

Skiing 2008 ex-TransArc Dragon

On the 1st of February 2008, 80 officer cadets departed Cardiff's Maindy Barracks for Les Arc, France, for a 10 day Adventurous training skiing package. The package was first offered in November, main priority went to those in the first year and those particularly who had never skied before. The package however was also open to a small number of people that had already skied before, varied abilities were catered for.

The destination was Les Arc 1800, the middle resort of 3. The 80 cadets were split between 2 different hotel blocks. Many shared with people from their same company at their same ability at skiing. For those who already had an aptitude for skiing it was a great opportunity to get to know, and live with new people from other companies for the week. The resort was actually on the piste which meant that you could ski to the lifts and back to the hotel at the end of a great day skiing. The hotel rooms were self catering, as was the whole holiday which meant, unlike university or school ski trips it allowed for more freedom. The skiing started the day after we arrived. We were instructed by regular military instructors. We were split into groups, of 8-14 people, based on ability and instructed from 9am when the lifts opened until 5 when the lifts closed. The day was punctuated with rest stops and lunch breaks on the piste. The aim of the trip was to by at the end, be qualified with the Army's Basic Ski Alpine qualification. Those who had already skied had to demonstrate the skills but had passed this assessment with ease. The qualification not only is based on ski ability but also knowledge about hazards, and health and safety whilst skiing. All those on the trip passed for this qualification. An important part of any ski trip is the après ski. Les Arc had a good range of pubs and clubs to socialise with members of Wales UOTC, but also had many nice restaurants to eat in. The shopping though not the cheapest was good and catered for all sorts of adventurous tastes. For 3 of nights we were there, we had 3 fancy dress socials of school night, beach night (a little odd in the middle of ski season) and super heros. In typical OTC fashion everyone made a huge effort with costumes. The cost of the trip was £365, which included all food, accommodation, travel, ski hire and ski pass. However, we got paid for the 7 days we were out there, full pay as well as getting 30euros a day to feed ourselves with. This meant buying breakfast and lunch in the morning and taking it on the slopes if you chose to, or you could buy your own food on the slope at your own cost. In the evening we were split into small groups of 20 to go to restaurants together and order our own food. Not only did we get paid whilst on the trip, for many of the officer cadets it was a chance to independently experience another sport and further getting qualified for doing it.