

KING'S CCF



ANNUAL CAMP 2012



22 Cadets from the Army Section of the CCF deployed from the King's School to Wathgill Camp. Cadets took part in six days of challenging activities designed to teach them about themselves, their peers and the army. The cadets had an excellent time in which they learned and practised many new skills.

Day 1 – Advanced Tactics – Cadets Chloe Cowan and Emily Jones write:

Waking up at a ridiculous 0540 to Laura's funky alarm clock we quickly got dressed into our uniform and headed to breakfast for a massive fry up! Having got our kit ready the night before, we girls got to have a quick nap for half an hour before drawing weapons at 0730.

We attempted (with limited success!) to march in time to the armoury to get our rifles (...NOT GUNS), then got on the coach to the training area. After a 20 minute journey we reached our destination, a field in the middle of nowhere, and went straight into training. We went over PREWAR and PAWPERSO (the mnemonics to remember section battle drills) which we all OBVIOUSLY already knew. We then learnt how to conduct a successful section attack followed by practise sessions to put the knowledge into practice. The only annoying part of the day was having to pepper-pot along the horrendous, boggy terrain, frequently jumping into seemingly invisible ponds.



After running around for about two hours we were lucky enough to get a break. We were given tea, or more likely, forced to drink the liquid that they called 'tea' (seemingly muddy water with bits in.) After the ten minute break we moved onto learning about platoon attacks. They were similar to section level attacks but on a larger scale and involved even more running. Emily and I were in 3 Section which meant we were initially the reserve section and we just got to chill and talk. We spent the time 'bombing up' our magazines; unfortunately, this isn't very exciting, it's just loading the magazines with rounds (the casing that the bullets are held in) but the section commanders worked us hard to get all of them done in time.



As the battle intensified however we were soon called from the reserve to launch an attack. Even though we were using blanks, it was amazing fun. We were tasked to attack an enemy position which was hidden in a re-entrant and involved moving across the terrain until we had a position which had decent cover. We then split up into Charlie and Delta fire teams. We had to give covering fire while the other part of our section secured the enemy position. Whilst in fire support I did have to stop myself getting too trigger happy and to maintain a sensible rate of fire!

When Charlie fire team secured the enemy position, we had to get up and follow the route round. A few of us did slip over several times! We then had to do a 're-group'. All of us had to lie down in an extended line. This was so we could easily move into our final stage of the attack, giving support fire. We lay down in a suitable firing position, and some of us did get a bit trigger happy. Ben (our IC) was saying what type of fire we should

use (deliberate, rapid ect). After a few minutes firing, some people had to reload, and our ripple firing was destroyed in the process. While people were half way through an unload, we could hear a voice shouting “RE-ORG!”; this was our cue to join up with the other two sections and to form into a giant circle with the rest of the platoon. The 2 ICs of each section did a ‘CasAm’ check - checking for casualties and ammunition state. Then our attack was done, sadly!

After lunch, our next lesson of the day was to do with cam and concealment. We all had to stand in an extended line through a small wooded area. We walked through the woods, in search of ‘enemies’. After a short time, we had to get down on our belt buckles, and unfortunately, I was crouching right next to a big area of mud, which completely soaked my trousers. I managed to spot an enemy and was the only person in my group to do so. Two minutes after I saw her, each one of the enemies stood up, revealing their hiding place. Some of them I couldn’t see, even when they stood up!



After returning to camp we spent around two hours cleaning our weapons of the carbon that had got almost all over the rifles because of how much shooting we did. This job was long and hard – constantly scrubbing each part of the rifle. Because we spent so long cleaning, we ALMOST missed dinner... the horror.

Day 2 – Visit to ITC Catterick – LCpl Paul Brownson writes:

Today we woke up at 6.20 to a very annoying alarm clock. As our room finished getting ready we heard from the other room “okay guys, let’s get out of bed now”, this news, shall we say, was not gratefully received by us or the girls who were already formed up outside. All tensions however were dropped at breakfast when everyone was cheered up with a Full English. After our first room inspection (which went very well for all apart from our room smelling) we had our first kit inspection which also went exceedingly well apart from finding out that boot polish cracks when put in the drying room.



