NFR in February 1976 and finally left on becoming an Omani Citizen in 2010, giving him 34 years actually in SAF (The writer will be a close 3rd [1983-2015] with 32 years, when I eventually retire in May 2015). ■

40 YEARS AGO

by Ian Buttenshaw

This Article continues the series from previous journal and looks at the period post monsoon 1973 until January 1975 as it affects the Dhofar War, when SAF were really succeeding in getting the better of the Adoo, It also covers some events in the north that overlap back to the previous

1973 Dec 4	Construction of permanent Hornbeam Line begins.
1973 Dec 19-29	Salalah Midway road is re-opened permanently by Government Forces, the bulk of whom are provided by an Imperial Iranian Battlegroup moving simultaneously from Salalah and Thumrait.
1974 Jun 29	The Hornbeam Line is completed
1974 July	At a PFLOAG Congress, they change name to Peoples Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO).
1974 Oct	Hammer positions established between Hornbeam Line and the Midway Road to further impede enemy movement.
1974 Oct 29	A Landrover with 5 PFLO members is fired on by a SAF (OA) piquet in the Rustaq Area. One enemy is killed and the others captured. This was to prove the final PFLO incident in Northern Oman.
1974 Nov	Imperial Iranian Task Force increased from Battalion to Brigade strength and deployed to Manston (Aydin).
1974 Dec 2	Operation Nadir begins, with SAF diversions prior to Iranian attack on Shirishitti Caves Complex. Iranians suffer heavy casualties and objective changed to capture of Rakhuyt.
1975 Jan 4/5	Operation Dharab is launched by SAF towards the Shirishitti Caves to relieve pressure on Iranian advance to Rakhuyt but the forces suffer severe losses and plans to capture the caves are abandoned.
1975 Jan 6	Iranians succeed in capturing Rakhuyt and commence establishing the Damavand Line.

OPENING OF THE MIDWAY ROAD

As soon as the Imperial Iranian Task Force (IITF) was placed under CSAF's Command he launched them on a night assault, on 19 December 1973, known as Operation Thimble, to open the Midway Road for the first time since 1970. The operation on the Front's 'Red Line' was almost unopposed and the Iranians established a series of mutually supporting positions known as Jasmynes. By the afternoon of 20 December the road was ready for use. SAF now had land communication with the north.

Concurrent with this was Operation Bisura, which involved the movement of 3 Saladin Armoured Cars from the Armoured Car Squadron (ACS) and a Patrol from MR, moving from Jibjat to Ravens Roost to open the track for the first time since 1968. They met with some opposition near Ravens Roost which was successfully dealt with. ACS then carried out Op Bisura-2 on 25 December by leading a convoy of MR Recce Platoon, some Firqat and some stores vehicles from Midway to Salalah.

With the opening of the Midway Road and the construction of the Hornbeam Line underway, the campaign shifted to wearing the enemy down in the east and building up civilian development in safe areas.



Above and above right:
Ravens Roost
Right: A Wessex helicopter
landing at Ravens Roost



Left: CO MR briefing His Majesty
and the Iranian Commanders about
the deployment
Below A convoy travelling the
Midway Road



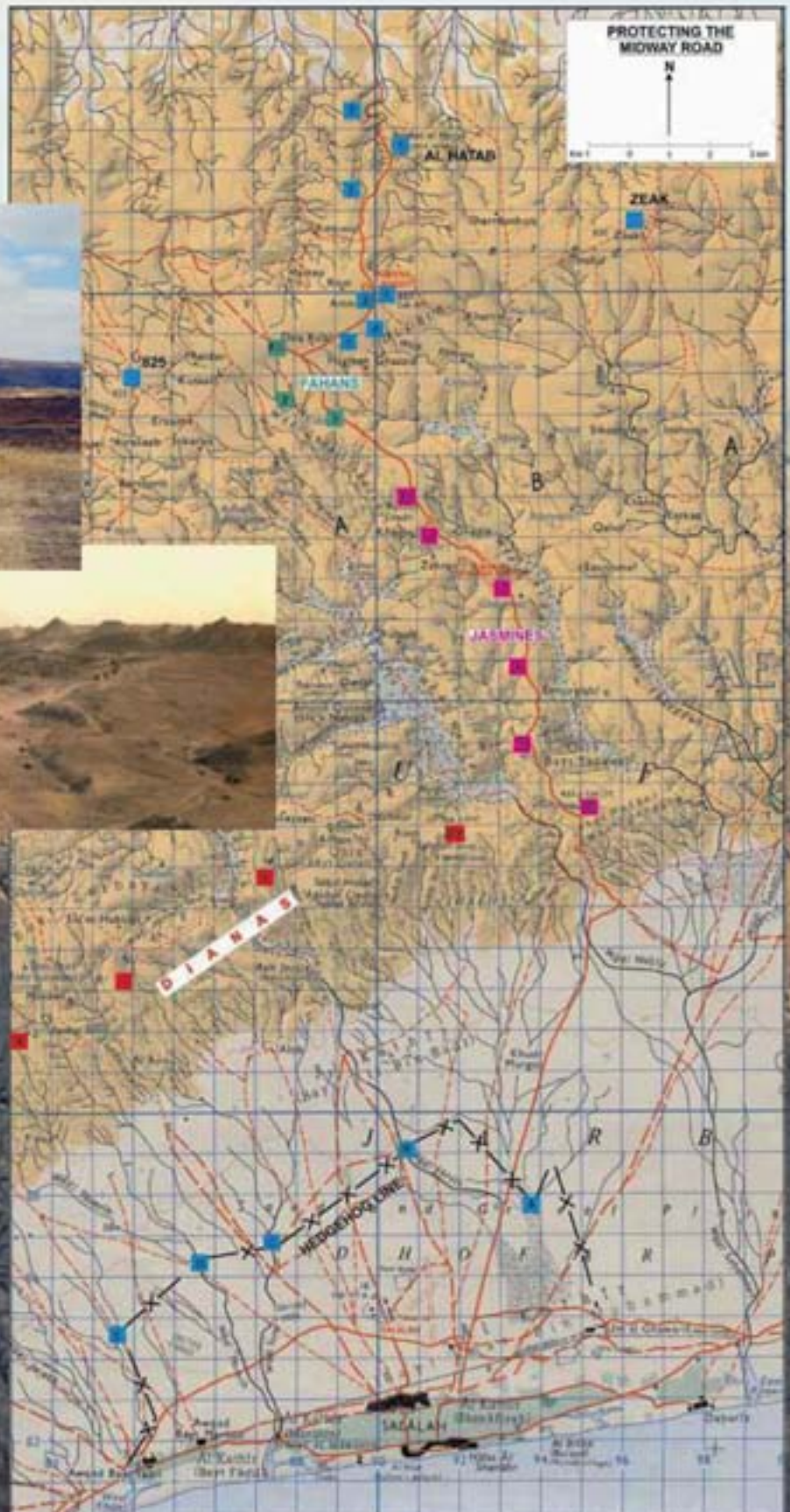
Background picture: The Midway Road to the Salah plain

Below: The Midway Road at Pink Cliffs

Below right: The move down the Midway Road once it was open



Below : Having secured the road, the Iranians extended the Jasmine locations and created some more, nicknamed 'Fahans'

