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Capt Chitra visits HQ

On Thursday 27th June, it was our pleasure to welcome Captain Chitra to a visit to Head Office. Chitra was formally presented his Employee of the Year certificate and tie by Tracey Allison and was taken to lunch by directors in recognition of five years of outstanding service to Octaga during which he has picked up several other commendations including, among others from clients and visitors, a hand written letter from artist, John Hounam.

Chitra wore his long service medal – presented to him by HRH Prince Charles – to the day in which he was given a tour of our operations centre and met the whole HQ team. Octaga has a long tradition of employing and supporting former soldiers, and it is a privilege to have aboard our team a Ghurkha officer of such quality and calibre.



Tracey Allison presents Captain Chitra Gurung with his Employee of the Year certificate and tie.

Throughout the day, Chitra chatted candidly with all staff and strengthened the bond between our officers, team leaders and managers/directors.

The highlight of the day was when Chitra himself presented Emma and Tracey with a representation of a Nepalese shrine and an original John Hounam watercolour, which Chitra

had arranged with the artist as his personal gift back to us.

It may be that future Employees of the Year get a tour of Head Office and even an invitation to our Christmas meal, but in the meantime we are so very glad that Chitra enjoyed his day and would like to add what an honour it was to have been his host.

Close Protection at Global Zero Summit

Maintaining Octaga's momentum in specialist security work, Dave Allison and Emma were in London for three days from the 21st to 23rd June, where they performed Close Protection duties for a client at the well publicised Global Zero summit at the Savoy Hotel. The international Global Zero

movement launched in December 2008 and includes many political, military, business, faith and civic leaders who lobby for worldwide nuclear disarmament. Its most famous member is Queen Nor of Jordan, who was present for the three days of the event.



HM Queen Nor

On the evening of the 21st, delegates attended the BAFTA awards as an opener to their stay before starting the summit proper at the Savoy the following morning. The second night saw a tour of the Royal Courts of Justice, after which an evening meal was served and the summit ended the following afternoon.

The summit, which attracted worldwide press interest, was attended well by over 100 former and serving political figures and our CP's described the three days as a most interesting experience.

To be commissioned for CP duties at such a high profile and potentially sensitive event is yet another feather in the Octaga cap and we look forward to further such work as the specialist operations which started Octaga continue to grow alongside our quality and accredited Guarding and Technical contracts.

Staff Survey Results

Thanks to all of you who took part in the latest survey – one that once again showed us some very encouraging results indeed.

With 50% of officers rating their chances of promotion as “good” and nearly 80% stating that they shall likely stay with Octaga for five years or longer, we feel very positive that we shall maintain our impressively low turnover figure.

Asked what would encourage you to stay longer with us, 75% cited “more training” with “more money” coming in second (understandable in the current climate) at 62%, while

a refreshingly surprising 40% said, “more responsibility”. These two statistics are encouraging reading and motivation indeed for the Staff Development programme discussed by Emma in later pages.

Regarding our internal development courses, the response was overwhelming with one hundred percent of respondents saying that they felt the training was “good” or better – with several “excellent” answers recorded.

We are further pleased with your ratings of communications throughout

the company, and have noted your desires for training sessions which will be incorporated into future seminars.

A few graphs are presented below, which make easier viewing than just lists of words and we'd like to thank all who took part.

A excel sheet of full results is available upon request to octaganews@octaga.co.uk and the next survey will take place this winter. Please take the trouble to complete staff questionnaires – we can't do what you want is we don't know what you want ;-)

Editorial

There's little to say in this upbeat issue that is not already in the articles.

