

**RLC YACHT CLUB – 2008 ANNUAL REPORT AND APPLICATION FOR RLC  
SPORTS GRANT FOR 2009**

**2008 ANNUAL REPORT**

**SUMMARY**

1. 2008 has been a year of significant competitive achievement with the RLC Offshore and Windsurfing teams, comprising in the order of 20 RLC personnel, winning their **Army Championships**. The RLCYC's offshore, dinghy and windsurfing individual training programmes have either introduced or qualified over 130 RLC personnel in one of the 3 disciplines. Over 60 RLC personnel have taken part in the Corps offshore and dinghy regattas. Some 70 RLC personnel have undertaken unit adventurous training, both in Majorca and the UK, using the Corps offshore and dinghy fleets. It has also seen success in replacing core equipments and securing dinghy bosun replacement and support to dinghy infrastructure at Bicester with tremendous support from 23 Pnr Regt RLC. However, the level of operational commitments is taking a toll on unit adventurous training, resulting in a low utilisation of club equipment, specifically the yachts, and corresponding mounting expenditure in berthing fees for Startrekker on ex Balearic Watch. This has resulted in the Yacht Club Offshore Committee deciding to end the exercise after 4 years and return Startrekker to the UK.

**COMPETITIVE EVENTS**

2. **Offshore.** The Offshore team won all elements of the Army Sailing Association (ASA) Offshore Regatta by a considerable margin and went on to win the ASA Dolphin Trophy, which, this year was incorporated in the internationally renowned Isle of Wight Round the Island Race where the RLC team finished 317 out of 1780. This resulted in the RLC becoming the Army Offshore Champions for 2008. The RLC team also participated in the Solent Twilight series and are committed to the Warsash Winter Series starting in late Oct 08, with a subsidiary aim of using these events to encourage novice participation, particularly from 25 Regt. A further notable achievement for the RLC has been the appointment of Capt Paul Andersen of 17 P&M Regt to be the Army Offshore Captain and skipper of the brand new "British Soldier" – a £270K investment by the Army in national and international offshore racing. The Army team with British Soldier were selected to be part of the UK team in the international Rolex Commodores Cup. First held in 1992, the Rolex Commodores' Cup is an international offshore regatta for three-boat national teams. Organised by the Royal Ocean Racing Club, this biennial event is held over seven days in Cowes.

3. **Dinghy.** At the time of this report, the Dinghy racing season has yet to finish. However, the RLCYC Dinghy Team has continued to race to a high standard and have competed in the following events:

- a. ASA Inter Corps Team Racing Regatta. The Inter Corps Team Racing Regatta has been moved to September and the RLCYC intends to enter 1 team into the competition.
- b. Inter Service Gold Cup. This is a Tri-Service events with individual entries in the fixed keel Mermaid Class. The RLCYC entered 1 team made up of

WO2 Goldby, WO2 Purtil and Cpl Southwick from 17 P&M Regt. The team fought hard against some stiff competition, but were unfortunately knocked out in the second round.

c. Inter Service Conningham Cup. Regretably, the Conningham Cup was cancelled due to poor weather. It is hoped that it will be rescheduled later this year.

d. Army Awards. LCpl Mason 17 P&M Regt was awarded Army Colours as a result of her contribution to, and success in, the Army dinghy sailing team throughout her military career

4. **Windsurfing.** The RLC team have had a very successful year. They have become the winners of the Inter Corps 2008 Series – effectively the Army's windsurfing league. They have also won the one off Army Inter Corps Team Championships, thereby pulling off the Army windsurfing double. Individually, Maj Cross was the individual winner of the Inter Corps Series and WO2 Way was 3<sup>rd</sup>. Maj Cross came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Army Championships and Capt Ireland was 8<sup>th</sup> and WO1 Hind was 9<sup>th</sup>. In the Forces Open Championship, Maj Cross was 1<sup>st</sup>, becoming the individual Forces Open Champion for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in succession – a most notable achievement.