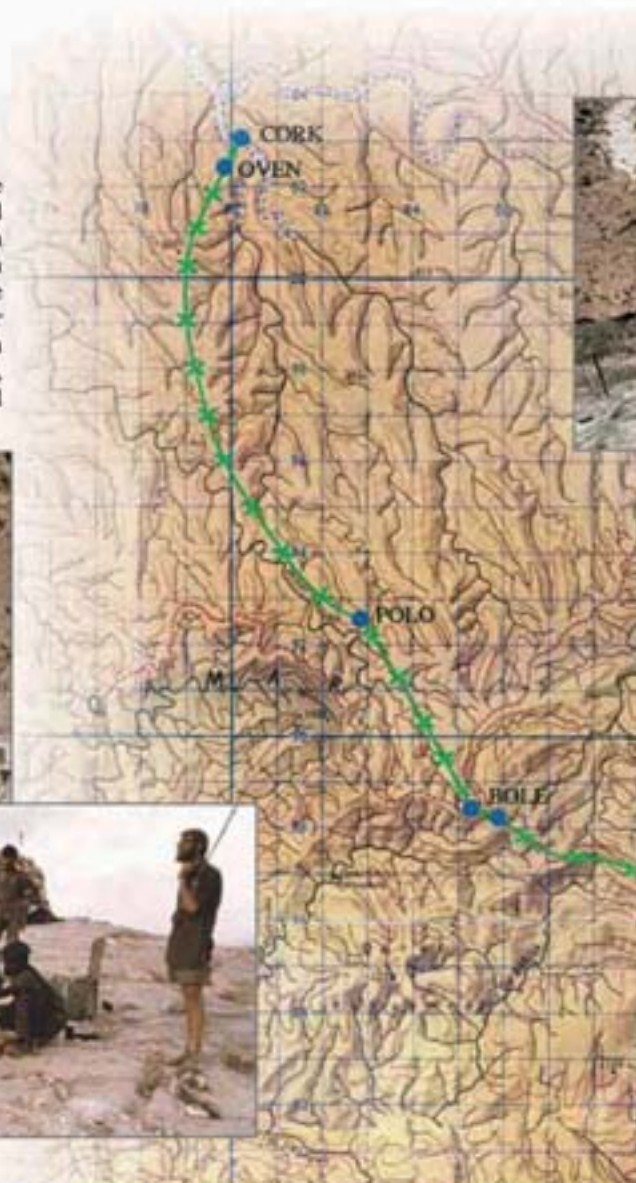


THE HORNBEAM LINE

Enemy attempts to harass the Hornbeam positions and penetrate the line were increasing as the year progressed. CSAF therefore decided a more permanent physical barrier was required, so that the enemy in the east could be cut off from re-supply and dealt with in isolation from other operations. Thus, in December 1973, for 6 months a remarkable feat in Combat Engineering was carried out by SAF Assault Pioneer Platoons, Royal Engineers from England, and Royal Jordanian Engineers. To complete the obstacle, over 15,000 coils of barbed wire, 12,000 pickets, 12,000 rolls of wire and nearly 4,000 anti-personnel mines were used.



Top: A helicopter dropping stores for the construction of the Hornbeam Line
Above: Building the Hornbeam Line
Above right: 60mm mortar firing from Hornbeam position
Right: Omani Assault Pioneers on the Hornbeam Line





Constructing the Hornbeam Line



A helicopter on loan from the UK, delivering construction equipment



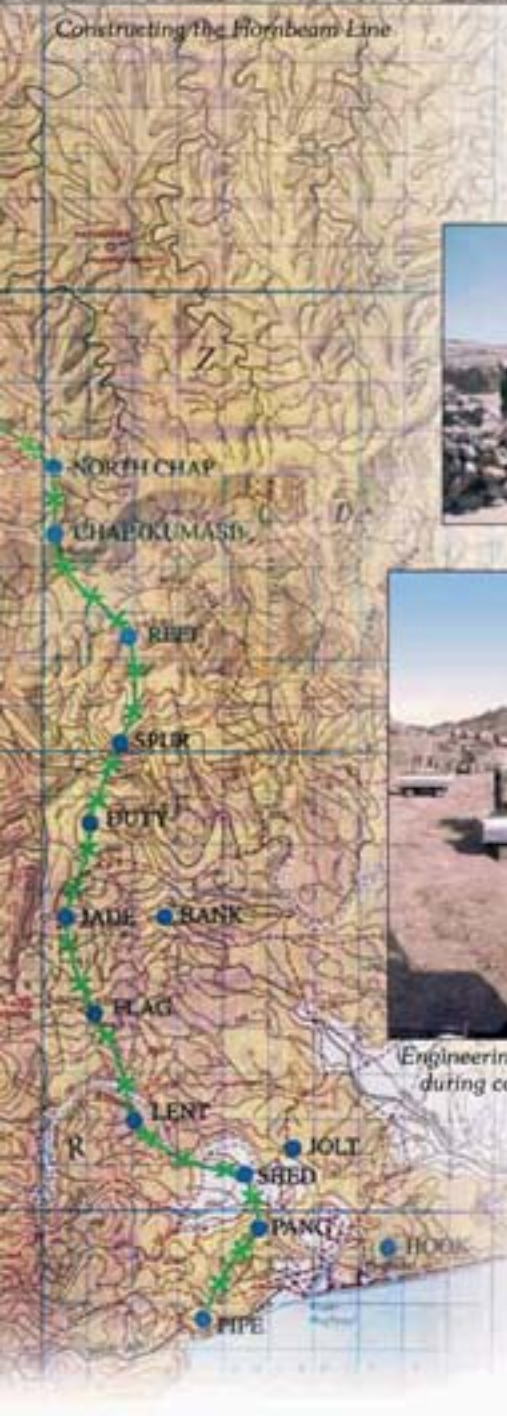
Mortars firing in support of construction operations



The Hornbeam Line



Engineering plant moves in convoy during construction of the Line



The Situation at the End of 1973

DR and JR returned north. FF handed over the Hornbeam Line to NFR and moved to Sarfait. MR took over in the central and eastern Jebel. The newly formed KJ manned the Hedgehog and Diana positions, provided small garrisons at Taqa, Mirbat and Sudh and later assumed responsibilities for all the eastern Jebel.

STEPPING UP THE PRESSURE, 1974

The first six months of 1974 saw the successful consolidation of control over the Eastern Sector and much of the Central Sector. In large part this was due to an increasing stranglehold on enemy lines of supply achieved by the wiring and mining of the Hornbeam Line. At the same time, aggressive mobile operations were carried out routinely on either side of the Midway Road which, since its opening in December 1973, carried the daily convoys between Salalah and Midway. The enemy mounted a few attacks against positions along the road using heavy weapons but had to abandon the attempts for the lack of ammunition, and increased SAF permanent positions and patrolling put an end to the laying of anti-tank mines on the road. The increasing pace of the mobile operations produced more than 100 enemy confirmed or reported killed, and another 70 wounded.

Map of Operation Mashoor

This was a Battalion operation by MR with BATT/FQ support. It was designed to search the head of the Wadi Dut. On 2 April there were two contacts with small parties of enemy; 1 enemy was killed and 1 Firqat wounded, who later died.

The operation continued until 5 April. 80 sacks of food, medical supplies, arms, ammunition and mines were found.



MR patrols reach Ayn Arzat after a successful operation



HM visits MR at Ayn Arzat

A Coy positions at the start of Op Mashoor, April 1974



Formation of Sultan's Forces Engineers (SFE)

In accordance with the new CSAF's expansion plan, the Sultan's Forces Engineers (SFE) came into being on 22 March 1974, when two British Officers, two British NCOs and 5 Omani NCOs, who had completed an engineer course in Jordan during 1973, received 33 soldiers direct from SAFTR and commenced Engineer Training at Bait Al Falaj. The first troop finished its training in October and moved immediately to Dhofar under command of a British Royal Engineer Squadron stationed there. A second troop started training, and additional to this SFE ran Assault Pioneer Courses for the Infantry Battalions. SFE took a full part in all operations once they deployed to Dhofar and worked alongside British and Jordanian Engineers in maintenance of the Hornbeam Line, mine clearance prior to operations, road construction and other general engineering tasks. The Squadron was finally complete by the end of 1975.

SFE D8

Operator grading a road shortly after the first SFE troops deployment



ACS carrying infantry on the jebel



Armoured Car Squadron

The Armoured Car Squadron (ACS), following on its successful drive from Jibjat to Ravens Roost and thence into Salalah, played important roles in supporting MR in the east, providing a troop and garrison commander for Makinat Shihan, and patrolling on the Salalah Plain. The addition of 18 new Saladins brought the total armoured car strength to 38.



Left: A combined SAF/Firqat/ BATT Patrol
Below: Firqat on patrol in the jebel



Jordanian Assistance

King Hussain had been supportive of Sultan Qaboos from the beginning and visited Oman shortly after Operation Simba in 1972. Jordan sent 25 pounder guns as a gift to the Artillery as well as training Omani junior NCOs at their School of Infantry. Additionally a Squadron of Royal Jordanian Engineers (RJE) operated in Dhofar between 4 April 1974 and 1 May 1977, carrying out general combat engineering tasks, as well as helping out with Civil Development, working in conjunction with initially the British Royal Engineers and latterly the Sultan's Forces Engineers(SFE).

