

## Pringle 2006

By Major Guy Gilks RMR

The winter term in all 18 schools that have the privilege of being granted a Royal Marines detachment in their CCF proves to be the most demanding in terms of preparation for this prestigious event in the calendar.

At best there are 5 drill periods when units can select a number of cadets to join the squad, equip them and practice for the annual Sir Steuart Pringle Trophy Competition. This, the annual Military Skills competition between all the Royal Marines Combined Cadet Force (RMCCF) Detachments took place at The Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

Each school entered a team of 8 cadets plus 1 reserve. There were 12 stances with a maximum score of 18 points and a minimum score of 1. Maximum total 216 points overall.

The structure of the Competition remained generally the same as in previous years with the AGM for CCF detachment officers being held on the Friday in the Falklands Hall at 2115. This was followed by frantic last minute preparations for the following two days. Accommodation for both Officers and Cadets was tight due to the large number of recruits and Young Officers under training at CTCRM. Cadets and Officers were required to bring sleeping bags and Roll Mats, with Camp Beds, for the more fortunate. Male cadets were accommodated within the drill shed and there was separate accommodation in one of the DL classrooms for the one female cadet in the competition.

The actual competition consists of a day's military skill stances on the Saturday and on Sunday the Drill stance and Endurance course and Orienteering are run concurrently.

The endurance section was run over part of the Endurance course on Woodbury common. This included the Sheep dip and seven tunnels, which had to be completed by four team members aged over 16. Concurrently the remaining team members had to complete an orienteering course. The combined scores of these two counted towards the Endurance Course Trophy.

After the final two parts of the competition a curry buffet lunch and presentation of the Trophy and other prizes by the Director of Training at CTCRM Col D J Stewart OBE MC RM took place in the Falklands Hall.

The stances were all manned by "volunteers" from CTCRM, who must be thanked for their time and in particular their positive and constructive attitude towards all the competitors. The Stances included:

*Drill* This consisted of an inspection, some general military knowledge questions (These were set by Sgt Ade Davie RM and the cadets had to learn 100 questions and answers about the Corps (e.g. when was 539 ASRM formed)) followed by squad drill taken by one of the cadets.

*Fire Control Orders and Target Indication.* This was back to basics, but nevertheless an important section of the competition.

*A Battle Exercise* This included an advance to an area where a downed pilot in “enemy” territory had to be “rescued” and a fight through an ambush, followed by a fantastically enthusiastic debrief from Cpls Lord and Leslie.

*Weapon Handling* consisted of the standard Weapon Handling Tests for the L98A1 cadet rifle (A non automatic weapon which has to be cocked with the right hand).

*Observation* This stance included a version of Kim’s Game, and the spotting of objects in a defined area using binos, both of which had to be tackled as a team effort. When asked to list the objects on the table one of the team attempted to remove the groundsheet covering the items, much to the amusement of Cpl Freeman

*Practical Leadership* This year teams were required to build from scratch a swing out of scaffolding in a time frame of 10 minutes. This works if cadets pay attention to the colour coding on the instructions provide by the DS!

*Section Attack* There were three options; left or right flanking or frontal assault with bags of smoke and pyrotechnics.

*First Aid in a military situation* was enhanced by plenty of prosthetics and fake blood which had to be stemmed by applying first field dressings.

*Camouflage and Concealment* which required considerable preparation prior to the competition in the form of cammed jungle hats and gilly suits, bearing in mind that cadets had to be able to actually take aim at the target and not just hide themselves in a gorse bush, which was favoured by a few.

*Map Reading* required a general basic knowledge and absolutely no conferring.

*The Endurance Course* was as usual down to fitness, mental attitude and the assistance of the YO who was allocated to show the team around the course. Thanks go to Richard Sharp for his excellent leadership and encouragement with the Pangbourne team.

*Orienteering* required the 4 team members to move as fast as possible around the stance in order to get down to the endurance course and support their other team members as they ran up the last hill around the quarry. “Get out of my way” is all I heard from the endurance team!

All the cadets acquitted themselves well on the endurance course, but there are those who didn’t fare as well as they might in this discipline, and some are aware that they need to work on their fitness levels for next year.

Following a very keenly contested competition, The Pringle Trophy was won by Pangbourne. Their total of 170 points was an impressive margin of 33 points ahead of the second placed school, Wellingborough, with Shrewsbury in third place with 133

points. Pangbourne also took the Drill Trophy, the Battle Exercise stance, and shared the Observation Trophy with Uppingham School.

Sergeant Harrison the RM DL, who took the drill stance, said that the standard and bearing of Pangbourne “drew goose bumps on his arms and that he would have passed them out as a King’s Squad”. This result is very much down to Colour Sergeant Paul Ewins (an ex RM who is now a serving police officer with the Special Search & Recovery Unit) who spent a considerable amount of time re-educating the cadets in Royal Marines’ drill.

This year the trophies were well shared out amongst the 18 teams, which was good to see along with terrifically high level of camaraderie and sportsmanship.

The Project Officer Capt Scott Wallace RM, WO2 Bob Turner RMYT, and Sgt Ade Davie RMYT are to be congratulated on the way they tackled the various challenges in organising such an event, not least dealing with so many schools but also by the way in which they did a regain on the official visitor’s programme, which I understand required a fair amount of tap dancing! I am sure that the Guest of Honour Maj Gen The Duke of Westminster and his entourage appreciated their efforts.

The entire winning team is to be congratulated on an outstanding result, and the remainder of the teams should be proud of their accomplishments, which are due in part, I am sure to their early morning practices, and their positive attitude and commitment.

The Trophies were awarded as follows:

DRILL	Pangbourne College
WEAPON HANDLING	Bedford Modern
LEADERSHIP	Shrewsbury School
OBSERVATION	Pangbourne/Uppingham
MILITARY SKILLS	Harrow School
MAP READING	Wellingborough School
FIRST AID	Canford School
ORIENTEERING	Winchester School
ENDURANCE	Sherbourne School

<b>PRINGLE TROPHY</b>	<b>Pangbourne College</b>
RUNNERS UP	Wellingborough School