#### **INDIVIDUAL TRAINING AND ADVENTUROUS TRAINING**

##### 5. **Offshore.**

a. Individual Training. The 2008 annual sail training week was a major success. Utilising 8 yachts from JSASTC Gosport and the RLCYC St George, and using RLC instructors and skippers, the Offshore Committee trained and qualified 20 Competent Crew, 7 Day Skippers, 3 Coastal Skippers and 1 Cruising Instructor. Ex Timber Deck has been retained as an integral part of the RLC Troop Commanders programme and each course has run a weekend expedition to demonstrate the benefits of offshore sailing and to see what excellent facilities are available both at JSASTC and in the Corps Yacht Club. Ex Fyn Diamond is a hybrid individual training, unit adventurous training and competitive regatta exercise conducted annually from the Services Sail Training Centre at Kiel. This year the exercise takes place from 3 to 12 Sep 08. The RLC has 7 yachts booked and 7 competent crew and 21 novices taking part. The availability of Corps qualified skippers has been disappointing but Kiel have agreed to provide 4 and have also agreed to reduce the level of qualification required – with commensurate and reasonable constraints on night sailing and racing. This is unfortunate, but the success is that so many inexperienced sailors have come forward to participate.

b. **Unit Training.** This is the fourth year of Ex Balearic Watch and the exercise is continuing to take a heavy toll on Startrekker. A lot of work was required in order to get to MCA coding standards which included a re-sheath of the mast and refurbishment of all safety equipment. The number of legs was reduced this year to try and match demand but it is disappointing that only 5 of the 12 legs are being utilised for adventure training by units. The cost of maintaining Startrekker in this environment along with the reduced income, increase in flight costs and unfavourable Euro exchange rate are making the

exercise economically unviable. Balearic Watch will not be run in 2009 and Startrekker will be home based in Marchwood for unit adventurous training in UK waters. It is anticipated that this will make it easier for units to charter at shorter notice and with less financial commitment.

6. **Dinghy.**

a. Individual. The annual keelboat regatta took place at Sea View Yacht Club on the Isle of Wight on 4-5 Jun 08, and, despite units being more committed to operations than ever, 11 teams (33 personnel) successfully entered from across the RLC. It was excellent to see teams from both the Regular and TA RLC, although with the exception of 17 P&M Regt, the majority were made up of RLC personnel from headquarters. Despite the poor forecast, a number of short races were completed on Day 1 and good racing conditions continued on into Day 2 allowing for plenty of races to be held. Teams were of mixed ability, but there were some extremely strong and experienced sailors; competition was hard fought between all teams, but 17 P&M successfully won first, second and third prize. Once again, Fastrax sponsored the event enabling it to continue and ensuring its success. The Corps Dinghy Bosun has also continued to run a series of individual courses at Calvert Lake Bicester both Dinghy (5) and power safety boat (3).

b. Unit Training. Sgt Bullivant, the Corps Dinghy Bosun has continued to work extremely hard promoting the RLCYC Sail Training Centre (RLCYCSTC) and Bicester Garrison Sailing Club (BGSC) throughout the season and highlighting yet again that many units in the local area are unaware of the clubs existence. Since promoting the club further, units within close proximity have begun to use the facilities on a weekly basis encouraging young soldiers to take part in taster session and subsequently pursue qualifications. Sgt Bullivant has successfully run a number of sail training courses and in addition, has again taught sailing at summer camps for a significant number of cadets, continuing to raise interest in the sport. The support for the RLCYC STC by 23 Pnr Regt at Bicester has been truly outstanding. Not only have they made extensive use of the facilities for both unit dinghy sailing and unit team building activities, but they have also taken the opportunity to enhance the infrastructure with their pioneer skills.