Saladin Armoured Car on patrol in support of infantry operations on the plain



Monsoon - 1974

SAF, now bolstered by Iranian and Jordanian Assistance, and the continued assistance from British Army elements in the form of BATT, Royal Engineers, Cracker Battery Royal Artillery and a Field Surgical Team, were in the strongest position ever as the 1974 monsoon began.

During the monsoon, all jebel positions were maintained, including Tawi Attair. FF were in the east, with KJ at Sarfait. NFR continued to man the Hornbeam Line; in a contact early in June, five enemy trying to cross on foot were killed. MR held the Dianas and Hedgehogs, but concentrated, with Firqat, armoured cars and artillery groups, on harassing the PLA on the central jebel during July and August.

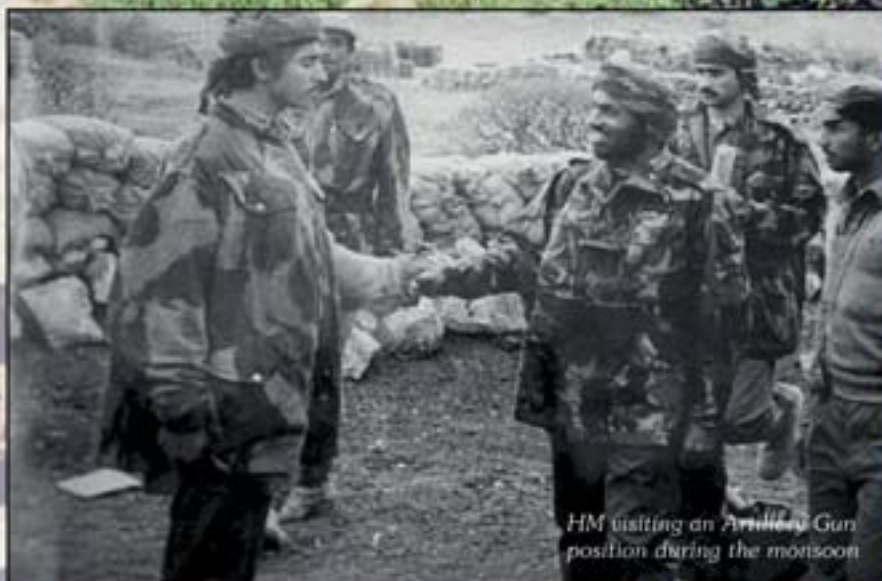
The Enemy

The Front, seriously weakened by defections, held another congress in August. PFLOAG was renamed PFLO, dropping the idea of spreading their revolution throughout the Gulf Region. It reaffirmed its emphasis on the armed struggle but also pushed for its northern Oman membership to foment revolution in the north to relieve pressure on Dhofar. It also gave regional leaders more autonomy.

C Coy MR at a Diana position



Constructing a Diana 4 Sangar

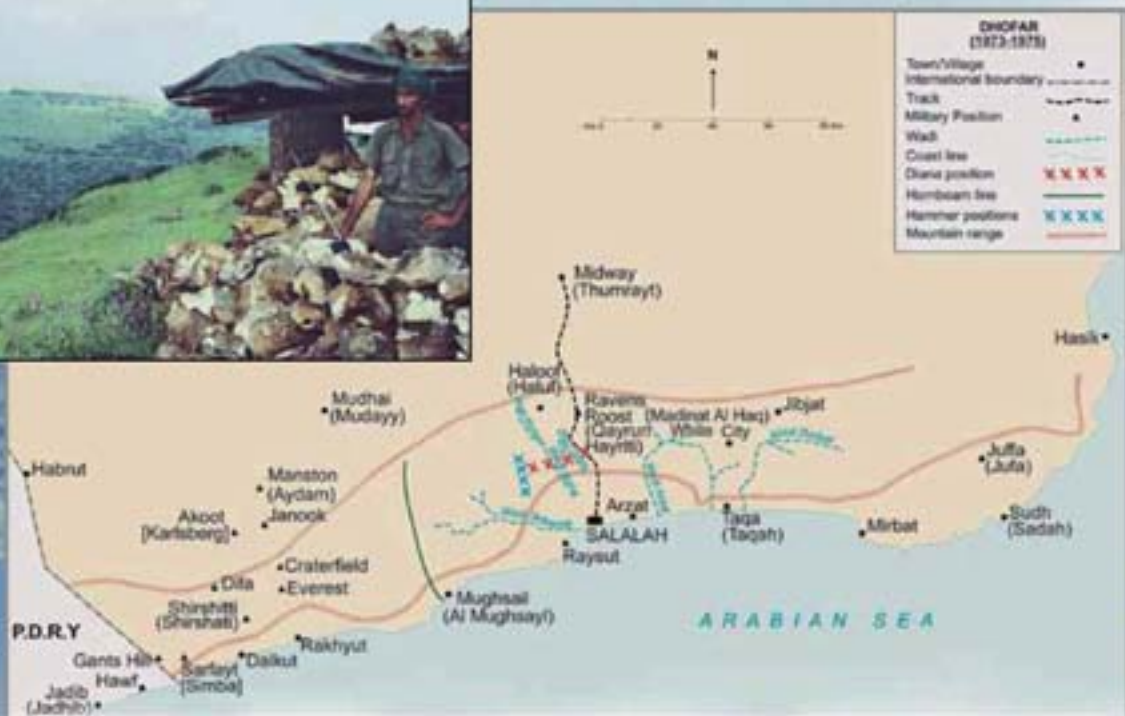


HM visiting an Armilla Gun position during the monsoon

Tawi Attair BA position, 1974



The view from Diana 4



OG continued to maintain the border positions at Habrut and Makinat Shihan and their fire power was enhanced by the arrival of the 106mm RCL.



Mul /I Said bin Nassir Al Salmi and another OG Officer outside Habrut Ops Room



SAF DEPLOYMENT IN DHOFAR (June 1974)

Location	Disposition of Forces
BORDER POSITIONS	
Makinat Shihan	One troop of infantry, one troop of armoured cars, local finqah to give warning of enemy attack, one troop of Iranian anti-aircraft guns.
Habrut	Three platoons of infantry, section of 81mm mortars, one 75mm gun, one troop of Iranian anti-aircraft guns.
Sarfait	One weak infantry battalion, one troop of 25 pounder guns, four 4.2-inch mortars, one troop of Iranian anti-aircraft guns.
HORNBEAM LINE	
	One infantry battalion, one artillery battery, two finqahs. Battalion maintained patrol bases overlooking foot and camel paths and water points.
CENTRAL AREA	
Midway Road	Opened by Iranian Battle Group on 19 December 1973 after four years' closure, enabling road convoys to travel freely with plans to tarmac the road after the monsoon.
Diana Positions	Four positions located on the Jebel north of Salalah airfield to prevent enemy rocket and mortar attacks.
EASTERN AREA	
Madinat al-Haq (White City)	Finqah and section of artillery, deployed in support of civil action team.
Jibai	One troop of armoured cars and finqah, finqah and section of artillery deployed in support of civil action team.
Tawi Attair	One infantry company, one troop of artillery and finqah, finqah and section of artillery deployed in support of civil action team.
Taqa	Small military garrison
Mirbat	Small military garrison
Mobile operations	Conducted by two battalions or less of infantry supported by armoured cars and artillery

Operations after the Monsoon - 1974

A new Commander Dhofar Brigade arrived in August 1974 and quickly defined the Brigade's Mission and that of the War as "to secure Dhofar for civil development".

As the monsoon ended in September, the roulement took place; JR replaced MR on the plains, DR replaced NFR on the jebel and a composite force from OG and the Royal Guard Regiment replaced the Iranians on the Midway Road. A number of operations were mounted to establish Firqahs in their tribal areas in the eastern and central sectors.

At the same time, routine patrols on the Jebel Khaftawt area were transferred into the 'Hammer Line', a series of Patrol Bases maintained to counter enemy groups between the Hornbeam Line and Midway Road.

