

The Royal Signals Fact File

Time chart of Historical Events of the Royal Signals

1835. Morse Code invented.
1870. 'C' Telegraph Troop RE formed under Capt M Lambert.
1884. Telegraph Battalion RE formed and Maj CFC Beresford RE selects Mercury as their emblem.
1900. Marconi trials army radio in the Boer War.
1912. RE Signal Service formed and despatch riders established.
1916. Capt AC Fuller RE invents the Fullerphone.
1920. Royal Warrant signed by Winston S Churchill, giving the Sovereign's approval for the formation of a 'Corps of Signals' on the 28th June 1920.
1920. August His Majesty the King conferred the title 'Royal Corps of Signals'.
1923. Major General (later Lieutenant General) Sir John S Fowler KCMG, CB, DSO was appointed as the first Colonel Commandant of the Royal Corps of Signals - 12th September. 1925. The Signals Training Centre moves from Maresfield, Sussex to Catterick, North Yorkshire.
1932. The first Military Cross to be won by the Corps was by Lieutenant (later Brigadier) LCC Harrison in the Burma Rebellion of 1930-32.
1937. The Corps completes mechanization.
1941. The last operational use of the heliograph at the siege of Sollum Hayata in the Western Desert.
1945. 4,362 soldiers of the Corps gave their lives in WW2.
1946. Change of pattern of the Corps cap badge.
1954. Gurkha Signals was officially formed on 23rd September at a parade in Larnjung Camp, Malaysia.
1961. The Queen authorised the appointment of Major General Sir William Scott as the first Master of Signals on 4th August.
1962. LARKSPUR range of radios is fielded.
1967. The School of Signals moves from Catterick to Blandford.
1968. BRUIN communications system declared operational.
1976. CLANSMAN radio system commences service.
1977. The Queen honoured the Gurkha Signals with her Royal title and they were renamed the Queen's Gurkha Signals.
1978. Last Signals Despatch Service is provided in Northern Ireland.
1985. PTARMIGAN area communications system fielding commences.
1992. The School of Signals becomes the Royal School of Signals.
1994. The Royal Signals Training organisation moves from Catterick to Blandford.
2002. The 25th Anniversary of the Colonel in Chief.

Appointments in the Royal Corps of Signals.

Colonel in Chief. The King appointed Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Princess Mary, to be Colonel-in-Chief on 6th September 1935 which she held until her death in 1965. On 11th June 1977 Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne was appointed as the Colonel-in-Chief of the Corps and became the Princess Royal in 1987.

Master of Signals. The name was selected because of the link with 'The Master of Posts' dating back to 1509 whose task was to organise a messenger service for the King. The Queen authorised the appointment of Major General Sir William Scott as the first Master of Signals on 4th August 1961. The Master is a senior retired officer responsible for the overall management of Corps' domestic affairs and the post is approved by the Colonel in Chief.

Colonels Commandant The appointments are approved by the Colonel in Chief and they are to assist the Master of Signals in his duties. One is normally appointed as Representative Colonel Commandant to attend appropriate occasions and to deputise when the Master is unable to carry out his duties.

Honorary Colonels. All TA Royal Signals units may have Honorary Colonels who provide support and continuity, within the local community, for the Commanding Officer. They are approved by the Master of Signals.

The Signal Officer in Chief (Army). The SOinC(A) is the serving professional head of the Royal Signals.

Organisation.

The Corps Committee. This co-ordinates domestic affairs of the Corps and manages their finances. It is chaired by the Master of Signals.

The Royal Signals Trustee Ltd. Is a legal Trust to administer the Trust. Deed, ensure correct use of the Benevolent Fund and manage investments.

The Royal Signals Association. This is open to serving and retired members of the Corps. The President is the Master of Signals and affairs are controlled by a Central Committee which is chaired by an appointed retired senior officer. There are widespread local branches that meet regularly.

The Royal Signals Institution. The RSI was founded in 1950 to foster the professional and technical interests of the Corps. The President of the Council is the Master of Signals and the Chairman is an appointed Colonel Commandant.

Other Committees. There are a number of Committees to manage Corps matters on behalf of the Corps Committee. They include Heritage, Welfare, Games, Dress, Finance, Band, HQ Officers Mess and HQ Sergeants Mess.

Corps Funds. The Corps Committee exercises control over the following funds which are reliant on donations by the serving Corps (including TA) through the One Days Pay Scheme:

The Royal Signals Corps Fund.) Collectively
The Royal Signals Officer Fund.) known as the
The Royal Signals Association Fund.) Benevolent Fund.
The Royal Signals Trust Fund.

Corps Benevolence. Requests for financial support from the Benevolence Fund by entitled personnel are considered at regularly held Welfare Committee meetings which are administered by the Royal Signals Association. The Corps' approved charities are Save The Children and The Army Benevolent Fund.