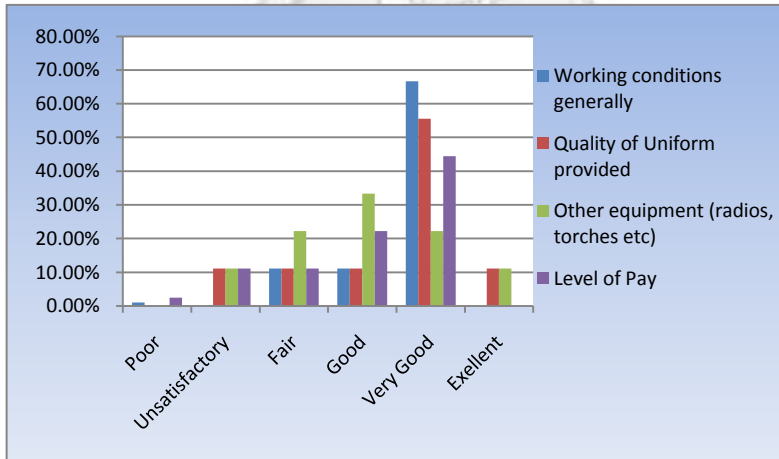
Just a few small points from me;

- Apologies again for the blunder over PS promotions last issue.
- Thanks to all of you who completed our staff survey.
- Thanks to the continued support of Directors, I'm feeling much better these days and will very soon be off the bench and back on the field.

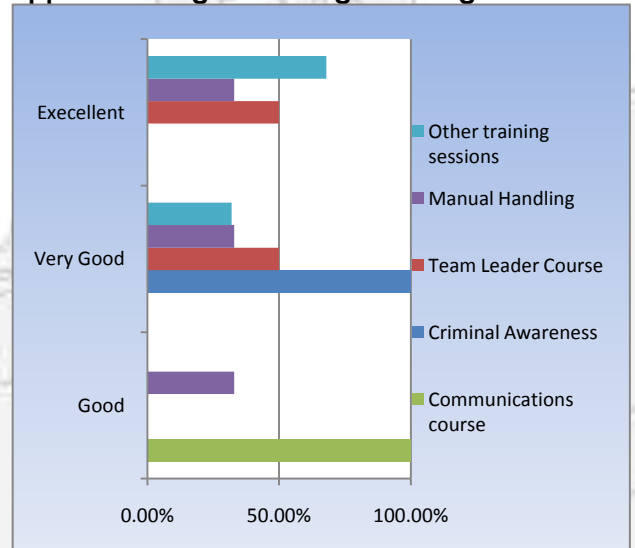
And last but by no means least; Capt. Chitra; I'm sorry our paths did not cross when you came to HQ, and I will try to meet you again soon.

Regards
Dave

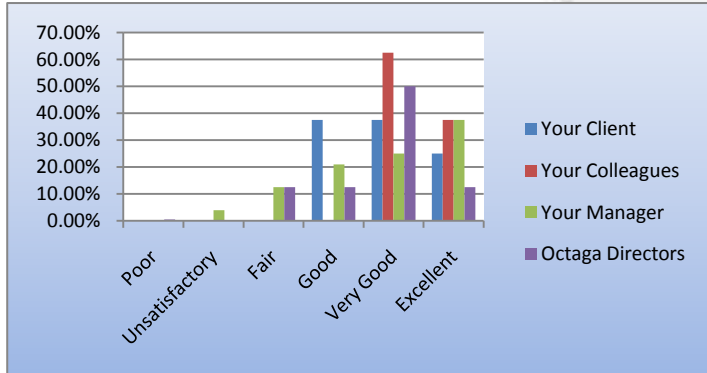
General Conditions



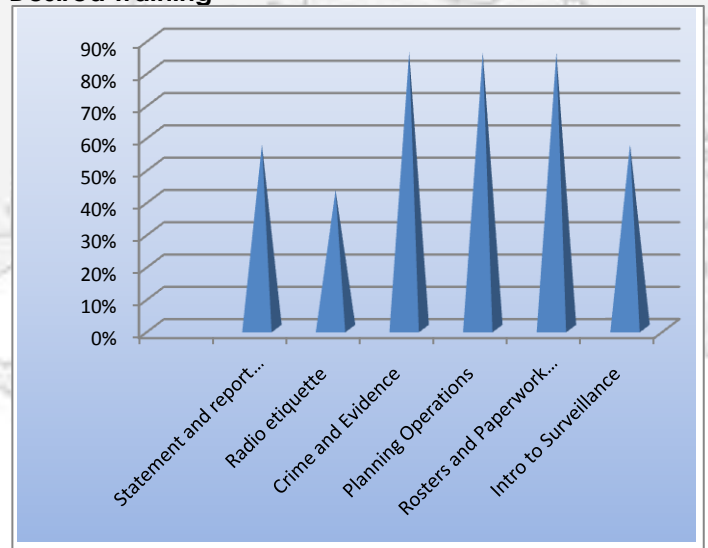
Approval ratings for Octaga Training Sessions