The new Brigade Commander also sought to eradicate the defensive attitude at Sarfait by ordering KJ to do more patrolling out. His instructions from CSAF were to:

- hold Sarfait
- deny access through the Hornbeam Line
- hold the Midway Road for the construction of a black top road
- secure the east to free troops for major operations in the west

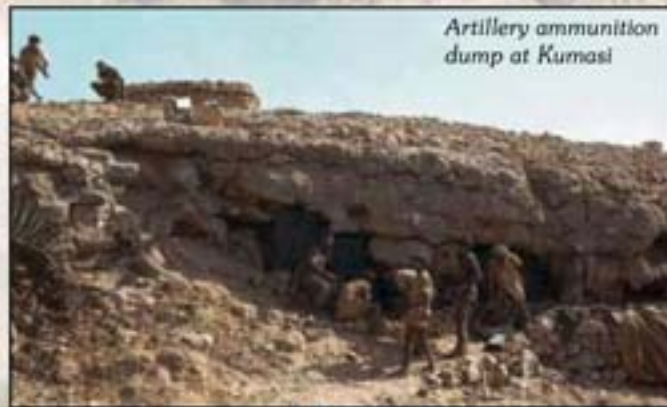
BATT on the Hammer Line



*Above, main picture:
A Hammer Line position*



*Artillery ammunition
dump at Kumasi*



*Above and below: Jundeas on
stand to in their sangars*

*Right: Erecting
fencing at Kumasi*



Operation Imsik

This commenced in the Central Sector on 20 December, mounted by 2 and 3 Companies of JR, with DR, Firgat, air, artillery, engineer and armoured car support. The aim was to secure Kushayt as a base for future operations southward to the base of the Wadi Risham and allow Firgat to penetrate deeper into an enemy area. The objective was achieved the following day.



OG 106mm RCL
Team preparing
ammunition

Operations at the End of the Year - 1974

The enemy were particularly unaggressive in the later stages of the year, although the build-up of troops in PDRY and the assistance they were providing to the rebels was particularly worrying to SAF.

Pressure was maintained in the east with various clearing operations being made. All these operations were accompanied by civil developments in the form of roads, wells etc.

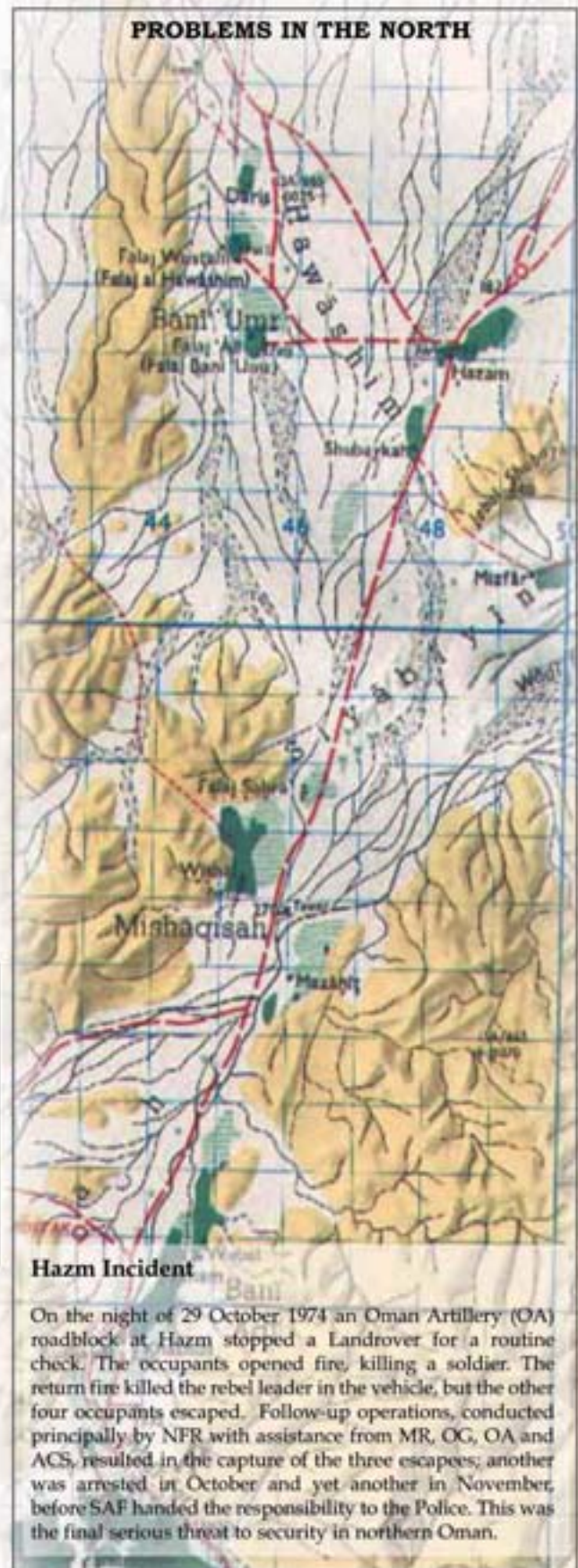


Left and below: Kumasi gun positions



Kumasi on the
Hornbeam Line

The view
over Kumasi



Hazm Incident

On the night of 29 October 1974 an Oman Artillery (OA) roadblock at Hazm stopped a Landrover for a routine check. The occupants opened fire, killing a soldier. The return fire killed the rebel leader in the vehicle, but the other four occupants escaped. Follow-up operations, conducted principally by NFR with assistance from MR, OG, OA and ACS, resulted in the capture of the three escapees; another was arrested in October and yet another in November, before SAF handed the responsibility to the Police. This was the final serious threat to security in northern Oman.

THE SHIRISHITTI OFFENSIVE

DECEMBER 1974 - JANUARY 1975

The most secure enemy stronghold in Dhofar was the Shirishitti Caves complex north-west of Rakhyut and capturing the caves would strike a major blow to the rebels. By the end of 1974, SAF felt confident enough to mount an ambitious operation to attack the caves and deal a severe blow to the enemy.

Operation Nadir

The opening operation was launched on 2 December 1974 by two Iranian Battalions, each with an attached Firqat and SAF Officers, and originally had the twin aims of simultaneously capturing both the Shirishitti Caves Complex and the coastal town of Rakhyut.

As a result of SAF diversionary operations around Sarfait, the initial advance from Manston, where the Imperial Iranian Task Force (IITF) was based, to the treeline, led by two troops of ACS, met no resistance. From there on progress was slower and on 5 December the Force was attacked near point 880 and took a lot of casualties and the advance on Shirishitti stopped. The other advance continued and Everest was occupied unopposed on 12 December.

By 18 December when CSAF visited, he found that the opposition to the Iranians was increasing and accordingly decided to abandon the Shirishitti objective and put

all efforts into capturing Rakhyut and establishing a line from Araqi through Everest to Rakhyut, thus further stifling rebel east-west movement. As a result of this change of plan, Operation Dharab was conceived to capture the Shirishitti Caves Complex.

The enemy fought hard as the Iranians advanced and numerous casualties were taken. Eventually Rakhyut was taken on 6 January 1975 and the Iranian Commander was given orders to consolidate on the Damavand Line (Craterfield-Araqi-Everest-Rakhyut) to prevent enemy movement west-east.





Sultan's Gallantry Medal - Posthumous

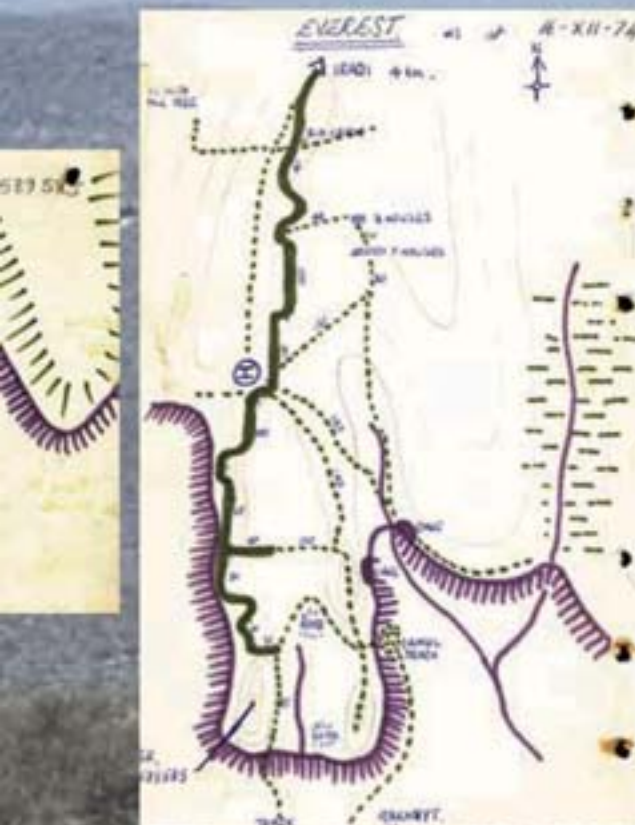
Major JB Braddell Smith, WB, (NFR). Commanding Firqat Tariq bin Zaid operating with the Imperial Iranian Army Task Force in Dhofar on 5th, 6th and 25th December 1974.