Today’s activity was a visit to the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, the home of all new soldiers wishing to join the infantry. We set off in two separate minibuses which was a bit squashed as we had one big bergan between two people. When we got there we had to form up, everyone having the feeling that we were being watched as every minute there was

another squad of the regular army recruits passing. We were soon escorted to our first lesson of the day which was by a regular corporal who gave us a lesson on the PRR (personal role radio).

Then we moved to a lesson on IEDs. We found out what kind of mines they use out in Afghanistan and how to search for them, and how to clear mine fields using the equipments that the army attach to their webbing. This gave us a great insight into the dangers faced by soldiers on operations and also the painstaking work to be done in extracting oneself from a minefield. At the end of this very interesting morning we had a long lunch which was greatly appreciated by all.

After lunch we went to the assault course and steeple chase which Mr Brown had done and who took us for a detailed tour of it which was extremely interesting and made us very grateful we weren't doing it ourselves! We then marched over to the building which contained the DCCT (Dismounted Close Combat Trainer) which even though we weren't able to have a go we were able to sit in and watch some recruits from the real army train on a virtual range, which they will be going on tomorrow. Whilst sitting in on them we got to talk to a RSM from the SASC who was very interesting and knew everything about DCCT. The people using the DCCT were showing all three of the shooting positions; standing, kneeling and prone position which we were to put into practice later in the week. Then we got to speak to a few regular recruits, one of whom was in our position as a cadet nine weeks ago. We also got to speak to a South African recruit who had come over to join the army as he had heard about the good discipline of the British army. On our way out we found ourselves marching past a lot of regulars so it was extremely stressful (especially for Ian who was leading us!) but we got into the minibus straight after to relax. We soon got back to camp and had a meeting then tea before enjoying a relaxed night off.



Day 3 – Visit to ‘Adrenaline’ – LCpl Jack Jameson and Cadet Simon Parker write:

We woke up at 0630 (a relative lie-in) to rain that was to last the rest of the day. Everyone got up with little drama and got to breakfast, which, funnily enough consisted of a Full English which lifted everyone's spirits. We then went back to our billets and prepared for our second room inspection. No major problems were found with slight slips the general cleanliness of the room due to it being lived in! We then, after gathering waterproofs and other kit we would need for the coming day, set off on a bus to 'Adrenaline' with a mixture of high ropes and a survival course.

We shared the bus journey with St Mary's CCF and it was great fun thanks to a pair of speakers and everyone singing along – 'Call Me Maybe' and 'Someone like You' being particular hits. Finally we arrived at our destination. Immediately we were given a safety brief for the area.



The survival course was hard and involved having to light a fire with (damp) wood and no matches. We were first taught about the different ways of lighting a fire: matches, lighters, flints and a bow shaped piece of wood which turned another piece of wood round – creating friction (and fire). We then moved to another part of the wood and began to make our own fire. First we created a ring of stones to stop any fire spreading via the ground. We then collected sticks of different sizes – we would pile the small sticks first and the bigger logs later. Will and I collected some bigger sticks – snapping them against a tree.

After many unsuccessful tries at lighting the fire using some sparks from a flint and some cotton wool, we got the fire going. At times it looked like it might go out, but with Ben's blowing of the sticks we got the fire going well. Soon it was burning vigorously and we had a real sense of achievement having created it but it soon had to be put out due to it being the end of the session.



The high ropes course consisted of us (with helmets and harnesses) trying to climb up various obstacles individually or in groups of three. The first climb was the 'Leap of Faith' which consisted of climbing a 20ft telegraph pole (with hand holes which wobbled) and then launching yourself off the pole to try and touch a buoy positioned 2 metres to our front; the speed record for the day was 16 from

floor to buoy! Next was the 'Jacob's Ladder' activity in which groups of three tried to climb a suspended wire ladder. This was very hard and we usually got to the 3rd rung of 6, which was, to be fair, 20ft above the ground! Finally a group challenge was to get three people to the top of a telegraph pole and then linking hands lean outwards. We were successful at this with all groups achieving the goal.



We took the bus home and changed into our combats for DCCT. This involves a rifle and a virtual range which you shoot at using specially wired up rifles. We did 2 separate shoots – one which traced how you aimed and another which saw how close your grouping was – the high score being a group the size of a two penny piece. The

careful coaching from the range staff saw all our standards of shooting improve. After this we played football, which given the day's rain was a mud bath! After this we were very tired and retired back to our billets for a good night's sleep.

