

A Visit to Blandford – Developing WCIT’s Affiliation with the Royal Signals

It is difficult to know where to start a report on the visit to Blandford as the day was jammed packed with information and activities.

Following a welcome by the Garrison Commander and a comprehensive high level brief on the changing role of the Royal Signals as part of the MoD ‘Future Soldier’ programme and, critically, how data is transforming the battlefield we visited the training school to witness the transformation of technical training. Here we were told of the career pathways and the new modular approach to training, and we sat in on a Foreman of Signals class, had a chance to try our basic signaller skills using the Land Rover Based Training facilities and watched the most junior of soldiers practising the deployment of ground mounted antenna systems.



Lunch in the Mess followed and was combined with a tour of the Corps Chattels by John Barratt, who also regaled us with some dits. It is probably best to gloss over the challenges of removing Generals from the Mess Bar beams and the story from Germany of the CO, his driver and a German house-keeper.

Replenished, we travelled to 13 Signal Regiment – the Army’s cyber unit – to hear of some of their innovations in Cyber Security. Everyone was struck not just by the deep technical expertise of Foreman of Signals and their focus on driving through to solutions but also the overall entrepreneurial culture exhibited.

A whistle-stop tour of the Royal Signals Museum also included opportunity to see and play with the robots and ipads funded by the WCIT Charity which are now being used to encourage programming within the Schools Outreach Programme.



Tea at the Warrant Officers and Sergeant's Mess, by kind invitation of the Garrison Sergeant Major, provided the opportunity to chat to Mess members, to understand their careers and tell them about the WCIT – and, of course, enjoy some cake!



As a finale to the day, the opportunity to try out the indoor firing range could not be missed – unlike some of the targets!



It is a testament to the value and enjoyment of the day that the 10-minute wrap up scheduled to finish at 18:15 extended to nearly an hour as we discussed more ways we can support the Corps and its greatest asset – its people.

Our thanks go to Col (Retd) Andy Percival (RSI Director) and Capt Gary MacKenzie (11SR) for putting together a memorable visit which has helped build many more bridges between our organisations.