

# EXERCISE MARKET GARDEN

*GW4XKE*

## **GB65BTF & GB2ADU**

*1st to 7th June 2009*

Following the very successful LRDG 2008 exercise some members of the team wanted a repeat in 2009. After some thought, a high profile event came to mind being the 65th Anniversary of the ill-fated Operation Market-Garden when so many servicemen and the local civilians were lost together with the German forces over ten or so days from Sunday 17th November 1944.

The logistics for these events are time-consuming to say the least, so an early start is a must. Preparations commenced toward the end of 2008 to obtain the call signs GB65BTF (Bridge Too Far) and GB2ADU (Air Dispatch Units) to recognize the RAF Dakota crews and also the RASC Air Dispatch Units involved in an air supply operation. With the assistance of [www.fds.graphics.com](http://www.fds.graphics.com) over the design of the very special QSL card for this prestigious event, and the issue of the licence by Ofcom 2009 followed by the arrival of the cards just before our start date of the 1st of June 2009 we were ready.

As a supplement to this operation at the Training Wing of 21 Signal Regiment (AS) Colerne, Wiltshire the call signs would be on the air again in July 2009 from another location (if available) with a final repeat in the month of September 2009 from the Barry Amateur Radio Society's

established station in Sully, near Barry South Wales with the QSL cards generously sponsored by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

It is appropriate here to acknowledge the full support and permission of all past and present Commanding Officers with (in post now) Lt Col Graham N. Addley, with all ranks of the Regiment and the facility of the Training Wing and nearby Block 52 together with the accommodation Block 67.

Since the event last year we have been joined by three fresh faces, Ian McGowan G8OFZ who took over from Tim G. Williams G4YVY who was unable to attend; Kane Gunter SWL who came with Daniel Millan GØØZU, followed by David W. Barnes who arrived with Air Formation Signals Association Hon. Chairman Dr. A. David Vickers both in an SWL capacity.

With the arrival of some of the team on Monday 1st June 2009 and attending to the requirements at the accommodation block etc. we were able start setting-up the radio equipment in the Training Wing and at Block 52 to be used by Peter Fletcher GØRGB and Ian G8OFZ. The aerial masts had been erected prior to our arrival and left in the nested position in case they required repositioning – in the event this proved to be necessary

First station activated by mid-afternoon by Peter GØRGB with log book No. 2 and GB65BTF and also our secondary call sign GB2ADU on the higher frequency amateur bands with, Morse and voice contacts throughout Europe until close down late afternoon.

The second station to activate was Ian G8OFZ with log book No 3 assisted by Peter GØRGG on the lower frequency part of the bands 40m and 80m but mainly with UK stations being in great demand until about 20:30 hrs clock time that evening then close down with a visit to the Sgt's Mess Bar by those team members present.

The third station ready to become live on the air was not completed until 20:00 hrs GMT in the Training Wing Room 9 with Dennis GW4XKE and log book No 1 as other essentials had taken up much time that day, including mast adjustments, erecting the 132 ft doublet aerial so a test transmission only on 40m SSB resulting in a contact with Mark DL1FDL and a good report of 5/9 lead to close down for that day. We were also very pleased to see John H. Densem G4KJV this year who attended for a number of days with his blue Fiat Scudo radio van and receiving assistance to set up his aerial by some crew members.

As in the past the general pattern was set for the following days all three stations operative, with all the HF bands appearing in the log books except 15m due to conditions, however, the LF bands 40m, 80m and 160m were all very productive and concentrated effort there was the norm up to the final half-day Sunday 7th June. Many stations worked us worldwide from all parts of the UK, Europe, and USA. One especially interesting contact was Al K6YRA a station in Los Angeles on SSB and CW who managed to get through the pile-ups and showed great interest, we thank all for their patience particularly the weaker and low power stations.

By the end of the week some of the team had to leave so a rather special surprise presentation was made from the group to Eileen Robinson, (an ex-WAAF, we only just found out), on her final and retirement day Friday 5th June 2009. She has been in charge of the Training Office for many years and over this period Eileen has known many of us who have been to these annual events at Colerne and has been a great assistance - so it is with sadness that we will not be seeing her there again.

We all gathered outside the Training Wing with the Air Formation Signals Association Hon. Chairman Dr. A. David Vickers pressed into service to make a presentation gift and card from all those present, to Eileen - a very surprised lady who was brought out of her office - with in mind all those who have been to these events over a long period, followed by the obligatory presentation picture taken by Kane Gunter the official team photographer.

To sum up: over the period of this operation in 6 days, 594 contacts were made worldwide, and this number of QSL cards sent out via the RSGB and RSARS QSL Bureaux. Received direct were many cards some with SSAEs. or IRCs including those from SWLs. Doubtless further cards will be received in due course