



33rd (Lancashire & Cheshire) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)

The history of the Regiment begins in 1880 with the raising of the 1st Lancashire Volunteer Battalion Royal Engineers (RE) at Liverpool. In 1912 the Battalion was converted into the Western Command Signal Companies (Army Troops) RE and provided contingents for overseas theatres in the early part of the First World War.

The transformation into Royal Corps of Signals came as the new Corps was formed in 1920 from the Telegraph Companies of the Royal Engineers as the Army's first technical Corps. Similarly, this unit was re-formed, first as 2nd Western Corps Signal Company and, in 1921, as 55th (West Lancashire) Divisional Signals TA.

55th Divisional Signals was established initially with two Companies in Liverpool and one in Horwich, near Bolton. The latter Company was transferred to Prescot and was composed largely of employees of British Insulated Cables Ltd. Hence the association of Royal Signals Territorial Army units with what is now the Borough of Knowsley began in 1930.

Early in 1940, 59th Motor Divisional Signals was withdrawn from its Division and was eventually reformed in the Middle East as 8th Army Signals in time to serve at El Alamein, the advance to Tunis, the invasion of Sicily, and throughout the Italian Campaign finishing up in Austria. There it was reduced to British Troops Austria Signal Squadron in 1954 and disbanded in 1955.

The place of 59th Motor Divisional Signals with its original Division was filled in 1940 by 66th Divisional Signals, which was re-allocated when its own Division was broken up. 66th Divisional Signals was the duplicate regiment of 42 Divisional Signals and now became the new 59th Divisional Signals.

42 Divisional Signals was sent to France in 1940 and was evacuated with the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. In 1941 the Division was converted to armour but was disbanded in 1943, however, 1947 the original unit was re-raised as 42 (Lancashire) Infantry Divisional Signal Regiment TA.

Meanwhile 55th Divisional Signals, the Liverpool Territorial unit, was reformed as 22 Corps Signal Regiment TA. In 1950, a large part of the territorial element was absorbed into 42 Signal Regiment TA as 3 Squadron based at Score Lane Childwall when 22 Corps Signal Regiment converted to Army Emergency Reserve (AER) prior to being disbanded.

42 Signal Regiment TA supported the reformed 42 (Lancashire) Division which had its Headquarters in Preston – now 42 (North West) Brigade. 309 (Infantry Brigade) Signal Squadron TA which was located in Aspinall Street, Prescot (now the Civic Centre) was part of 42 Signal Regiment and supported 127 Infantry Brigade whose Headquarters was in Belle Vue, Manchester.

In 1967 the Territorial Army was reorganised and 33 Signal Regiment (Volunteers) was formed on the 1st of April as part of the new Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve (TAVR) which was subsequently re-designated the Territorial Army.

The Regiment was formed by an amalgamation of 42 Signal Regiment TA, 59 Signal Regiment TA and the Cheshire Yeomanry. The two Signal Regiments were perpetuated in Manchester and Liverpool as 42 and 59 Signal Squadrons. 80 Signal Squadron adopted the designation of a former AER Signal Regiment from whom the newly created Regiment was to draw a large number of Officers and Soldiers.

59 Signal Regiment TA, based until 1967 at Everton Road, and then at Edge Lane Liverpool, originated as 4th Anti Aircraft Divisional Signals TA raised in Liverpool and Woolton in 1939. The unit was continuously engaged during the course of the German air offensive against Great Britain in 1940-41, and became a mixed unit in 1942. It re-formed in 1947 as 14 Anti Aircraft (Mixed) Signal Regiment TA.

In 1960 the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) element was transferred to 42 Signal Regiment TA and 59 Signal Regiment TA took on the role of a Trunk Formation Signal Regiment in support of NATO. In terms of role, 59 Signal Regiment was 33 Signal Regiment's forerunner.

Based in Chester, 80 Signal Squadron incorporated Cheshire Yeomanry into its title in 1973. It is worth recording that the Cheshire Yeomanry raised in 1797 converted to Line of Communication Signals in the Middle East in 1942 until disbandment in 1946.

The Headquarters of 33 Signal Regiment (Volunteers) is established in Alamein TA centre, Liverpool Road, Huyton. This was formerly the home of the Royal Tank Regiment who occupied the building after its opening in 1956 by Lord Derby.

The pace of change never ceases and in 1993 the Regiment was re-rolled and re-equipped as a PTARMIGAN Signal Regiment assigned to the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) as a result of Options for Change. In January 1995 the Regiment was declared operationally ready and has a notice to move time of 60 days to be deployed on operations anywhere in the world.

In 1999 the Regiment regenerated the title of 55 Signal Squadron combining it with the existing Headquarters Squadron in Huyton and was named 55 (Merseyside) Signal Squadron. It was also decided to rename the Squadrons as follows; 42 (Manchester) Signal Squadron, 59 (Liverpool) Signal Squadron and 80 (Cheshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron.





In April 2009 SDR once again struck 33 Signal Regiment when the now defunct Ptarmigan Trunk Communications System was declared obsolete. Reductions in the TA Royal Signals meant the various units including 33 Signal Regiment were to be disbanded.

By April 2010 the Regiment had closed and in its place 33 Signal Squadron was generated from the disbandment of 42 Signal Squadron, 55 Signal Squadron, 59 Signal Squadron and 80 Signal Squadron. This with elements of the disbanded 93 Signal Squadron from Blackburn created 33 Signal Squadron with a new UK Ops role.

Manpower was deployed onto Op Telic (Iraq), Op Herrick (Afghanistan) and Op Tosca (Cyprus). The squadron was also called upon in its new role in support of Op Giraffe (new bridge replacement in Workington after the floods in 2009). By 2010 the Squadron was firmly established in Huyton and had supported the Labour Party Conference in Manchester (Op Protector).

Tasking on the Squadron increased throughout 2010/12 and included work on Op Escalin (Tanker Drivers Strike), Op Quickthorne (Prison Officers Strike) and Op Escudo support to Political conferences. The major Operation given support was Op Olympics in 2012 where members of the Squadron deployed in direct support of the London Olympic Games.