Communications with ...



Desired Training



“Vox Populi, vox dei”
Roman Proverb
T – the voice of the people, [is as] the voice of [the Gods]

A Brief History of Close Protection; 27BC – 1974

Following Dave Allison's speech to the Future of Close Protection forum in the last issue, we thought it may be of interest to present some background information regarding the history of some specialist Close protection units, organisations and individuals

The Praetorian Guard

The term *Praetorian* is derived from the standard of the General or *Praetor* of a Roman army division, and the original guards were handpicked individuals who guarded the tent of a general or other VIP.

As Julius Caesar discovered with his famous *Legio X Equestris*, (Legion number Ten of Horse, or The Tenth Cavalry) a powerful unit more dangerous than its fellow legions was a useful tool in battle and for special operations, and when Augustus became the first ruler of the Roman Empire in 27 BC, he realised that such a force had

peacetime as well as battlefield applications.

Thus, from the ranks of the legions, Augustus recruited the Imperial Praetorian Guard - a brigade of Roman citizens and other soldiers of the empire who were in effect the elite infantry in battle (though there was later a cavalry battalion or *cohort*), and the bodyguards used by Roman Emperors.



The Praetorian Guard of Augustus, circa 10BC

The training of praetorian guardsmen was more intense than in the legions because of the amount of free time available when a cohort was not posted or travelling with the emperor. The Praetorians received substantially higher pay than other Roman soldiers and upon retirement another 20,000 sesterces – about 13 years pay – an indication of their skills and value to the Emperor and army.

Many of the Praetorian Guards were *Immunes*, or soldiers with specialist skills which set them apart from the average soldier, in this case they were mostly weapons instructors, medics or military police.

A good number were *Evocati*, or veterans who had completed the 'full term' with the Roman army of 16 years and had stayed on in service.

Although its name has become synonymous with intrigue, conspiracy and assassination, the Praetorians were in effect the western world's first Special Forces regiment; with the twin roles of personal protection to the Emperor and VIP's and specialist military operations; duties carried out by Special Forces to this day.



The Knights Templar



The Templar Seal

After the First Crusade in 1099, pilgrims visited the holy land but though Jerusalem was relatively secure, the rest of the Outre-mer (French: Overseas territories) was not. Bandits slaughtered pilgrims, sometimes by the hundreds, as they attempted to make the journey. T

wo veterans of the Crusade, the French-Egyptian knight Hugues de Payens and Godfrey de Saint-Omer, proposed a militaristic-

monastic order for the protection of pilgrims (also merchants and dignitaries). Having been granted space for a headquarters on the Temple Mount, the Order took the name of *Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon*, or "Templar" knights. The Order quickly grew with Vatican funding and public support after the proven dedication and bravery of the Templar's.

Strict rules of behaviour and dress were in force – including rules of engagement in battle. For example they were forbidden from surrender or retreat unless their flag had fallen and were dishonoured if they did likewise when outnumbered by less than three to one.

Heavily armed with perhaps

the best equipment of the day and very highly trained, there were around 1500 Templar Knights at their peak, supported by several thousand farriers, squires, cooks and other attendants – many of them trained soldiers in their own right.

A modern analogy s that of the SAS being supported by 1 Para et al



First and last Templar Grand Masters, Hugues de Payens and Jaques de Molay

Templar's were often the advance force in key battles of the Crusades -

their most famous action being at the Battle of Montgisard, 1177, where 500 Templar knights helped to defeat Saladin's army of more than 26,000 soldiers.

