

## Wales UOTC Ski Trip: Operation Transarc Dragon

My Ski-trip started with a wander into Cardiff City centre to buy some shiny new ski kit (goggles, sun cream etc) as I had never had any need for such items being a complete ski novice. Luckily everything else I'd need would be given to me from the stores. I got a great quality jacket and salopetes (later in the trip I was even given 85 euros for food). So good was the kit that I stayed dry and warm despite spending a lot of time sprawled out in the snow.

Talking to the other OCdts from Bangor, Aberystwyth and Swansea it was clear most of us on this trip had never had a chance to ski before this, let alone seen enough snow to do so.

Between us and the Slopes was a 27hr coach journey which passed with endless action movies and some sleeping tablets. And so by the evening of the 2nd I was at 1800m surrounded by fresh snow and anxious faces. A quick meal and a pint of biter and it was bedtime for the most of us.

Day 1 was spent largely on the learner slope, but thanks to our great instructor WO1 Andy Saunders, our small group left fellow new-skiers behind and got onto the chair lift and proceeded to the top of what seemed like Mount Everest only to take about 2 hours and hundreds of falls to get back down to a well earned hot shower and a massive meal.

### Starting to get confident

The next day after a quick refresher we went out exploring the resort (accidentally taking in 50 metres of black run madness), good progress was made by all and it was amazingly good fun. With 15 euros to spend each night we were spoilt for choice and even the most ravenous appetites built up skiing were sated.

Over the next three days we quickly progressed to safe and competent skiers, if a little slow. This was entirely credit to our slightly too trusting instructor who claimed red slopes were always just wrongly labelled blue slopes. We were pleased and surprised to find the RSM skiing with us for the most of the first three days. OCdt Martin Baker accidentally took the RSM out but the rest of us were glad to have an extra member to our group.

The culmination of all our ski tuition was getting tested and I am happy to say gaining our Basic Ski Proficiency (BSP). The last day was spent independently on the slopes and gave us a chance to show-off our fast progress to our more experienced mates. I was shocked at how well we all had learned as we (slightly stupidly) tried to follow the faster OCdts and ski beyond our BSP over some moguls.

I am so pleased I can now join family and friends on ski-trips without endangering myself or others! As I said everyone passed the BSP qualification test and I'm sure it will be a skill I'll treasure for life! My face book profile is full of new photos to show off to my friends.

Thanks to the CO granting us some pay for the trip and all the hard work put in by the staff at OTC this is most likely the best value for money holiday/training I will ever get in my life. I would like to thank all the staff that made it possible and it was a pleasure to spend time with them.

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