During Operation Nadir, on 5th December 1974, an operation was mounted by the Iranian 129 Battalion to establish a position two kilometres to the south of their main forward base, which was then on the edge of the tree line. Major Braddell Smith personally led the advance through the trees at the front of one of the two columns of Iranian troops, with complete disregard for his own personal safety. On reaching the objective, it was discovered that the main body had become separated from the leading troops. Major Braddell Smith immediately returned along the route taken and successfully made contact with the missing troops. Later the same day the enemy attacked the position with small arms fire and RPG 7 (Soviet-made grenade launcher) rockets, killing ten Iranian soldiers and wounding one other. As soon as sufficient fire was being returned, Major Braddell Smith moved forward to check the position. He personally went forward of the company perimeter and recovered the bodies of three Iranian soldiers, who were thought to have been captured by the enemy. Throughout the operation he continued to assist the Iranian Company Commander, and he organised the evacuation of the casualties. His personal example and tireless vigilance enabled the company to withdraw the following day without further losses, despite further enemy attacks.

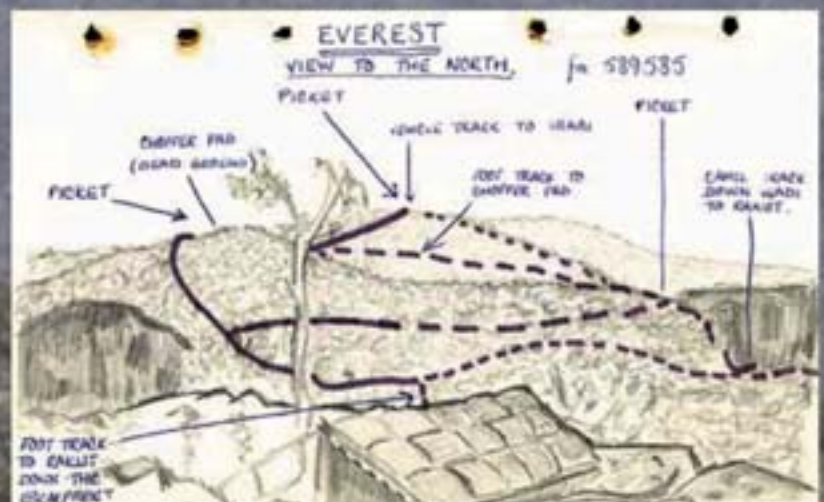
On 6th December at 1800 hours, 129 Battalion sustained several casualties on their forward position, at Hoqub al Jadit, from an enemy attack. At that time it was not possible to evacuate the dead and wounded by an Iranian helicopter. Major Braddell Smith volunteered to take a jeep forward from the main position to Hoqub al Jadit, a distance of three kilometres, along an undefended route with darkness falling rapidly. This courageous action enabled the casualties to be evacuated by a Sultan of Oman's Air Force helicopter as soon as he reached Hoqub al Jadit.

On 25th December, Major Braddell Smith accompanied an Iranian patrol forward from the Everest position, with the intention of seizing the high ground to the north of Rakhyut. One kilometre to the south of Everest the leading troops of the patrol were attacked by an enemy group in the thick trees. The Wakeel of the Firqat Tariq bin Zaid was killed in the opening burst of fire. A Firqat soldier picked up the dead body and attempted to carry him to the rear. Seeing that the Firqa was having great difficulty in carrying the body, Major Braddell Smith handed his weapon to another Firqa and picked up the dead man. Shortly afterwards Major Braddell Smith was heard to cry out, and fell to the ground mortally wounded. The enemy fire was so intense that it was not possible to recover the bodies of Major Braddell Smith or the Wakeel.

Major Braddell Smith gave his life attempting to recover the body of one of his comrades whilst under intense fire from a determined and ruthless enemy. This action typifies the magnificent courage and complete disregard for personal safety shown by Major Braddell Smith during this and earlier actions against the enemy. His gallantry and devotion to duty are beyond praise.



Below, left and far left: Field sketches of Everest
Background picture: The Shirishitti Scarp



Operation Dharab

To take the pressure off the Iranians consolidating in the Damavand Line, JR was relieved of its central area positions and concentrated at Manston (Aydin). It was joined by Red Company DR, armoured cars, artillery, BATT and firqat.

The plan was to move the infantry by helicopters to Defa, the artillery having already positioned themselves at 'Gun Lines' and Defa secured by ACS, then move eastwards on foot past the Zakhir tree into the treeline to a high point marked 980 on the map. From there picquet positions would be established above the caves, and once they dominated the high ground a company would be moved into the cave complex.

The operation started on 3 January was not a success. A slow start, followed by contacts with the rebels between Zakhir tree and Point 980 caused further delays. Eventually the JR Group stopped around Point 980 within mortar range of the caves and were attacked by the enemy during the night.

Surprise was lost, and a deliberate advance on the caves was planned, but unfortunately the firqat guides led them by a wrong route and straight into the enemy. Several casualties were taken and eventually the force withdrew to Point 980.

The objective of securing and searching the caves was considered no longer viable, so a road was driven to a feature called 'Stonehenge' that overlooked the caves and the main rebel supply route, known as 'the Freedom Trail'. From Stonehenge, Armoured Cars, 106 mm RCLs and .50 MGs could fire on the caves. JR continued to operate in the area, having several contacts, until 20 January when they were withdrawn to the central area.

While this was a setback for SAF, who didn't achieve their mission and suffered several casualties, the PLA suffered more and this operation led them to stop using the caves as their major stores complex.

See Distribution

OPERATION DHARAB

1. I am very proud of DHARAB and congratulate Group. Despite an early successful and accounts more wounded. One of the ammunition was recovered the Province was hit by

2. The mounting, air gr enance of the operation w committed to the operation throughout the rest of the impressive example of coop and the Staff. Well done!



Above: Saladins near the Zakhir Tree during Op Dharab

Right: The Zakhir Tree

Below: Field sketch of Hilal done during the IITF advance on Op Nadir



ACS prepare to move from Janook to Defa, via 'Gun Lines', at the start of Op Dharab

Below: BATT and Firqat elements start the advance through the tree line towards the caves



SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY
BY BRIGADIER J B ARKHURST
COMMANDER DHOFAR BRIGADE

10

21 January 1975

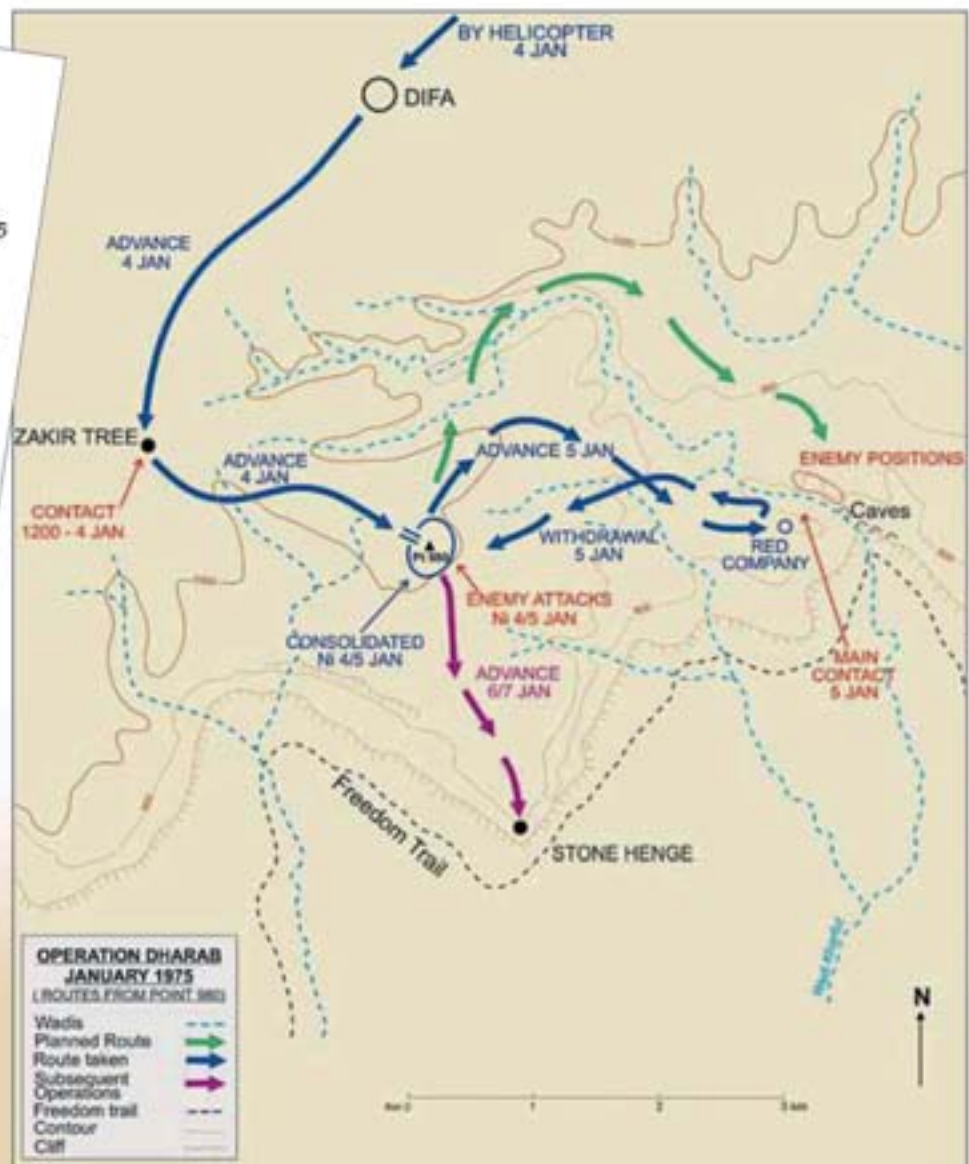
of the brigade's achievements on Operation
 you all, especially The Jebel Regiment
 setback the operation was highly
 for at least ten enemy killed and
 the biggest hauls ever of arms and
 and the enemy's main supply base in
 direct fire.

ound and sea support, and the mainte-
 ers second to none. Those not directly
 successfully maintained security
 Province. The whole operation was an
 operation between all Arms and Services

J B Arkhurst

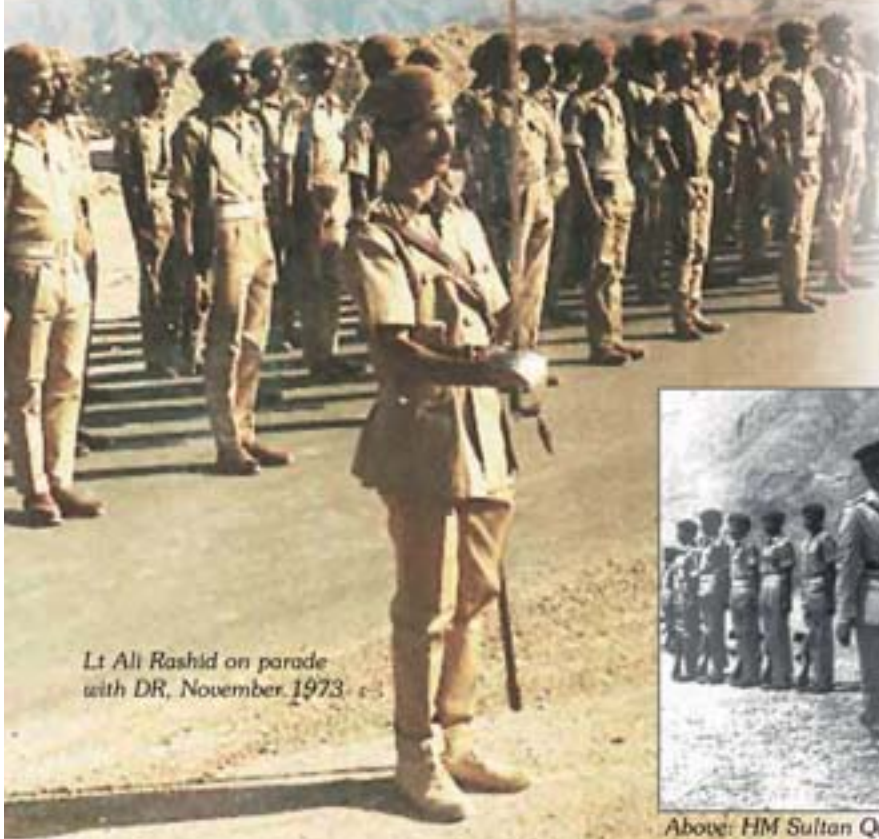
J B ARKHURST
 Brigadier
 Commander
 DHOFAR Brigade

Below : A Saladin moving into
 cover at Defa prior to the start
 of Op Dharab



NORMALITY IN THE NORTH

Whilst the war was being waged in the south, Northern Oman, apart from Operation Jason in 1972 and the Hazm incident in 1974, had an air of normality about it. Units were retraining for the next deployment, patrolling the country to show the flag and carrying out ceremonial duties.



Lt Ali Rashid on parade with DR, November 1973



Above: HM Sultan Qaboos inspecting troops during a visit to OA in 1972

Opening of the new SAF Officers' Mess at Bait Al Falaj, 1972

*Right: HM arriving to open the new mess
Below: HM being escorted to the mess by CSAF*



Top: Oman Artillery drive past HM on the 1972 National Day Parade at Bait Al Falaj Airstrip



The new SAF Officers Mess

SAF Colours Parade, November 1974

The first ever colours parade occurred on 16 November 1974 at SAFTR, Ghallah, when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos presented colours to the three senior units; MR, NFR and OG.



OG detachment give the Royal Salute to HM

Right: OG Ensign receives the colour from HM. NFR and MR Ensigns are to the right, having already received their colours



NFR Ensign to the colour receiving the new colour from His Majesty



The Parade marches off past HM, led by MR, followed by NFR and OG

OG Colour Party displaying their new colour at their camp at Seeb. It bears the battle honour 'Dhofar'



Formation of Headquarters Northern Oman

The build-up for the Dhofar War had an impact on the size and complexity of forces at Bait al Falaj and in the north as well. By 1971, SAF forces in the north included five major Army units, including two infantry battalions, OG, the Training Regiment, and the Muscat Garrison, as well as various logistic units and Air Force and Navy components. It became increasingly clear that HQ SAF was not able to control the forces of the entire country, deal with operations in the north and exercise day-to-day control of northern units all at the same time. As a result, HQ Northern Oman was established on 1 May 1973, and eventually became HQ Northern Oman Brigade on 21 September 1976, taking command of the bulk of northern-based units.

MORE ACTIVITY IN THE NORTH

The Formation of Northern Oman Border Scouts (NOBS)

In January 1974, His Majesty directed a study be made into a proposed Askar Force. The task of the force was that it was to be established in Northern Oman to patrol and maintain surveillance over the land and sea borders of the Sultanate to deter and prevent illegal immigration, gun running, smuggling and effectively relieve OG from manning some of the smaller border posts.

The study was undertaken in February 1974. It was accepted that the force would be under the administrative control of OG, who would also do the initial training. It would recruit from ex-soldiers in the areas that each troop would operate. The force was to be formed on 1 July 1974 and would be carried out in two phases.

Phase One: The HQ and Troops at Qabil (Western Sector), Khatmat Milahah (Northern Sector), Suwaiq (Central Sector) and Balad Bani bu Ali (Southern Sector)

Phase Two: Troops at Sumaini, Aswad, in the Ibri area, and another in the Southern Sector.

Training started in August, with the Khatmat Milahah troop becoming operational in November, followed in early January 1975 by the troops at Qabil and Hazm. By April 1975 the Sumaini troop was operational and the Balad Bani bu Ali Troop under training. A sixth troop was situated at Hazm which was the Training Troop.