To join the Templar's as a Knight, one had to prove an elite and pious background and it is said undergo a 'selection' process to assess physical prowess. Initiation, a largely secret affair, was a solemn oath of allegiance to God, the Templar's and the protection of pilgrims.

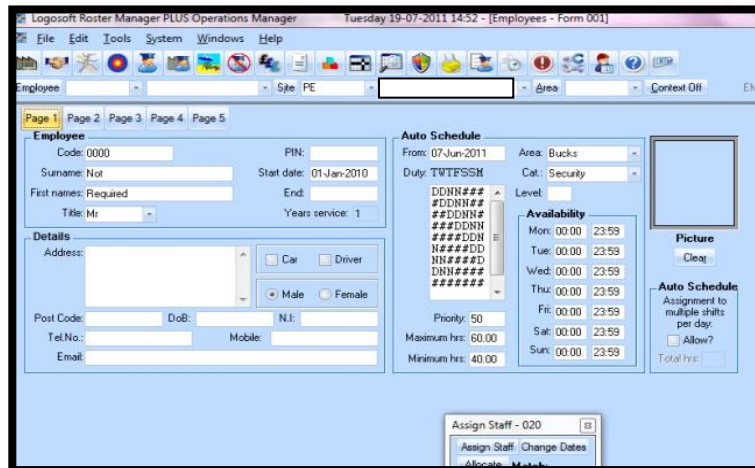
Another example of Body-guarding provided by elite (and serving) military personnel!

Next time, we shall discuss the Samurai warriors of Japan and the Arabic world's famous elite cavalry, the Mameluk.

Logosoft®

We've completed the trial of our rostering software now, which has been given excellent reviews by management. For the last two months, site and events crews have been paid from data on Logosoft® and we shall introduce booking on and off duty by phone direct to the database this autumn.

This will phase out the need for the current e-mails to book on duty and further free up time for all of us, leading to an easier yet more efficient Octaga and an Operations department free to manage people rather than paperwork.



Rostering software has been our goal since 2007 and now that Logosoft® is up and running it is difficult to speak too highly of this system that has improved efficiency on so many levels.

Thank you all for your patience in running two systems side by side for a while and to all who were so active in its inception and set up – not least Dave B. Kevin and Suzie.

"Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why"

Bernard Baruch

"Nothing is so strong as gentleness and nothing is so gentle as real strength"

Ralph W. Sockman

Invitation for Articles



Do you have an idea for an article in the Octaga News?

If so please send it in. We'd like to hear from all officers - and other readers - if you've anything to say which is loosely connected to security. Letters, comment, and articles are welcome, even anecdotes from previous jobs or military/police careers. You're more than welcome to submit a one off contribution or, if you're so inclined, join the regular team. The more people we get involved in the News the better it will become and anyone who'd like to be considered as a regular writer would be most appreciated. Simply send us one piece with synopses or ideas for a few more. We've not the budget to pay much, but to those who have not yet done so, this is your chance to be published in a corporate journal.

Quick thinking officers avert serious damage at Studios

Octaga officers, Jogar S, Pradip G and Mohammed K have received praise from Studios and Octaga management after spotting the outbreak of a fire at Pinewood. What had the potential to be a rather serious event was mitigated by the vigilance and quick thinking of our officers on site, and within minutes the flames were extinguished and the area made safe by the fire brigade and Pinewood officers.

The fire broke out between two oil tanks to the west of the complex and, in the words of Pinewood Health and Safety officer, Alison Wickens, "it was the brave actions of Pradip Gurung that extinguished the fire, ... myself and Bob Pollard, the Studio Fire Safety Officer would like to thank the team on shift that night for their prompt actions as there could have been a more serious fire. All Octaga Guards on the Pinewood site have received fire extinguisher training from the in house Health & Safety Department, which obviously paid off!"

