



HISTORY OF SIGNALLING IN 100 OBJECTS

HARRIER JET - AIR SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS



The Army and the RAF implemented an agreement called RISTACOM - Rationalisation of Inter-service Tactical Communications - in January 1968. This gave Royal Signals responsibility for communications in forward tactical areas, which included providing the trunk and radio communications in support of the Harrier Force and later the heavy lift helicopters. 21 (Air Support) Signal Regiment provided these communications to the Harrier Force, which was then based in Germany. When the RAF airfields in Germany closed, the regiment returned to UK to its present location in Collierne. Later air support

moved from 21 Signal Regiment to 244 Signal Sqn, then subsequently in 2013 to 30 Signal Regiment. This was how air support communications developed to the present day.



Whereas air support communications had mainly focused on the Harrier Force, this changed during the Gulf Wars and Afghanistan. Helicopters had become the key means of transport in these theatres of war, but also the Apache attack helicopter was deployed to give close fire support to British and Allied Troops on the ground. Royal Signals deployed signallers to provide ground-to-air communications for all these helicopters based in Helmand province. 244 Signal Sqn became responsible for all air support communications, eventually moving to Camp Bastion from Kandahar. Here the pressure was on to deliver vital support to the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan). This Troop became experts in

the specialist helicopter communications, which included interoperable requirements between US and UK air detachments. Often Royal Signals soldiers, as well as managing communications took responsibility for marshalling aircraft at the busy Helicopter Landing Sites (HLS). In addition the



Installation Line Section provided emergency repairs, late at night, to the lines supporting the air traffic control radar, known as the Watchman Radar; throughout showing flexibility and speed – Certa Cito!