The unit had a short-lived existence within SAF, as with the end of the war in Dhofar, and a return to peace, it was considered that having military units controlling border crossings was no longer the way forward. Thus, the whole unit was transferred to the ROP on 1 July 1976.



Above: The NOBS fort at Sumaini



Left and above: NOBS under training at Khatmat Milahah



Left and below: NOBS mount a vehicle checkpoint (VCP) at Qabil



NOBS patrolling in the Wadi Sumaini on the Abu Dhabi border



Support from the UAE

OG were over-committed, and having to cover all their sectors as well as provide Squadrons for service in Dhofar was proving beyond their manpower means. Thus, two rifle squadrons of the Abu Dhabi Defence Force (ADDF) were stationed in Sohar from October 1973 to January 1974 and again from November 1974 until April 1975 so that the OG unit from Sohar could be deployed to Dhofar.



Top: Two well known OG Officers at HQ OG Seeb - Lt Saleh Ibrahim Al Ajmi (mortar officer) and Capt Nasib Hamed Al Ruwaili of HQ Sqn

Above: HQ OG PENSEC at Khasab, showing the camp and fort



The OG fort at Bayah, which housed one troop

Right: Commander, HQ Northern Oman, visiting the new OG post at Tibbat - the Oman / Ras Al Khaima border is denoted by the Oman flag



Development of Muaskar al Murtafaa (MAM)

SAF's huge growth of personnel during the early 1970s was accompanied by a proportionate increase in the size of the Headquarters and the various support branches. Most of this was contained within the confines of Bait al Falaj Camp.

The BAF Camp was rapidly becoming unable to take any more expansion, thus in early 1972 plans were drawn up for the construction of a new camp, and the area selected was at Risail, at the point where the roads from Muscat, the Batinah and the Interior meet.

The site became known as Muaskar al Murtafaa (MAM). Over the 1970s, nearly all the units at BAF moved to MAM, including MOD and the Service Headquarters, and it became the hub for all military activities in the capital area.



Left: CO ADDF inspects the OG Quarter Guard at HQ OG Seeb, paying a liaison visit before the deployment of ADDF Squadrons to Sohar

MAM camp under construction

BOOK REVIEWS

BURAIMI THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER, INFLUENCE AND OIL IN ARABIA

By Michael Quentin Morton. Published in 2013 by I.B.Taurus & Co Ltd in hardback at £25. ISBN: 9781848858183

"The Buraimi Affair" lingers long in the memory of those who were there at the time and is often talked about by those who travelled from Oman to The UAE for the weekend, playing Rugby or just for a change of scene. In itself the "incident" and its solution do not today figure very significantly in the wider history of Arabia, the Gulf and Oil, but **Michael Moreton's** extensive research into the background of the dispute between Saudi Arabia, the Trucial States, Oman, the United States of America and Great Britain, often solely represented as a struggle for the vast oil and gas deposits in the Gulf region, had many other aspects, and these are brought into focus by this book.

It is true that Saudi Arabia sought to dominate the whole region and claimed sovereignty over all the tribes of the Gulf coastal regions and much of the Empty Quarter and when oil revenues became significant worldwide in the 1940s, the lack of internationally recognised boundaries between Saudi Arabia and the Trucial States, and to an extent Oman, created tensions of which the large oasis of Buraimi became the centre. American interests were represented by the Arabian American Oil Company (today's Aramco) and by Great Britain through its 50% stake in the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), as well as its treaty obligations to the Trucial States and to Oman. The extent of potential oil-bearing areas was by no means fully identified and therefore there was much at stake for all the participants and in 1949, the Saudi Arabian government took the first action and located a small military and police detachment in a village in the centre of the Buraimi Oasis. This brought it into direct confrontation with patrols of the British-officered Trucial Oman Levies (TOL).

Military contact between the two sides was very limited, the Saudis made considerable efforts to influence local rulers and sheikhs with "gifts" and to persuade them to declare their allegiance to the king. However, on the diplomatic front there was much activity at the highest level and it is on this that the author concentrates, and his in-depth research has allowed him to do so in the greatest detail. He describes the involvement of both the British and Saudi governments and of the United Nations in the negotiations between the parties and how the decision as to who was in the right fluctuated between them. In the event, the Saudis withdrew from Buraimi, there was some adjustment of the borders between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi and Buraimi itself remained a part of the latter – oil was NOT discovered there.

This book is a useful and well-written account of what transpired to be a relatively minor element in the struggle for power, influence and oil in the Gulf, and while beside present day events it may appear unimportant, it does describe an important element in the history of the area. As such it will be of considerable interest to students of that history, and general interest to those who know the area.

John Quinn

TOMMY AT WAR

**By John Sadler & Rosie Serdiville
Published in 2013 The Robson Press in hardback at £20.
ISBN 978-1-84954-514-3**

Most books that describe the events of the First World War call upon occasional extracts from contemporary documents of one sort or another. *Tommy at War* is unusual in that it goes the other way and uses the traditional description of events as background, to the stories taken from personal accounts of the participants, of all ranks and literary ability. These come from diaries, letters home, interviews and occasionally the poems and songs of men and women at war. Some of the originators did not survive the war or the events they anticipate; others survived and went on to full careers in civilian life. There are few references to the more generally recognised writers such as Sassoon.

The personal stories have predominately come from soldiers from Northern regiments who suffered as many casualties as regiments from elsewhere and there are often home connections between the writers. Battles covered include those of Mons, Ypres and the Somme and highlight, apart from life in the mud and the trenches, the impact on war generally of advances in technology and particularly of artillery, the machine gun, the tank, aircraft and the shocking effects of gas.

Finally, there are sections dealing specifically with personal accounts of service with the artillery, aircraft, tunnelling, horses, public relations and nursing, where the part played by women is particularly interesting.

This is an easy book to read and will be of interest to both the general reader as well as to students of WW1.

John Quinn

A MILD FORM OF INSANITY – RECOLLECTIONS OF A HELICOPTER PILOT

**By Mike Tuson, published in paperback in 2001 by Writers Club Press.
ISBN 0-595-18257-7**

The author of this book served on contract in SOAF from 1972 to 1973, flying primarily on operations in Dhofar, and the chapters on his experiences will be of interest to anyone who served there. He was wounded by ground fire on more than one occasion and before he left was awarded the Bravery Medal. His contract was shortened by mutual consent to enable him to convalesce and to ensure that he was not shot for a third and more final time!

But while his time in SAF takes up a large part of the story, the rest is equally interesting, as he describes learning to fly both fixed wing and rotary aircraft for the Fleet Air Arm, later putting his training and growing experience as a helicopter pilot to use as the personal pilot of a wealthy businessman in Europe followed by eighteen years in the Middle East flying in almost all forms of helicopter operations, including for a TV company during the Iran/Iraq war of 1987.

This is a book for the layman as well as the experienced pilot and is highly recommended.

John Quinn

FROM RAGS TO RICHES; A STORY OF ABU DHABI

By Mohammed A.J. Fahim (Retold by Patrick Dougherty)
Published in 2011 by Makazem Books, Abu Dhabi. Pp. 109
ISBN 978-9941-16-330-5

This is a remarkable book, for a number of different reasons. Firstly, it belongs to the rare genre of Arab autobiography. While Motivate Publishing in Dubai has done sterling work to publicise the development of the UAE, and the role played by the rulers of the different emirates, the private citizens of that country have largely remained in the background. This book, however, tells the story of both Abu Dhabi and the rise of **Mohammed al Fahim**, who is now a fabulously wealthy businessman.

Secondly, the book is "retold". This means that it is not a direct translation of the Arabic original. It has been abridged and edited.

The most remarkable thing, however, is that this is the Student Edition. **Melanie Gobert** of the UAE Higher Colleges of Technology had the inspired idea of producing this book in a version where the English would be comprehensible to undergraduate level Emiratis. She has not, therefore, produced a graded reader or a simplified reader. She has produced a book about the UAE which the third generation of Emiratis can read in English. At the same time, she has produced a book that anyone else literate in English can read with both profit and pleasure, and I would suggest that this book brings both.

Today, when one lands at the air-conditioned, reflective glass, marble floored, state-of-the-art luxury of an UAE airport, complete with the food courts and high level shopping experience, it is very easy to forget how recent all this development has been. Third generation Emiratis take it for granted. They have never known a world without the Abu Dhabi Corniche, shopping malls, tower blocks, schools, hospitals and illuminated highways.

