



HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS SATELLITES - THE CAPABILITY SATCOM STATION



The first UK military communications satellite was SKYNET 1A, which was launched in November 1969, following two unsuccessful launches and then SKYNET 2B was launched in 1974. The follow up of this satellite - SKYNET 3 was cancelled so that when the FALKLANDS war was in progress non-UK satellites had to be used. The 1990s saw the SKYNET 4 projects which continued until SKYNET 5 which followed after 2000.

In the late 1970s RSRE built two capability stations, one of which is shown in the first picture. These were deployed in 1979 to support Op AGILA in Zimbabwe and proved a success in providing both secure voice and secure telegraph links working back to the UK.



This led to further developments - the boxed Satcom station, RACAL TSC 502 and a vehicle borne set that was later called the VRC 501, made by Marconi, who named it first "Marmoset", which is shown in the third picture featuring S/ Sgt Fof S Dave Ellis talking to HRH Princess Anne on 30 Signal Regiment's square at Blandford Camp.

Both of these trial sets were deployed to Saudi Arabia under the Command of Captain John Thomas, who had Dave Ellis as his Foreman of Signals. This 30 Signal Regiment troop was supported by RACAL and MARCONI teams of technicians, see photos below of the equipments. All these sets remained in Saudi Arabia until the crisis in the Falklands Islands with Argentina broke. When they were returned to 30 Signal Regiment where they were prepared for operations.

