

RUTLISH SCHOOL COMBINED CADET FORCE

Watery Lane, Merton Park, London, SW20 9AD

Contingent Commander: Captain Ryan Sammons



20th December 2023

RUTLISH SCHOOL CCF – SITREP – Wash Up 2023

What a 2023! This year has been one of the best in ages for Rutlish School CCF, with many events, camps and courses delivered by Contingent Staff.

The Contingent maintains a steady number of cadets, with the most recent successful Recruitment Drive taking our total to 103 cadets, the highest The Contingent has been in over 30 years. As we are all volunteers, the contingent relies on cadets attending each week to make training or camps viable and worthwhile for all. The turnout recently has been excellent and I thank you all for your dedication and efforts.



To the Cadet Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs):
Contingent Staff are continually being impressed by the maturity, diligence, teamwork and leadership by this group of exceptional young men. I am confident that we will be in a strong position to hand over weekly training and lessons to the Cadet NCOs to lead and develop the cadets within their Sections and Flights. Keep up the great work Gentlemen.

2023 has been a year of success for The Contingent, but also some frustrations with camps having to be cancelled due to operational priorities of the Armed Forces and process delays. There have been a lot of lessons learnt for Contingent Staff and protocols are in place to ensure that all camps for 2024 are signed off by London District Cadet Training Team by January 2024.

Here is a brief overview of just some of the camps, courses and events that Rutlish School CCF have conducted since April 2023. A lot achieved by all.

Navigation Package (01-02 April)

Over Easter this year cadets conducted a short 2-day Navigation Package at Rutlish School and local area. The aim, to practice and develop confidence to navigate away from school in open ground. These skills will be honed further over the coming camps and exercises.

The cadets were given the chance to get lost in Wimbledon Common and learn from these inevitable mistakes in a safe environment, under the supervision and watchful guidance of Contingents Staff.

Orienteering and Navigation Exercises will be playing a strong part of training in 2024 for all cadets.



NNAS
a step in the right direction



Exercise First Fight – June 2023

Deploying on quite possibly the hottest weekend on record, the Contingent arrived to Crowborough Camp, hungry... which was lucky as the Army Chefs had provided the world's largest container meals of pasta and meatballs, which were exceptionally good. However, from experience Rutlish School CCF knew that this was not good enough for our boys, so put in an order for 60 portions of fish and chips from the local chippy. The Contingent were definitely ready for the weekend ahead.



The next day, after a morning room inspection, cadets carried out a round-robin of military training session deep within the cool shadowy woods, which was lucky due to the 30 degree Celsius heat. The training include Camouflage & Concealment, Movement in the Field, Basher Building, Judging Distances and Why Things Are Seen. Finishing off with Ration Packs and an introduction to The Officer's Ration Pack. Ice lollies and ice creams delivered once back to camp were a welcome treat for all.



The next day the Contingent deployed into Pippingford Park on a mission to RV (Rendez-Vous) with agents waiting to pass on critical intelligence. Stealthfully cadets moved into cover and travelled tactically through brush and dense vegetation to make the PUP (Pick Up Point) within 90 minutes. Battling the terrain and heat, all Sections made the PUP within the time and were elated at their success. Bravo Gentlemen!



Falklands Challenge June 2023 – 10 Miler

It was a good idea at the time... On a Friday evening 11 Cadets, PI Francis and Capt Sammons embarked on the lengthy minibus journey to a shoreline campsite in Devon. Upon arrival the advanced party welcomed the weary travellers with a stack of fish and chips. Tents were then put up, daysacks packed and everyone bedded down for some much needed rest. The Team apprehensive for the next day, but excited.

At 0630hrs the next morning ablutions were done, feet prep-ed, tents and kit packed away. A delicious breakfast had been pre-arranged and enjoyed, however, the café staff had not quite understood the urgency of our planned communicated timings, and so the team had a pre-event 1.5 mile TAB (Tactical Advance to Battle) to get to the start point (we'll just call it a thorough warm up). Rutlish always making a grand entrance.



Over the next 10 miles, which ended up being 11 miles, of gruelling hot weather the team displayed fantastic teamwork, leadership, humour and pride to complete the challenge in good time. True grit and determination.

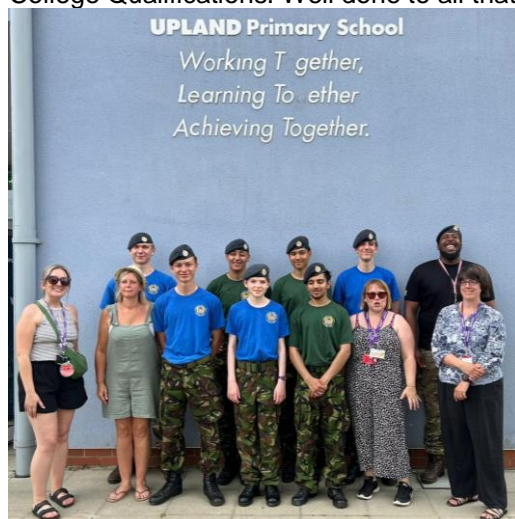
The cadets were looked upon by organisers, participants and spectators with great pride and admiration. They were the talk of the event and cheered on throughout. Massively proud of the team and what they achieved for The Veterans Charity in honour of those that served and were lost in The Falklands Conflict.

