



09/12

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

Feb 13

## 1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION

February began in a sober fashion with the 12 Brigade remembrance service. This allowed all those who lost a colleague or brother Viking to remember the sacrifices that were made over the last year. This continued the process whereby we begin to draw a line under last years' tour. Prior to Mission Specific Training for Operation Herrick 16 the Brigade Commander informed us that the tour would involve 3 stages: The preparation for our tour, the deployment and completion of the tour and finally the preparation of the next unit to go out on Op Herrick 18. This month we can finally say that we have completed the third stage, with our continued support of the Field Training Exercise for the Soldiers deploying on Op Herrick 18. The Vikings provided real life support for this exercise which is the biggest exercise the Army runs and was a truly mammoth task. In addition we also provided numerous observers and mentors to guide the Soldiers who would, in a few short weeks, face the last fighting season of the Herrick campaign. This was a rewarding task in which we succeeded in closing the gap between the standard when we left the tour and their standard at the start of theirs.

On top of this the Rifle Companies have been continuing their preparation for what's known as CT1, which is a field exercise up to Section level. This brings focuses much on the junior commanders of the Battalion and the Lance Corporals and Corporals have had a lot of responsibility on their shoulders.

On the flip side of this, it has also allowed them to get their hands on their Soldiers, to train them as they want with no distractions. This is where the foundations of any future successes are built. If the basics are learnt and mastered at this level then usually everything else falls in to place. Support Weapons Company have continued to run cadres with Recce/Snipers group welcoming over 20 new Soldiers who managed to get through the robust selection process. February has also seen the Fire Support Groups of Ypres and Somme Platoon running training to ensure that their personnel are current and competent on the heavy weapons. Also Mortar Platoon has continued the preparation for its Cadre to start immediately after Easter leave.

February has seen continued training of the basics with numerous shooting opportunities, communications training and sporting development. The Companies progressing their shooting all the time going from the most basic shoots which ensure your sights and weapon are aligned to the more complex shoots which involve shooting from 400m. The signals training is steadily reaching more people and the future Platoon Signallers are being identified and developed. However, it's not all work and there have been numerous chances to enjoy sport and adventurous activities. This month has seen the Battalion Ski Camp which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

In February The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was honoured by the Ipswich Star and the East Anglian Daily Times at their annual 'Stars of Suffolk' award. A team from B (Suffolk) Company attended the event at Ipswich New College alongside the best of Suffolk's emergency services, sports people, volunteer workers and fundraisers to be awarded a Special Recognition award for the Regiment's commitment and service to the county. It was a humbling experience for the B (Suffolk) Company team to be set alongside the likes of Mason Fountain, another recipient of a Special Recognition Award. On being diagnosed with his own inoperable tumour, young Mason set up his own fundraising charity for children with brain tumours, raising £50,000 in its first year. The cheers from the audience when the Vikings took to the stage to receive the award spoke volumes for the support the Regiment receives from the County of Suffolk and a £200 contribution to the Regimental Benevolent charity was a generous token of appreciation from the organisers.

## **2<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION**

For the Poachers, February has seen a real kick start into Mission Specific Training (MST) for a potential deployment on Operation HERRICK 19. The professional development of our soldiers continues and we have seen our boxing team represent the Poachers in the Army Quarter Finals.

With the All Ranks Briefs (ARB) taking place, a party of 12 out to Theatre to conduct immersion and a HERRICK study week, MST progression is well and truly upon us. Our soldiers also continue to be kept busy with the Sniper and Recce Cadres established, 14 Soldiers away on the Fire Team Commanders Course (FTCC) and the ongoing commitment of individual MST courses such as driving.

The ARB is generally recognised as the formal start to a Unit's MST. Over a week specialists delivered a number of presentations to the Battalion. Having recently returned from theatre, these soldiers delivered the ground truth, covering all aspects of our possible future tasks out in Afghanistan.

A 7 man team spent two weeks in Afghanistan on immersion training during February. This immersion training gave the first opportunity of a recce to theatre. In a similar way to the ARB, it is there as a start point to ensure that all training conducted between now and our future deployment is relevant and well informed. Due to flight timings some then moved straight from Afghanistan to Hohne, Germany, for the 7 Brigade HERRICK study week. These five days of presentations helped put the campaign into context, with an impressive and well informed list of speakers.

