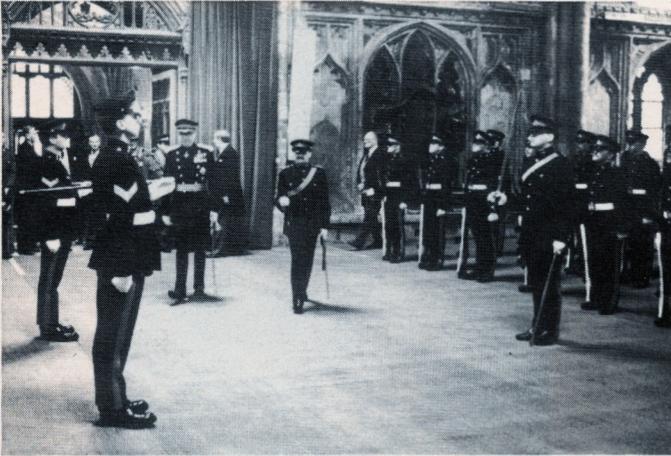


National Artillery Association Prizegiving

by Chris Vere



Lt Gen Sir John Akehurst completes the inspection of the Guard of Honour, provided by 101 (Northumbrian) Fd Regt (V) and commanded by Capt James Haggerty, at the Guildhall, 22 Nov 86.

Gathering once again at Guildhall, London for the annual National Artillery Association prizegiving on Saturday, 22 November, only the weather outwitted the organisers — for as Hon Secretary, Maj Michael Harrison explained 'the forecast was so poor that we decided to have the parade inside the Great Hall'. So, although there were some shreds of sunshine outside to show the superior shine of the HAC's saluting battery's 25 pounders guarding the doorway, it was nevertheless, more intimate to see the Guard of Honour, furnished from 101st (Northumbrian) Field Regiment's Headquarters and 203 (Elswick) Field Battery, and the Royal Artillery Band formed up on the comfort of carpet rather than risk the rain that threatened, and had damped the parade outside last year.

Guests, members of the NAA's organising committee, families and members of the winning batteries and OTCs saw Capt Jim Haggerty's Guard of Honour pay compliments as the official guests arrived, and after the 'General Salute', Lt Gen Sir John Akehurst, Commander UK Field Army and the TA's Inspector General, inspected the Guard and the Band, accompanied by the NAA's Chairman, Col David Sime and 'Duty Vice President', Maj Gen Mike Tomlinson, a former Director Royal Artillery.

Representing the Master Gunner, Gen Sir Thomas Morony, Maj Gen Tomlinson passed on his best wishes, and welcomed those who had travelled to come to the ceremony. He then went on to thank the CRA 2 Inf Div, Brig Giles Arnold and his staff



Lt Gen Sir John Akehurst presents the National Artillery Association Cup to Maj Andrew Dines, BC of 289 Cdo Bty (V) which were Runners up in the Field Competition.



The General presents the Manorbier Trophy to Maj David Lewis, BC of 210 (Staffordshire) AD Bty (V) which were Runners up in the AD section.

from York and the DRA, Maj Gen Peter Bonnet for their help with the arrangements, and then introduced Lt Gen Sir John Akehurst as principal guest. 'He is a distinguished infantryman, with a sound appreciation of the place of artillery in battle — a soldier's man' stated General Mike. Then followed the presentation of the trophies and awards of the National Artillery Association — with Hon Sec, Maj Mike Harrison reading the list of winners and Treasurer Lt Col Peter Binder making sure that the right awards were to hand. The top Air Defence award — and the replica — were presented by Mr Christopher King, British Petroleum's Director of Administration, who was a member of the platform party.

'We infantrymen are the supported arm' declared Gen Sir John in his address, 'and I'm well supported today'. 'The National Artillery Association exists for the furtherance of the science and practice of artillery — and I applaud its aim — and the organisation deserves the strongest support'.

'Artillery is the most neglected arm in peacetime. It is more than just the price of the ammunition. It is impossible to simulate the effect of artillery fire on the ground or in the air, and for whole generations of infantry, 'artillery support' has been thunder-flashes. There is great comfort in quick and accurate close support and, recognising this, the Gunners are the quickest to expand in war but the fastest to go in peacetime'.



Maj Nick Eleanor receives the King George V Trophy for the Best OP Bty for his 269 (West Riding) OP Bty (V).



Maj Bill McVickers, left, BC of 203 (Elswick) Fd Bty (V), helps hold up HM The Queen's Cup which he and his men won for the second year in succession.

'The Falklands conflicts showed the need for adequate air defence — and with the prospect of the new Javelin system, things are very exciting for the TA's air defence regiments.'