Mohammed al Fahim, born in 1948, has a different perspective. "Life in Abu Dhabi at the time of my birth was the same as it had been in 1800. It was simple. In 1950, the population of Abu Dhabi was about 2000 people. People did not want to live on Abu Dhabi Island during the summer because of the heat and the humidity." (P 32).

These were the days of **Sheikh Shakhbut al Nahyan**, before the discovery of oil. They were the years when the British government fulfilled its responsibilities to the Trucial Coast by guaranteeing its territorial integrity, but left internal affairs alone. There was thought to be no profit in development, and Al Fahim is understandably scathing about that attitude. A younger sister died of burns. His mother died in childbirth, aged 30. "The British never helped us in the areas of education and health care. They never built a school, a medical clinic or a mosque." (P. 35).

He was, however, fortunate in as much as his father had a little education, and that

education attracted the attention of Sheikh Shakhbut's enlightened brother, **Sheikh Zayed**. This allowed his father to become an advisor and confidant of Sheikh Zayed, although initially that meant very little in financial terms.

The father was a "merchant" to the extent that he owned a small shop. This enabled him to send Mohammed to a one-room Qur'anic school and, later, to a three-room, one teacher, "school" where he learnt the rudiments of literacy. Sheikh Zayed then sponsored Mohammed to go to Britain when he was sixteen. By that time (1964), the very first shipments of oil were leaving Das Island.

Mohammed was aware of these developments. Earlier the same year he had visited the oil camp on Das Island with an uncle, and had been touchingly impressed. "Everything was new and seemed so advanced. They had piped water, showers and towels. I had never owned a towel. Here there were towels for everyone." (P. 73).

That last passage has particular resonance when we learn that, exactly 30 years later, Mohammed al Fahim completed the construction of the Dubai Holiday Centre (Photograph Pp. 60-61) on Shar'ia Sheikh Zayed in Dubai. This complex cost 77.5 million pounds sterling to construct, and al Fahim was so proud of his accomplishment that, within months, he refused an offer to sell it for three times its cost price. The next year (1995) he received the Gulf Chief Executive of the Year Award, and in 2007 he received the Arab Business Excellence Award.

Book titles sometimes oversell their contents, but *From Rags to Riches* does not. The boy who once asked his father for some money, and who was given the man's last coin (P. 82); the boy who had never owned a towel, is now rich beyond the dreams of avarice. This book not only tells his story, it mirrors the development and astonishing rise of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

Neil McBeath



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THE INSPIRE FOUNDATION RUNDLE CUP POLO TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY 12TH JULY 2014 – TEDWORTH PARK

by Rory Steevenson

Lt Col Rory Steevenson DR 1978-80 retired from the British Army in 2009. He is now the Executive Director of the INSPIRE Foundation, a Salisbury-based national charity which raises funds for research into practical solutions to help those living with Spinal Cord Injury.

One of INSPIRE's major fundraising activities is the annual polo tournament held in July at Tedworth Park near Andover. INSPIRE sponsors The Benney Trophy which opens the Rundle Cup Day, the annual polo match between the Royal Navy and the Army. Two celebrity teams representing the Jockies vs the Eventers play two chukkas, then some fun bicycle polo, compete in the Two Furlong Dash which whips up the tempo prior to the wheelchair relay between three surprise teams. At this point the INSPIRE Guests retreat to their own 'Hafla' in a bespoke marquee. After lunch, guests are then free to wander back down to the Indian Cavalry Officers' Association polo at 2.30 and the Rundle Cup at 4.30. This is a county fair type event with art and craft retail outlets and many refreshment stalls for those with a Dhofar thirst! A military band plays during the afternoon (in 2013 HM Royal Marines), and weather permitting an Army freefall team will drop in for tea. In all about 3,000 people attend of which approximately 200 are guests of INSPIRE.

Rory cordially invites members of the SAF Association to what he promises to be a fun, action packed and convivial day of relaxed polo at which no previous experience is at all necessary! He claims his own equine experience is based on inspecting the DR donkey lines in Nizwa and occasionally taking **Chris B-W's** nag out for a hack past the leper colony. Happy days!

By joining us at Tedworth Park, SAF members and their guests will also be contributing to much needed funds into spinal research initiated by INSPIRE's own Scientific Committee. One of our scientists is also an old Omani hand, **Robin Gibbons** ex Royal Navy and SON 1987-91 whose subsequent flying career with Virgin Atlantic was cut short in 2001 by a road traffic accident which left him paralysed. Robin received a cheque for £20,000 to continue his research project into Functional Electrical Stimulation. The



Zara Phillips.



Prince Harry.

other photos from recent Polo Tournaments help set the scene.

Guests are invited to sit at tables of ten or twelve at a price of £75 per head. This covers morning coffee with pastries, a champagne reception followed by a full buffet lunch (with all wines provided in DR size glasses!) and afternoon tea. Grandstand seats for the morning's Polo are also included along with parking (which normally costs £20.00).

For ticket applications and further information please visit 'www.inspire-foundation.org.uk' or call 01722 336262 Ext 2465; Lorna McGregor 07739 488519 or Rory Steevenson 07777 603588. ■



HRH Prince William and Major General Arthur Denaro with the boys from Chelsea!



Actor Tom Ward winning the wheelchair race.

THE JOURNAL

OF THE
SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES
ASSOCIATION



The Journal is the official magazine of the Sultan's Armed Forces Association. It serves a readership which is actively involved in the development of the country. Published each year for the last 46 years, and with a current print run of 4,000 copies, the Sultan's Armed Forces Association Journal is circulated to all individual and company members of the Association as well as:

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SAF ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GOLF MATCH

MONDAY, 30 JUNE, 2014
DORSET GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB,
NR WAREHAM

For directions see www.dorsetgolfresort.com

SCHEDULE:	09.00-10.00	Arrive – coffee with bacon butty
	09.40-11.00	28 Stroke Handicap Stableford on 7000 yards Lakeland Course in groups of 3
	Approx 15.30	3 Course lunch with prize giving
	Approx 17.00	Depart

This will be the nineteenth year of this event and we are looking for 30+ gentleman and lady players to turn out. The occasion is intended to be both sporting and fun and certainly the first eighteen competitions have been extremely enjoyable. The facilities at the Dorset Golf and Country Club are excellent and it is only 2 hours by car from Heathrow, 1 hour from Southampton and 20 minutes from Dorchester. Wool railway station is 2 hours 15 minutes from Waterloo. Applications are limited to 28 handicappers or less from the SAF Association or Anglo/Omani Society, or anyone who can be shown to be a friend of the Sultanate. Spouses may attend lunch only for £18.00. Club members will be charged £23.00.

SAF ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GOLF MATCH

MONDAY, 30 JUNE, 2014
DORSET GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

For directions see www.dorsetgolfresort.com

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2014 SAF ASSOCIATION DINNER

will take place in the

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON AT 1900 FOR 2000HRS ON

FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2014

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2014 AT THE LATEST

To: Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Rock Lane, Burnley BB11 2RN. Email: neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

FROM: (BLOCK CAPS)

ADDRESS:

Service(s)Unit(s) in SAF:

Dates of service in SAF:

I would like to sit near:

THE ABOVE INFORMATION WILL ASSIST IN SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Please send me ticket(s) at **£35** each for the Dinner on **Friday 28 November 2014**.

Other guests **£40** per head.

Please list name(s) of guests

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to the SAF Association.

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2014 AT THE LATEST



2014 SAF ASSOCIATION COCKTAIL PARTY

will take place in the

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON BETWEEN 1830 AND 2030HRS ON

FRIDAY 6 JUNE 2014

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 23 MAY 2014 AT THE LATEST

To: Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Rock Lane, Burnley BB11 2RN. Email: neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

FROM: (BLOCK CAPS)

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Please send me ticket(s) for the SAF Association Cocktail Party on **Friday 9 June 2014**.

Costs are **£25** per person or **£40** per couple.

Other guests **£30** per head.

Please list names of guests

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to the SAF Association.

Or book by email and pay your fee into the SAF Association's Bank Account: Sort Code 40-15-17 Account No. 72019116 (HSBC Burnley)

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 23 MAY 2014 AT THE LATEST

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