Day 4 – Ranges– Cadets George Elsely and Henry Greaves write:

Once again our day began with the usual routine of getting up at 5.45 to the ring of a phone alarm. After our breakfast of a lovely, filling, Full English we were off marching down to the armoury to collect our weapons as today was range day.

After this we marched up the hill, a steep slope leading from the middle of the camp to the ranges which was a hard trek with our bergans, rifles and webbing. We reached the top of the hill and stopped at the DCCT hut which we had used the night before. We then split into two groups, one went to the DCCT room to wait and the



other to the rifle ranges. A good time was had by all in group 1 and some good shoots led to some small grouping (the overall spread between your bullet holes on the target) the best being 135mm. After this we all went on the DCCT and took turns shooting at electronic targets which was similar to the night before but, with our recent practice almost all improved.



Next we walked a small way down the hill and went into a field and did some clay pigeon shooting, we each had four chances with a shotgun to knock the clays out of the sky. We all had a great time and some stood out hitting three targets down but no one achieving four hits.

We then walked down to the main 300m range and were given our lunches followed by a shooting competition against St Mary's. This challenge included a run of 100m down the range to a the 200m point, loading your rifle and firing ten rounds at the target taking account of the wind and the limited time you had to do it in. Both schools entered an 'A' and a 'B' team with all scores being close together but with St Mary's narrowly beating us by two points overall.

After the competition shoot we prepared for the final shoot of the day which involved firing the LSW (Light Support Weapon) at a target on fully automatic! This gave us a feel for the power of the weapon and also of the effects of bursts of fire on accuracy. We were then cleared from the range and were sent marching back to camp, singing songs as went to keep spirits high!



After dinner at 1900 we rounded off the day's work with some drill practice. For many this was their first experience of drill taught by a Guardsman and we were understandably nervous. It was however made fun by Mr Brown and a spectacular failure by the Cadet RSM to tell 'left' from 'forwards!' We then relaxed from 2030 till lights out as usual at 2230; today had been a great day.

Day 5 – Leadership and Orienteering– Cadets Alan Prossor and Ben Samarji write:

Today we got a lie in which caused some excitement until we realised it was only till 0645! We then got up and went down to the cookhouse to have a Full English breakfast. We then went back to our

dorms and got ready for a day of command tasks and orienteering. We packed our bergens and set off down to the coach. We then put our bergens in our van, got on the coach and set off for the unknown. After a short journey of 20 minutes, in which lots of songs were sung, we finally arrived at our destination; the middle of nowhere!

We all got off the coach and formed up. We set off in the direction of where we thought the leadership exercises were; after a five minute march we arrived at the leadership exercises. We then split into sections and set off to work. My section started on an exercise where five out of the seven members of



the section were blindfolded and we had to build a tent, which unfortunately for our group, we failed at spectacularly! Next we moved onto an exercise where we had to take a 'wounded soldier' (a sack) called 'Sackie' and some planks across a 'mine field' without anything touching the ground. We finished but lost a member of our team and a plank along the way. Next we had to do a 'Tower of Hanoi' style task, but unfortunately again our team was blindfolded. We got very close to finishing but ran out of time with only a few pieces left to move. Finally we moved onto the last exercise in which we had to do almost the same as the second one but we also had to use tyres to get across. Whilst we failed more of these tasks than we succeeded in, we learned a great deal about teamwork and leadership along the way.

We then had a hearty lunch and set off to find the orienteering stand. We arrived at the start of the course and got into pairs. Then we did a few lessons to establish stride length, learn how to take a bearing and how to estimate distances from on the map. Finally we set off in groups each spaced about two minutes apart.

I was paired with Ben and we were the penultimate pair to leave. We set off at a fast jog and quickly found the first of ten controls. Mr Lee then overtook me and Ben, only to be overtaken by us on the way to the second post. There we found Simon and Mark Rennie who set off first, and had got completely lost due to Simon's bad map reading skills. Mr Lee soon joined us again just before the third control. He, Simon and Mark soon got terribly lost looking for the fourth and had to ask me and Ben who had found it easily due to my excellent map reading skills. Me and Ben then went to the fifth post and were soon followed by Mr Lee, Simon and Mark. They then left us at the sixth and Ben and I continued on our own again. We then got lost after we walked straight past the seventh post and spent 20 minutes searching for it again. We finally found it and then the eighth and ninth were found with ease. We finally ran through a field full of sheep (who were oblivious to our efforts!) to the final post before a sprint finish took us to the finish where we ended up with a time of over an hour (not the worst) which we were happy with seeing as we walked most of it and got lost.