This is yet another example of the success of our philosophy of continuous training and development of our staff, equipping them with all the skills that can be required of a professional security officer. Furthermore, this example in particular illustrates our strategic security partnership with a client and the commitment of both Pinewood and Octaga to develop and maintain a security team befitting the needs and expectations of a prestigious and historic British institution.

Large TV Event for new TL

The latest TV show at Shepperton – Don't stop me now (Sky 1) – has been a large event indeed and Alex and his team have received positive feedback from Pinewood TV regarding our performance and professionalism. Thank you to all officers who took part in this.

More TV shows are coming up at Shepperton on 22nd and 30th September and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th October. If you'd like to be involved, and for further details email operations@octaga.co.uk

Promotions

Stewart E

Stewart has been promoted to Supervisor in the Newtown, Powys area after a superb first year with Octaga. In the words of Dave Barrett, "Stewart has shown commitment and exceptional professionalism throughout his time with Octaga, he's a natural supervisor; taking on all tasks to the best of his ability."

Stewart has certainly gone well beyond what could be reasonable expected of a Security Officer and we feel sure that he is a great asset and will become an outstanding ambassador for us in Wales as our operations in the country expand. Well done Stewart

Tony L

After what has been described by Emma as a "superb" stint as acting supervisor at Pinewood, Tony has been awarded the post full time. Since joining us, Tony has shown more energy and enthusiasm than many men half his age and with his rich experience and seemingly boundless energy is ideal for this new role.

After an outstanding and lengthy military career, Tony's people skills and ability to train and mentor colleagues can only possibly be seen as a great asset and the Pinewood Team is much the richer for his overdue elevation.

Jayne B

Our Employee of the Month for June (right) has also been promoted T/L at Cheltenham after a year and a half of excellent service to us as an S/O.

With organisational skills, integrity and a lively, motivational character, Jayne is an asset to Octaga, her colleagues and our much valued client.

Left: Captain Chitra presents Emma and Tracey with pictures during his visit to Headquarters on 27th June

Congratulations

Warm congratulations must go to Suzie and Graham for the birth of daughter, Phoebe Jay on the 7th September and to Emma on her marriage to Mark Walker on the 10th.

Emma and Mark are currently on honeymoon in Iceland and return on the 27th. Suzie, Graham and baby phoebe meanwhile are doing well and all have our very best wishes for the future.



Staff Changes

A warm welcome aboard the Octaga group goes to **Jawaid R** who becomes a supervisor at Shepperton and **James F**, our new officer at Pinewood. **Kiran P** is also on the team as a relief officer in the south and we have three new members of our events crew in **Heidi H**, **Paul B** and **Graham P**.

Graham T moves to Solihull; replacing George who becomes part time as he returns to his University studies with our best wishes and thanks for hard work and flexibility.

Monthly Commendations

June 11

Jayne B

Our June prize goes to Jayne who, having already proved herself as a competent security officer of quite some integrity, has most impressively risen to the challenge of being Team Leader at Cheltenham.

Very much appreciated by her client and all who have worked with her, Jayne has had a positive effect on morale and efficiency at the racecourse with her energetic and intelligent character. Recently, she even went so far as to re-paint the security room (in her own time!) and rearrange our CR office for a more comfortable yet professional environment from which to work.

Jayne's local knowledge, client and customer liaison and commitment to the job are invaluable and very much appreciated.

Thank you very much, Jayne.

July 11

Andy J

Whilst technically just a part time officer, Andy has proved himself extremely valuable to both Octaga and Pinewood of late with superb stints at various studios events.

Having a long working experience at Pinewood, Andy knows the character and geography of the place as well as anyone and his management and people skills have come to the fore as he has organized, staffed and run events. Such has been the quality of service that Andy has been described as the de facto Team Leader of events at the studios and his efforts and results should not go unrecognized, nor unrewarded.

You are a most valuable member of the Octaga Team, Andy. Thank you

August 11

Massimo L

Following a move from Shepperton to the Avid Building within Pinewood, Mass has shown himself to be an adaptable and flexible officer – and has recently been praised by our client.

