



Battle Squadron

Tracer fire from heavy machine guns, Warrior armoured fighting vehicles and Challenger 2 tanks lit up the afternoon sky as it pounded enemy positions directly in front of ten Air Cadets from 134 (Bedford) Squadron.

The cadets were watching the Combined Arms Firepower and Manoeuvre Demonstration held at the Army's Land Warfare Centre, Warminster, Wiltshire on Tuesday 9th October 2007.

The day commenced with a Combined Arms Manoeuvre demonstration by elements of the Royal Tank Corps and Yorkshire Regiment involving Warrior armoured vehicles and Challenger 2 main battle tanks. The purpose of this display being to show how an Army battle group would locate and attack an enemy position using armoured fighting vehicles.

During the lull between displays the cadets formed up on a dais in front of the viewing gallery for what they thought was the customary team photograph. However the staff had arranged something special to capture the spirit of the day. With the support of the Army Air Corps an Apache Longbow attack helicopter flew in behind the cadets and hovered directly behind them so that the perfect picture could be taken.

Before the live firing demonstration the cadets were given the opportunity to climb over a Challenger 2 tank and met the crew who did an excellent job in explaining how such an impressive piece of equipment is used. The cadets were even more impressed to learn that the tank was commanded by a Corporal and the crew were not that much older than them.

Ear protection was essential for the afternoon Combined Arms Firepower demonstration. Working through all of the weapons systems available to an Army Battle Group the cadets witnessed the live firing of small arms, anti tank missiles, artillery and armoured fighting vehicles. Air support was on hand as well and a Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 strafed targets with its Mauser cannon, Harrier's fired rockets and dropped a parachute-retarded bomb against enemy positions.

To finish off the Apache returned and laid down accurate fire directly in front of the cadets using its 30mm cannon.

Whilst it rained throughout the day the event was a complete success and much enjoyed by all those who attended and witnessed the impressive firepower that is available to the Army.

Warrant Officer Paul Taylor who organised the cadets' attendance at the event said, "The cadets have thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have been privileged to witness a stunning display of firepower. Our hosts, the Army have been excellent and we cannot thank enough the Army Air Corps for providing an Apache attack helicopter as the backdrop for our squadron photograph."

Bedford Squadron is currently recruiting new cadets and staff members, if you are interested please contact www.134.org.uk and get in touch with us.