After dinner we set off for the obstacle course which was to be great fun. It was a grade A which means it is suitable for cadets. Firstly, there were the steps (easy), which were followed by a six foot wall (hard). There are two ways to conquer this wall, either you run and jump and push yourself up or the alternative is to get a leg up from someone. Then there is the six foot jump and then



the log run, which is just running over a log covered in chicken wire (easy). Next comes the rope swing (medium) followed by the 12 foot wall (very hard!) which again only has two ways to get over it. Firstly, if you are very strong and tall you can run and jump up the wall. Alternatively you can get a leg up from two teammates. Next came the monkey bars which are good fun and easy, IF you get the technique correct. Lastly there is the ski jump (easy!) which is jumping over a ditch and landing on a slope and a final sprint to the end. All this was physically demanding but a great way to get in some exercise before bed and yet another chance to bond as a team.



Day 6 – Adventure Training – Cadet RSM Rennie and CSgt Stockton write:

After an early start and a big breakfast we got on the coach and headed to a local lake and water sports centre to take part in some adventure training; water sports in the morning and dry sports in the afternoon. The water sports included an hour kayaking, an hour raft building and to conclude and hour of canoeing. All cadets prior to taking part were worried about how cold it would be in the water but these fears soon evaporated and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



In canoeing we were shown how to paddle, this was done by 'pulling' to go forwards and 'pushing' to go backwards. We then split up into pairs and had a number of different races from simple paddling races, to standing up not facing each other, to races which had to be completed in silence. These races were not only fun but allowed us to practise the skills the instructors had taught us. For the 'last runner up' as the instructor put it, there were a number of forfeits from 'I love water' to 'helmets' the 'cube' and 'I REALLY love water'! If you just came last then the instructors chose the forfeit but if you cheated or did not complete the race, then all the other cadets in your group chose the punishment. The most popular one was 'the Helmet' where you had to take your helmet off, fill it with water and put it back on as fast as you could. If this was done incorrectly then you had to do it again, to everyone else's amusement!

After canoeing the cadets headed to kayaking; yet again the instructors showed how to paddle which was necessary as it is quite different to canoeing. We headed out to the water and practised for a bit before we had a race which Ian Prossor won with the help of his extremely long arms! We then played several catching games, which were all good fun, with the instructors joining in.



Next we headed to Raft Building where we were split into two teams and were given six barrels, seven planks, rope and 20 minutes to build a raft. It was a challenge as some cadets had never built a raft before but we worked together and completed it within time. We then had to paddle it out to a buoy and back before the other team,

ideally without our raft falling apart! We managed to do this but there were some hoarse voices due to all the encouragement we found ourselves giving!



After the wet activities we got changed and had lunch before heading to the dry activities; climbing, volleyball and archery. Climbing was good as the instructors were relaxed and encouraged us to push ourselves but understood if we did not want to go all the way to the top. At Volley Ball we split into King's and St Mary's for a competitive but good natured match.

In archery we learnt about two different styles; barebow and freestyle. Barebow did not have a sight whereas freestyle did. There were several differences between the two including where to pull the string back to, how to pull the string back and where to aim. It was very interesting and many of the cadets really enjoyed themselves and were pleased that they had learnt a new skill.

In the evening as a treat we had takeaway pizza for dinner which, after a week of army food, was a great change! The rest of the evening consisted of preparing our rooms for handover to those units coming in the next week. This meant packing, sweeping, tidying, wiping and mopping. Not the most fun activity but it didn't take long and was not too difficult.

On Saturday morning we had our final room inspection before boarding our bus and heading home. On return to school we handed weapons into the armoury and then fell in for our final parade of the week. Three promotions occurred, Emily Jones and Harry Stable to Lance Corporal and Paul Brownson to Corporal. With one of our best intakes for years, Cadet Chloe Cowan fought off tough competition and was awarded the prize for best recruit. Finally an emotional goodbye was said to Laura Stockton, Mark Rennie, Victoria and Christina Davies who leave us after six years in the CCF.