Area Manager, Dave Barrett says of Mass, "He's a conscientious officer who is doing a very good job down there, and a credit to us." Having been with us since our takeover of the Pinewood Group contract in December '06, Massimo's experience and diligence have served both him and ourselves well and this award is perhaps overdue.

You are a committed officer, Mass; and loyal to your client, company and team. Congratulations, and enjoy your voucher.

And Finally

Employee of the Year – voting open September

Now that we're well over halfway through the year, it's worth a reminder that we shall soon accept nominations for the Employee of the Year award for the individual who has, *"Made a significant and substantial contribution to the company, client and team-mates, beyond what could be reasonably expected from their rank and contracted duties, thereby enhancing the profile of the Octaga Group."*

Unlike the monthly commendations, awarded to S/O's and Supervisors after management consultation, the Employee of the Year can be won by any officer of any rank and is decided only upon your votes and quality of citation. And anyone can vote; officers, managers, and clients.

Last year, Capt Chitra's entire team wrote a joint letter to the Octaga News which, along with other votes and a written commendation from a visitor to his site, ensured Chitra of a

prize he so narrowly missed in both 2009 and 2008.

So should you know of anyone who deserves to be named Employee of the Year, we shall be accepting citations from September onwards and will award the prize in time for our December edition.

Please write to the News, at the address on the left, e-mail octaganews@octaga.co.uk or follow the link from our web page.

2011 Employee Handbooks and Personal Information

By now, all should have received the new Employee Handbook – if you haven't, do inform your line manager. May we also remind you to complete as soon as you can the 2011 update for form EE (next of kin contacts), the update for your uniform size list and to confirm or update your personal contact information.

Chess Club + Sudoku

Well, the clue was in the question in last issues chess position with the solution being;

1. Qe7+. Kh6
2. Qf8+. Kxg5
3. Qf4#

Not too many replies last time though, so here's an easier one for the summer. White can deliver checkmate in just two moves – both with the knight.

A nice 'medium SuDoku too, so there's no need to think too hard in the hot days of late summer.

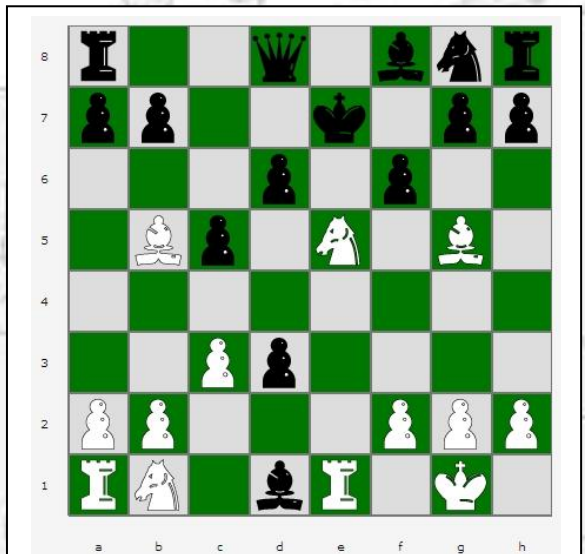
Octaga Quiz Anyone?

If anyone would like a return of the Octaga Prize Quiz instead of chess or SuDoku, do let us know.

It's difficult to run a quiz (even a pub quiz, sadly) in these days of Wiki, Google and i-phones, but they were quite popular a year or two ago and we can easily re-introduce them if you like.

Here's a taster question to warm up those of you in the mood;

1. Heirs to the throne of which country were known as the Dauphin?



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Website

See us at:

www.octaga.co.uk

All Readers:

Deadline for submissions for next edition: **20th Nov**

Managers:

Deadline for monthly award citations: **31st Nov**

Opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and as such may not reflect the views, strategy and policy of the Octaga Group

"Multitasking???"

There's no such thing!

And the people who tell you that they can 'multitask' ... They're not even able to sit down and shut up at the same time!"

David Fenn

Next Time:

- Articles from new writers?
- The return of the Octaga Quiz?
- Employee of the Year