7. **Windsurfing.** The Windsurfing team have been keen to broaden the base of its membership. The recruiting drive is going well and, for the first time in a number of years there are members of the squad serving at Regimental duty. The Corps Open Day identified a number of additional sailors, one of whom (Cpl Blinston, 27 Regt RLC) made it to the Army Championships. Operational commitments unfortunately ruled out participation by the others, but they will be back from theatre by next season. A series of one day introductory courses were run for 45 soldiers from 29 Regt RLC, generating sufficient interest to run 3 "start windsurfing" courses. As a result of the interest shown by both personnel from 29 Regt and 9 Sup Regt (thanks to WO2 Watson's efforts) it is intended to open a Wednesday Club and start to run Start & Intermediate windsurfing courses, based out Aston Keynes Water Park, near Cirencester. This facility has full RYA recognition for Windsurfing, Dinghy and Power-boat (up to safety boat). The management are ex military so very accommodating to service personnel, both 29 & 9 Regt have unit membership and the proprietor is happy for the Corps Windsurfing team

to run courses at the centre.

### **AWARD OF CORPS COLOURS**

8. WO2 Purtil of 17 P&M Regt was awarded Corps Colours for her contribution to Offshore Racing, both as a team member and as the administrator.

### **CHANGES IN KEY OFFICIALS**

9. Vice Commodore Windsurfing. Capt Ireland, 29 Regt, has replaced Maj Cross as Vice Commodore Windsurfing, Maj Cross has assumed Army Windsurfing responsibilities.

10. RLCYC Secretary. Maj King, DES, has replaced Maj Scott as Secretary.

11. Vice Commodore Dinghy. Capt Boxen, DRLC, will be leaving the Army at the end of 2008 and will be replaced by WO2 Goldby 17 P&M Regt.

12. Corps Dinghy Bosun. Sgt Bullivant, 23 Pnr Regt, is retiring from the Army at the end of this year and will be replaced by L Cpl Locke from 23 Pnr Regt.

13. Offshore Assistant Bosun. LCpl Mason, 17 P&M Regt, completes a 2 year tour as Assistant Bosun and will be returning to regimental duty with 17 P&M Regt in Nov 08, who are in the process of identifying a successor.

14. RLCYC Commodore. I leave the Army in Apr 10 and succession planning is underway to identify an appropriate successor.

### **2009 FORECAST OF ACTIVITIES, AIMS AND TARGETS**

15. Last year, we stated that that there was no evidence of any imminent reduction in the level of operational commitments. This has been borne out in 2008, and has been instrumental in the decision to withdraw from Balaeric Watch. Notwithstanding, it is evident that there is a strong appetite amongst young soldiers and officers to have a go at the sailing disciplines. This has reaffirmed our strategic intent to maintain strong competitive and training programmes and invest effort in publicity in the face of intense operational commitment. Our 2009 programme and targets are therefore:

a. Offshore:

(1) Conduct a programme of individual training activity comprising one Corps Sail Training Week and 3 Tp Comd weekends.

(2) Conduct a 10 day unit adventurous training exercise in the Baltic, incorporating the RLC Regatta.

(3) Facilitate unit offshore adventurous sail training expeditions by making available Startrekker and St George from Marchwood Military Port with the planned minimum utilisation of 161 and 88 days respectively.

(4) Undertake a comprehensive racing programme that includes participation in the Army Offshore Regatta, the Services Offshore Regatta, the Isle of Wight Round the Island Race and Cowes Week.

(5) Win the Army Regatta and the Dolphin Trophy.

(6) Support 2 legs of the Joint Services Transglobe Expedition in 2009/10, one with a 17 P&M crew, the other with a crew drawn from the remainder of the RLC.

b. Dinghy:

(1) Bring into use the 6 new Pico Dinghies and Safety Boat, purchased with Corps and Nuffield Trust Funds in 2008.

(2) Secure a successful handover of Corps Dinghy Bosun and the full training to instructor level, in both Dinghy and Safety Power Boats, of LCpl Locke 23 Pnr Regt.

(3) Run a programme of individual dinghy and safety power boat courses.

(4) Increase the unit utilisation of the facilities at the RLCYC Sail Training Centre at Calvert Lake.

(5) Increase the utilisation of the mobile sail training fleet in support of unit adventurous training camps outwith Calvert Lake.

(6) Run the RLC Seaview Regatta 3/4 Jun 09.

