

On the 11th/12th September, Claires Court CCF welcomed their first ever cadets to their first ever field weekend!

After a very quick and efficient kit issue and safety brief, the cadets were ready to go and Exercise Ridgeway Dawn was underway. The cadets began by rotating around 3 stands, learning all about camouflage and concealment; moving, patrolling and field signals; and living in the field.





Next up was the issue of the ration packs and a lesson on cooking, before cadets had their first taste of a military boil in the bag meal - they all found it delicious! Then it was time for a brief lesson on harbours before setting up their bashas.



As darkness fell, we rehearsed for the recce patrols that would take place later that evening in The Thicket, and RSM Larkin demonstrated some night noises so the cadets could hear how much further noise travelled at night.

It was then into The Thicket for their recce patrol, to try and obtain as much information about the enemy as possible. Thanks to a cloudy night, it was pitch black under the trees but the cadets did amazingly well considering 12 hours previously they had never even put on a uniform! Each section patrolled in silence to the enemy location, crawled into cover and observed the oscar-worthy performance by 2Lt Richards and CFAV Jon Neil. There were some impressive observations before they patrolled back to their harbour area for a quick debrief and took to their sleeping bags for a well-earned rest.

At 0630 on Sunday morning, the cadets had a somewhat unique Reveille thanks to 2Lt Gravett who had brought his trumpet along.





After breakfast, the cadets had an excellent first aid lesson thanks to Alastair Cole, and experienced trauma medic from Adventure Lifesigns. Both cadets and staff were amazed to hear of the advances in treatment in the field.





After a quick lunch, it was time for the cadets to put what they had learned into practice with a casualty simulation exercise. While out for a routine patrol, each section was faced with an explosion and three casualties to treat and evacuate, whilst also providing all-round defence in case more enemy were in the area. 2Lt Richards once again proved that drama should be his subject, acting as a casualty with a sucking chest wound; and 2Lt Gravett was the designated 'noisy' casualty with a bullet wound in his hand - and boy was he noisy!



The cadets blew us away with their enthusiasm and effort during the weekend, and we are very excited to start the new school year and the new CCF with such an amazing contingent!