For our 14 Soldiers away on the FTCC, February was dominated by snow, hail and gale force winds as they conducted both the Platoon Operations week and Final Exercise on the Sennybridge training area. This has, of course, resulted in the forever favourite saying amongst those attending "the toughest FTCC in years" to once again raise its head.

Both the Sniper & Recce Cadres are now in full swing. Both see volunteers from the Rifle Companies being put through their paces over a 4 week long period by Capt Tom Aspinall (OC Recce), Sgt Asbridge (OC Snipers) and their teams.

The Poachers arrived by the bus load to support the Battalion boxing team at the Budd V.C. Gym in Colchester, home to 3 PARA's boxing team. In what was a very close contest, the final score line of 6 – 3, in favour of 3 PARA, did not reflect how close the fighting was on the night, with many believing that, minus one controversial bout, the night should have finished 5 – 4. Many in the run up had spoken how these two Battalions were the teams most likely to meet in the final and, ultimately, it was a very closely fought evening. Our boxers did incredibly well against an equally determined opposition.

February has also brought a number of new and old faces to the Battalion. We welcome the new Officer Commanding B (Leicestershire) Company, Major Andrew Swann, the new Officer Commanding C (Northamptonshire and Rutland) Company, Major Martyn Cook and the new Battalion 2IC, Major Andrew Redding.

## **3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION**

Despite the month being the shortest of the year once more 3 R ANGLIAN has been a hive of activity throughout...

Operations:

February has seen the various disparate stages of training for HERRICK 19 begin to come together. A number of events have helped to bring the start state of volunteers for the tour up to a broadly similar standard and one that should see them held to the Reinforcement Training Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) in good order. The Battalion held a Mission Specific Training shooting package at Middlewick Ranges near Colchester in order to bring our volunteers in line with the skill sets of their Regular counterparts. The Commanding Officer, utilising his wealth of previous experience from directing Senior Division at the Infantry Battle School, was on hand to offer advice on both the training and also

what would be expected of Reservists when they entered the mobilisation progress. On the topic of mobilisation it is worth mentioning that the Quartermaster, Maj Chris Wright, will shortly be departing the unit on an OCE tour as SO2 Log Sp for TFH, we wish him the very best of luck in this challenging role.

#### Training:

The main focus for training during the month has been build up for the year's first Battalion exercise STEELBACK HORIZON, with all companies conducting pre training for individual and low level patrol skills.

In line with future Reserve activity the Battalion deployed 12 individuals to KENYA in support of 1 YORKS Ex ASKARI THUNDER, these individuals have now spend 6 weeks with the YORKS battle group in a variety of roles. One point to note has been the intelligent use of civilian skills with LCpl Dowling (RAMC) finding herself attached to BGHQ as both team medic and also utilising her civilian physiotherapy qualification to keep the CO and RSM on the move.

Two slightly 'left field' items of training have been the Band's CD production which is now in its final phase of production and also the attendance at Ex RACING ICE III of two members of B Coy. RACING ICE is the British Army's Bobsled championship and under the coaching of the RAO (former Gt Britain team member) the 3 R ANGLIAN team finished a very creditable 7<sup>th</sup> in a field dominated by professional sports athletes. Again the Battalion passes on its congratulations.

#### Recruiting:

As many will have noticed the airwaves were filled with the 'TA Live' campaign for the majority of the month and to support this recruiting drive the Battalion held a number of recruiting open evenings throughout the Eastern Counties. With the Reserve being the only area of the Army currently growing we are leaning into all opportunities to enable both civilians and ex-regulars to join.

#### Social

Members of the Battalion enjoyed the Cambridge University OTC dinner night held at St John's College, time whilst there was used to strengthen the links between the Bn and the OTC with a view to providing an outlet for members who enjoyed OTC but do not wish to join the Regular Army on graduation. A similar arrangement with East Midlands Universities OTC has reaped dividends with 3 young officers joining in the past year.