(7) Participate in Army and Tri Service competitions, aiming to win the Lagos Trophy.

(8) Contribute to the Army team in the Inter Services competitions.

c. Windsurfing:

(1) Develop the use of Aston Keynes Water Park for the introduction and training of novices to windsurfing, specifically for 29 Regt and 9 Sup Regt.

(2) Return to the windsurfing squad those soldiers identified in 2008 but unable to participate due to operational commitments.

(3) Conduct a pre season squad training camp.

(4) Participate in all Army and Tri Service competitions, aim to retain Army Inter Corps and Team Championships.

(5) Contribute to the Army team in the Inter Services.

## APPLICATION FOR RLC SPORTS GRANT

16. This year's application follows the 10 year financial planning cycle that the RLCYC has adopted and developed with the Corps Treasurer over the last 3 years. Notable features of the plan are an equipment replacement programme and the generation of Club income from yacht charter fees and sponsorship to enable the Club to enhance its activities beyond that funded by the RLC Sports Grant.

17. The equipment programme is based around a 2 year windsurfer replacement cycle, a 3 year dinghy replacement cycle and a 8 year and 12 year replacement cycle for light displacement and heavy displacement yachts respectively. These replacement cycles currently accord with ASA endorsed practice and the programme assumes the maximum call upon Nuffield and Army Central major and minor grants. However, there are potentially a number of changes that may be introduced into this replacement cycle, that we wish to draw to the Sports Committee's attention.

18. First, the ASA have decided to introduce a subsidiary discipline to windsurfing, namely slalom. This requires a different windsurfing board to be able to participate. The ASA, to encourage teams in this direction, is offering a one off grant in 2009 but have not committed themselves to provide any further assistance beyond that. Effectively, this has introduced the requirement for a second set of equipment, which design and material advances and wear and tear will result in the necessity to replace it every 2 years. This means that the Windsurfing team will have to replace 2 sets of equipment every 2 years, but the replacement has been staggered so that each year a set of equipment will have to be changed. Currently the ASA is only giving grant for 2 sets of equipment for one year, thereafter it appears that teams and or individuals will have to fund 2 sets of equipment but with only 1 sets worth of ASA grant. This issue remains under discussion within the ASA and within the RLCYC. The RLCYC view of participating in slalom is that we must support it. As the long standing Army Champions and with key RLC personalities running the ASA, it would be inappropriate not to do so. However, it has always been the RLCYC's view that each discipline should be self funding, ie. income derived from offshore by charter fee or sponsorship should be used to reduce the offshore call on RLC Sports Grant, and not be used to subsidise the other disciplines. Consequently, the increase in costs due to adopting the slalom discipline are going to have to be met by the individuals, by sponsorship or the RLC Sports Grant. The RLCYC believe that it is unreasonable to expect further individual contributions. Many of them are already paying for wet suits and other protective clothing, and, in order to attend and compete during the Army series, are investing in their own camper vans. It is not inexpensive, and unless we encourage participation, by reducing the financial burden, it is difficult to see how young and low rank soldiers could become fully fledged team members. Both dinghy and offshore have achieved success attracting cash sponsorship. Windsurfing has achieved a degree of sponsorship in terms of discount on the boards and the rigs. It may be possible to attract some form of cash sponsorship towards the slalom equipment, but it requires time, effort and a bit of luck to come to fruition. This means that, the additional costs of meeting the Slalom capability have been put forward for additional Corps funding in the first instance, but we will be actively seeking to reduce this through sponsorship, and, or, increased ASA grant in the medium and long terms.

19. Second, the new material that the dinghies are made of, a polyethylene derivative, is proving exceptionally hard wearing and tough. As the majority of the dinghy fleet has now been replaced with dinghies of this material, we are examining its durability with a view to the degree that it has increased the life span of the hulls and therefore extended the replacement cycle. The Dinghy Committee will form a view on this and report next year.