'In peacetime, our thinking is conditioned by cost — and no general ever gets enough cash — so we have to improve the skills of the few. Those skills are better than ever — in both the Regular and Territorial Armies. The National Artillery Association enhances the skills. Although it is over 120 years old, it moves with the times. The test exercises do not overstretch — and it deserves the support of all. I congratulate the winners — and there is a very noticeable trend in that they seem to come from the North — I suggest that next year, we'll see the South back for their revenge? By promoting competition, the National Artillery Association gives the motivating edge to training for the TA — and as Inspector General over the last two and a half years, I respect and admire the TA's enthusiasm — especially those who have benefited from the enhancements!'

The Chairman of the NAA, Col David Sime, then rose to propose a vote of thanks to Maj Gen Tomlinson for presiding, and Lt Gen Sir John for presenting the prizes. 'Once again', he said, 'I have the honour and the privilege of saying thank you to the large number of friends who have helped the National Artillery Association to achieve the aims that were formulated some 123 years ago — when direct shooting at target screens on the mud flats at Shoeburyness were the order of the day. Today we are more sophisticated but TA training must be fun. Likewise the NAA contests must be worth while, satisfying and fun to enter too. We are most grateful to Brigs Giles Arnold and John Howarth and their staffs for their assistance in running the Field, Air Defence and University OTC competitions. We must thank the staff of HQRA 2 Inf Div, those at Woolwich, the DRA, the City of London for the use of Guildhall, and the Guard of Honour and the Band for the spectacle that we have enjoyed inside the hall today'.



213 (South Lancs Artillery) AD Bty with their BP Trophy held aloft by Maj Bob Gornall, the BC, outside Guildhall. WO2 (BSM) Doug Fletcher, centre right, holds the replica.

'The National Artillery Association are privileged to be regarded as part of the Regiment — and as we move on to next time, there are the inevitable moves and changes. I'd particularly like to thank Brig Giles Arnold for his friendly and dynamic help with our affairs, and Maj Bill Easeman who has been our Treasurer for 25 years — now succeeded by Lt Col Peter Binder who will look after our silver! In the absence of our President, the Master Gunner, I'd like to thank Gen Mike Tomlinson for presiding here today. As DRA, we enjoyed his wholehearted support, and with him, Regular and TA links were secure through his being Colonel Commandant, Honorary Regimental Colonel of 2nd Regiment and Honorary Colonel of 104th Air Defence Regiment.'

'Sir John, how honoured we are. Thank you for the gracious presentation of the trophies. I hope that you have found it useful and refreshing to be with the TA's Gunners. They are in good heart!'

The platform party then joined the prizewinners, guests and friends in refreshments and the inevitable series of photographs. And so the question is — will the South strike back? Will 203 (Elswick) Field Battery win HM The Queen's Prize for the third year?

Footnote

The most recent of the NAA Trophies, the Dodds Trophy, was not presented at this ceremony, but has been won by 207 Air Defence Battery of 105th (Scottish) Air Defence Regiment.



Members of HQ Bty (V), 101 (N) Fd Regt (V) with the Surrey Yeomanry Cup, which they won, held aloft by Lt Grahame Eyre. Those in No 1 Dress were part of the Guard of Honour.

National Artillery Association 1986 Main Prize List

HM The Queen's Cup

203 (Elswick) Fd Bty (V), 101 (Northumbrian) Fd Regt (V).
Awarded to Maj Bill McVicker, BC.
Replica award to WO2 (BSM) John Rudd.

2nd Prize, The National Artillery Association Cup

289 Cdo Bty (V), 29 Cdo Regt.
Awarded to Maj Andrew Dines, BC.

The British Petroleum Trophy for Air Defence Artillery

213 (South Lancashire Artillery) AD Bty (V), 103 (Lancashire Artillery Volunteers) AD Regt (V).
Awarded to Maj Bob Gornall, BC.
Replica award to WO2 (BSM) Doug Fletcher.

The Manorbier Trophy

210 (Staffordshire) AD Bty (V), 104 AD Regt (V).
Awarded to Maj David Lewis, BC.

The Taurus Trophy (for aircraft recognition)

211 (South Wales) AD Bty (V), 104 AD Regt (V).
Awarded to Maj Guy Clarke, BC.

Air Defence Headquarters Battery Competition

HQ Bty (V), 102 (Ulster) AD Regt (V).
Awarded to Capt Bill Lemon, BK.

King George V Trophy for OP Batteries

269 (West Riding) OP Bty (V).
Maj Nick Eleanor, BC.

The Surrey Yeomanry Cup for Field Headquarters Batteries

HQ Bty (V), 101 (Northumbrian) Fd Regt (V).
Lt Grahame Eyre, Radar Tp Comd.

The Dodds Cup

207 (City of Glasgow) AD Bty (V), 105 (Scottish) AD Regt (V).