Cadets raised over £400 for The Veterans Charity on this event.



Family Day – Upland Primary School and Wimbledon Chase Primary School – June 2023

Rutlish Cadets always eager to support the local community helped out on School Family Days. The PTA and school staff were blown away by the cadet's engagement, maturity and fun loving spirits that made both events highly successful for all the families visiting. Furthermore, all this counts towards Cadet Vocational College Qualifications. Well done to all that supported on this.



Funeral of Flight Lieutenant Brian Still

FltLt Brian Still sadly passed away after a year of battling terminal illness. Since 1994, he was RAF Officer Commanding and was one Capt Sammons' father figures growing up as a cadet. FltLt Still was a character to say the least, full of banter and plenty of laughter.

FltLt Still was a London Fire Brigade Officer, a Physical Training Officer and member of 10 Para (Parachute Battalion TA). He was an excellent role model to many of the young men that he instructed throughout the 1990-2000's.

Cadets were given the prestigious task of providing the Honour Guard for the coffin to be carried through, which under the expertise guidance of Flying Officer Urmani (RAF OC) had practised for weeks to perfect.

Guests, family, ex-colleagues and ex-cadets moved through the Honour Guard all standing smartly to attention.

Everyone took their seats, "Waterloo Sunset" by The Kinks played, as heads gazed around to see the coffin entering, there was shock by some guests myself included, but immense pride to see the cadets and staff carrying FltLt Still's coffin to his final resting place. I believe this was a final last minute request by the great man himself, just for a laugh.

Fortunately the Cadets and Staff conducted themselves with humility and pride, executing the coffin manoeuvres with care. At the wake, there was high praise from family and friends for the effort of the cadets of Rutlish School CCF. A great send off, for a great man.



In 2024, the Contingent Commander will be commissioning "The FltLt Brian Still Shield for Humour in the Face of Adversity", this is planned to coincide with the planting of a small tree within the Rutlish Commemoration Garden.

Central Camp – July 2023

During the summer term 40 cadets deployed to Nescliff in Shropshire during school time to partake in military exercises, section attacks, defence and delay tactics and live firing on the ranges. The camp was a challenge for many, but all cadets gained knowledge and experience that will support them greatly in their time as cadets. Rutlish excelled on the Shot Gun shooting and The Gun Run, so 2024 watch out!



The Rifles Cup Challenge – September 2023

Brecon... just the name along still sends a shiver down the spine of many serving and ex-military that have had the “pleasure” of operating in this bleak and challenging environment in the Welsh Hills. Nevertheless, Rutlish School CCF Army Section embarked onto the competition arriving in darkness during Storm Agnes. Sleep on the first night was limited, to say the least.

The next couple of days, however, the weather held out and Rutlish School CCF Rifles Team plodded over the hills, through the puddles and beat a number of other Rifles Cadet Units to be awarded a Bronze Medal and being named Third Best Cadet Rifles CCF Unit in the UK 2023. An absolute sterling effort by all involved, with fantastic support and motivation from Army Section Officer Commanding PI Braithwaite.



Remembrance Sunday

Representing the school each year, Rutlish School CCF paraded at both The Nelson (Hospital) War Memorial and St Mary's Church to give thanks for all those that paid the ultimate sacrifice since World War II to present day. All NCOs, Cadets and Recruits held themselves proudly and given high praise as always.



Walking Home For Christmas 2023

On Wednesday 20th December, Cadets and Staff stepped off on this year's Walking Home For Christmas event to raise much needed funds for veterans in need especially at this time of year, through Walking with the Wounded Charity : <https://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/>





Dressed in Christmas jumpers, flashing lights, glow sticks and Santa Hats, the Contingent successfully completed the 6-mile walk through Wimbledon and surround. With excellent support from family, friends, colleagues and school staff, Rutlish School CCF have managed to raise a staggering £2,107.90 for Walking With The Wounded. Thank you everyone that has supported this fantastic cause.



If you wish to donate, please use the QR code below, which will remain open until Friday evening.










Walking Home For Christmas is Walking With The Wounded's annual, nationwide walking challenge to support their work helping wounded veterans re-ignite their sense of purpose and get back on their feet with positive physical and mental health. This Christmas, is WHFC tenth year of this event, help us push the lifetime total to over £2m raised for our veterans.

Contingent Commander's Final Word

Thank you to my fantastic staff, for without them we could not achieve what we do with the excellent young men of Rutlish School CCF. Well done to all of the current Contingent Cadet and Recruits, you have done amazing things this year! I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay safe, have fun and enjoy your time with family and loved one. See you back on Wednesday 10th January 2024.

Capt R Sammons