



HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS THE BRASSARD OF CPL R A BIRDSALL



This 1st Commonwealth Division brassard was worn by Cpl R A Birdsall, whilst serving as a cipher corporal in the Korea from 1955 to 1956. It was kindly donated to the museum and forms part of its display for the Korean War. Korea had been occupied by the Japanese prior to WW2, but at the end of that conflict the country was divided along the 38th parallel of latitude. The north of Korea was supported by the Soviet Union and the south was supported by the USA. The north invaded the south on the 25 June 1950, which marked the start of the Korean War. Only a ceasefire was agreed in 1953, but no peace treaty has ever been agreed to this day.



Initially Royal Signals were involved as part of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade deployed to Korea on the 27th August 1950. Initially during the mobile phase of the war the requirement was for tactical communications provided by HF radio, but also the first VHF combat net radios used in the British Army. When

the war became more static line communications once again became the priority, see photo above. Royal Signals were involved in the famous battle of the Imjin River. Cpl Neville Bestwick earned the Military Medal for his bravery for repairing lines between the Brigade and Bn HQs, whilst under constant mortar and small arms fire. Unfortunately the Royal Signals rear link detachment (RLD) to the Gloucestershire Regiment were all captured, when the battalion broke out from their defence positions. Only 39 men made it back to UN lines. This RLD consisted of L/Cpl S Ward, Sig J Cairns and Driver A Miles. They courageously managed to destroy all their radios and cipher pads prior to capture by the Chinese Army. Many who served in Korea were reservists recalled to the colours plus a large number of National Servicemen. The National Service Act came into force in 1948 and this form of conscription did not end until 1963.