20. Third, the Offshore Committee is reviewing the requirement for replacement or refurbishment of Startrekker and St George. The former has been summer based in the Mediterranean for the last 4 years, has undertaken an extensive refit and has had a significant amount of further money spend on her. We assess that she now has many more years of useful life, and that UK basing at Marchwood should reduce further maintenance expenditure due to the ability to use 17 P&M facilities and also due to the ability to have more immediate supervision of her use. However, we have not deflated assessed expenditure on her maintenance as there is a major piece of work that has to take place on water ingress where the hull joins the deck and we need to monitor its use and costs in the UK for a season in order to get an accurate view of future costs. Therefore, there is the possibility of a reduction in bid next year. On the latter, St George, whilst utilisation remains low and maintenance is manageable, it does not make financial sense to replace her. We have incorporated a planned refit within the new financial plan. We are conscious that we have a hull replacement fund for the replacement of both hulls in due course and we believe that we will be in a better position to assess the full use of this fund for yacht replacement next year.

21. A final factor that has had to be introduced this year, as a prudent act, is the incorporation of a 4% uplift for inflation in the sailing/marine sector. The majority of sailing equipment (hulls, sails) is all manufactured from oil based materials and we are noticing above inflation increases in prices and see no early prospect of a return to 2007 relative price stability.

22. The resulting bid for Sports Committee Grant is £23142 comprising:

Offshore Training, Maintenance, ASA Membership and Racing	3408
Offshore Hull Fund	5410
Dinghy Training, Maintenance and Racing	2705
Dinghy Hull Fund	4680
Windsurfing Training, Equipment and Racing	6939

This represents an increase in bid of approximately £3K above previous years plans as a result of the additional cost of the new slalom discipline to windsurfing, as outlined in para 18 above. The resulting 10 year plan is in the attached spreadsheets. The Sports Committee should note that the RLCYC overall cash sponsorship secured for 2008 and expected to be taken forward for 2009 is £11.5K. Therefore, for every £2 from the Corps, we are matching it with a £1 from the RLCYC's own sponsorship efforts – and this excludes the extensive discounting that the Windsurfers are able to secure in purchasing their equipment.

23. Transglobe. Last year the RLCYC informed the Sports Committee of its intent to support 2 legs of the Army's entry to the Transglobe expedition, and secured a provisional approval for a major grant to offset the costs that each RLC crew member was likely to face. The Corps entry has been confirmed as Leg 4, 3 Oct 09 to 14 Nov

09, Cape Town to Perth. The 17 P&M Regt leg is Canary Islands to Rio, 1 Aug 09 to 29 Aug 09. Participants must first fill in the application form and send it to the ex office. Final selection will be done in conjunction with the Corps in Nov 08. Personal contributions are likely to be in the order of £400. It would be appropriate for the Corps to cover these costs and for maximum Corps exposure to be achieved, a contribution to RLC badged crew kit would be most beneficial. The bid for Corps funds is therefore:

28 x £400	£11,200 (although this might be less)
28 x £150	£4200
Total	<u>£15,400</u>

Costs will become firmer later in the year once Army sponsorship details are confirmed. In the meantime, the RLCYC wish to register an initial formal bid for £15.4K.

## **CONCLUSION**

In spite of the level of operational commitments, curtailing unit adventurous training and diminishing the numbers of RLC personnel able to participate in sailing at any one time, RLCYC activities continue to attract large numbers into the sailing disciplines and the Corps teams are Army Offshore and Windsurfing Champions. This is a major success and confirms the rightness of the RLCYC's decision to maintain a full programme of individual training activities, participation in Army and Tri Service competition and investment in Corps sailing equipment, ie. invest in the future. What is encouraging is the number of novices that are being introduced to the sailing disciplines and the increased use being made of the RLC STC at Bicester. This bodes well in achieving a broad base from which unit adventurous training and future competitive teams can be built, and enabling sailing to remain a key element in the generation of non operational challenge, adventure and fun in the lives of RLC personnel.

1 Sep 08

S J FLEET  
Commodore  
RLCYC

Annex:

A. RLCYC 10 Year Income Expenditure Plan Spreadsheets.