



HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS CLANSMAN RADIO—PRC 320



CLANSMAN was a radio re-equipment programme for the whole of the army as well as Royal Signals. The first operational use of CLANSMAN combat net radio was during OP AGILA in Zimbabwe. It proved highly successful. A Landrover was blown up on a mine there, but the set from the same vehicle was picked up, reconnected and it worked immediately.

The most well known use of this family of radios was during the Falklands War. Strangely it was used by both sides during this war as some of the sets had been sold to the Argentinean army prior to 1982.

The reason that the PRC 320 was selected

as the object for this group of combat net radios was because it was the set that made the greatest step change for personal radios. It was HF, but unlike most of its predecessors, it had a frequency range from 2 - 29.999 MHz. This increase in frequency range plus being SSB (narrow band width) made it much more flexible when using both ground wave and sky wave (the latter with attention to frequency prediction charts). It was capable of working up to 30 Kms with a 2.4m whip antenna and 320 Kms with a droopy dipole. Its weight on its carrier was 11kg, with a spare battery that weighed an additional 3kg. The second picture shows the PRC 320 being carried by a soldier during the Falklands campaign. The post operational report written by Cpl Reynolds, who was the Rear Link Detachment Commander for 2 Scots Guards, comments on the carrying frame for the PRC 320 being “okay”, but by the time you tried to add spare batteries, a hand generator for the batteries and the ancillaries plus your personal kit you looked more like a “Tinker” than a modern communicator. However, it proved more effective than the vehicle borne sets as in the Falklands there were then virtually no tracks for wheeled vehicles and the manpack VHF sets often could not cover the distance of the PRC320. Luckily the enemy EW effort was not that great, so the insecure HF net could be used, though it was found that staff officers were not used to talking on lower quality speech HF nets (Cf VHF net) nor using off line battle codes. They tended therefore to rely on the Royal Signals Operators, which was often frustrating to commanders under the formation HQs wanting instant command decisions.



