

ROYAL SIGNALS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In May 1952 the 1st Army Wireless Reserve Squadron, Cadre, Royal Signals was formed and Major Dennis Haylock (G3ADZ) was appointed Officer Commanding with a mandate to recruit personnel mainly from radio amateurs.

In 1954, the first proposal for the formation of an “Army Amateur Radio Society”, a society having both amateur status and, as with the United States’ MARS (“Military Affiliate Radio System”), official recognition as an emergency military network was put forward by Brigadier Eric Cole (G2EC), then CSO Southern Command. This proposal was very favourably received but because of G2EC’s posting overseas he was unable to supervise and monitor the Society’s organisation, and the proposal was not proceeded with. By 1955 an Army Wireless Reserve Amateur Radio Society had been formed, a biannual news sheet *BROADCAST* issued to members, and unit exercises and camps were arranged to ensure that GB3AWR operated in various “rare” counties.

In 1956 G2EC became Honorary Vice-President of AWRARS which had extended its membership to a number of Army personnel who were not members of the Squadron. Also in 1956 the Unit became 2 Press Communication Signals Squadron and went to Suez where MD5ADZ, MD5DNQ and MD5AMO were briefly activated.

By 1959 the Squadron had been renamed 404 Signal Squadron AER, and the question of affiliation between Army amateur radio clubs, many of which existed in the TA and AER, was being actively pursued.

In 1960 G2EC, when Director of Telecommunications, asked Major-General Whistler, the Signals Officer in Chief, to carry out a survey within the Corps, the results of which indicated that there was sufficient support to justify the formation of a Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society.

On 23 June 1961 at Blandford, where 404 Signal Squadron AER was at camp, a meeting was held of War Office, Command and Unit representatives under the chairmanship of G2EC, and RSARS was formally established. By August 1961, the Rules and the first edition of “MERCURY” were sent to all Army Command HQ and Royal Signals units worldwide. HQ RSARS was established at Catterick Garrison, and the Catterick Club (G3CIO), which had been in existence since 1947, became the HQ station.

At the 1966 AGM it was agreed to extend Society membership to all serving soldiers and the Society Rules redrafted at the 1968 AGM incorporated all approved changes, and this new revision included all personnel serving with or employed by a R. Signals unit - regular or T. & A.V.R., members of the CCF/ACF and University O.T.C. were also included.

The callsign G4RS was issued to the Society in 1967. Other UK callsigns operated for the Society are:- GØRCS, GØSIG, G3CIO, G3SIG, G3VXX, G4CCF and there are Overseas calls.

The Headquarters Station, G4RS is currently located at Blandford, Dorset having spent many years at Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.