The Royal Signals Band. An unofficial band had existed since the days of 1st Telegraph Battalion RE but approval for the formation of an official Corps Band was only granted by the Army Council on 29th August 1938.

The White Helmets. The motor cycle display team of the Corps traces its history to the late 1920's but the name only originated in 1963. The display stems from Despatch Rider responsibilities and was originally combined horses and motorcycles.

The Royal Signals Museum. There are records of a small museum existing at the Signal Training Centre (STC) at Maresfield, Sussex as early as 1922. The current Museum was officially opened by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, on 9th July 1995. The Museum is a charity run by its own Trustees.

Signal Officer in Chief (Army)'s Policy Directives.

The details of the day to day running of the Corps are contained in SOinC(A)'s Policy Directives which are held by all Royal Signals establishments.

Contact Address. For all Corps domestic matters is:

Regimental Headquarters Royal Signals
Blandford Camp
Dorset DT11 8RH Tel: 01258 482083

Traditions and Customs of the Royal Corps of Signals.

Titles. The full title for the Corps is "The Royal Corps of Signals". The short title is "Royal Signals". The abbreviated title is "R SIGNALS".

Corps Badge. The current badge was approved in 1946 and is described as:

"The figure of Mercury holding a Caduceus in the left hand, the right hand aloft poised with the left foot on a globe all silver, above the globe a scroll inscribed 'Certa Cito' and below on each side six laurel leaves all gold, the whole ensigned with the Crown in gold. "

Corps Colours. The Corps colours are light blue, dark blue and dark green in the ratio 3:1:3.

Precedence. The precedence of the Royal Signals is immediately following the Corps of Royal Engineers.

Corps Motto. CERTA CITO was selected as the Corps Motto in 1925. It freely translates as Swift and Sure.

Corps Grace. Formally used at Corps or Regimental Guest Nights: *"For what we are about to receive, thank God"*.

The Corps Collect. The current Collect was proposed in 1957 and accepted by the Queen:

Almighty God, Whose messengers go forward in every age giving light and understanding, grant that we of the Royal Corps of Signals; who speed the word of man to man, may be swift and sure in sending the message of Thy truth into the world. May we serve thee faithfully and with the help of thy Spirit make such success of our soldierly duties on this earth that we may be found worthy to receive the crown of life hereafter. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Corps Ties. The current Corps tie dates to 1933 and is a repetition of light blue and dark green diagonal stripes separated by a narrower dark blue stripe (ratio 3:1:3) all on a dark blue background. The sports colours tie is a repetition of diagonal stripes in Corps colours, light blue, dark blue, dark green in the same ratio. All stripes slope downwards from the right shoulder.

Corps Flag and Pennant. The Corps flag consists of the Corps colours flown horizontally. In the centre is the Corps badge in gold (deep chrome yellow). It is flown by Signal Regiments with an appropriate number or short title in the canton. The Corps pennant consists of colours and badge as for the flag but is triangular. It is flown by Squadrons and below with an appropriate number or title.

Regimental Marches. The "Royal Signals March" incorporated two tunes, "The Newcastle Air" and "Begone Dull Care" and was originally arranged by Dr. C Wood in the 1920's. The "Royal Signals Slow March, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal" was arranged by Mr. RR Ricketts in 1952. The Regimental March of Queen's Gurkha Signals is "Scotland the Brave".

Corps Publications.

The Wire Magazine.

The Royal Signals Institution Journal.

The White List - Serving officers and Warrant Officers.

The Blue List - Retired Officers.

Corps Awards and Prizes. These are administered by the RSI:

The Princess Mary Medal. For an achievement or service at the highest level.

The Master of Signals Award. A rare award for exceptional contribution or service to the Corps.

Royal Signals Institution Silver Medal. Marks the attainment of an outstanding professional achievement in the Corps.

The Agar Memorial Prize. For the best Young Officer of the Intake at RMA Sandhurst.

The Evis Memorial Prize. For the best student on the Troop Commanders Course.

The Chenevix-Trench Prize Essay. For the best essay submitted to the Institution ..

The Whistler Subaltern's Trophy. Awarded to the best subaltern of the year.

The Birtwistle Pennant for Recruiting. Awarded to the unit that has contributed most to recruiting.

The Birtwistle Pennant for Sport. Awarded to the unit that has contributed most to sport.

Other Prizes. The many prizes available to the Corps are listed in SOinC(A)'s Policy Directive 203.

Important Dates.

Princess Royal Day. 28th June to celebrate the forming of the Corps.

Corps Carol Service. December at St Stephen's and St John's, Westminster.

Association Reunion Weekend. On the last complete weekend in June at Blandford.

Corps Dinners. At the HQ Mess, Blandford in March and October.

Association with Foreign Signal Corps. Alliances have been made with the Corps of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Malaya and Zambia.