



# Royal Anglian *News*

May 2020

---

# Regimental Matters

---

## VE Day Commemorations

The Regiment focussed most of its VE Day commemorations at home and via social media to our community. Three posts were well received online on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Maj Ken Mayhew reflecting at home from the Association, a Private soldier and a subaltern from the Vikings outside the bombed out chapel in Woolwich which marked the start in the 2 minutes silence and a salute from a SNCO with the Poachers to end the two minutes and salute those who served during the conflict.



## London Gazette 62927

- Lieutenant Colonel A M Wylie 522878 retires 6 September 2019.
- Major S M Broomfield 25147884 from IRC 7 Nov 19 to be Major with seniority 31 Jul 15.
- Major T J W Green 25213884 from IRC 7 Nov 19 to be Major with seniority 31 Jul 18.
- Major J R P Heugh 25212917 from IRC 7 Nov 19 to be Major with seniority 31 Jul 19.
- Major W R Hoy 30066070 from IRC 7 Nov 19 to be Major with seniority 31 Jul 19.
- Maj B S French 24771177 from IRC (LE) 7 Nov 19 to be Major with seniority 31 Jul 17.

# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## Vikings Re-Focus on Op TORAL Preparation

May saw the Viking contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic begin to draw down, with a re-focus back to this year's deployment to Afghanistan.

Op RESCRIPT (the military component of the Government's response) required the Battalion to re-structure to a 'COVID Support Force' (CSF) ORBAT. In early May, C (Essex) Company – still in its CSF ORBAT, with the Mortar Platoon attached – continued to provide testing support, now just at the Lea Valley testing centre. As this task concluded and the Company took stock, we counted that Cpl Du Maurier had trained up 78 testers in the last month!



By mid-May much of the Battalion's focus was turning back to routine training and preparations for deployment on Op TORAL. The Vikings, like the rest of the Army, are getting used to 'the new normal' of social distancing and other rigorous procedures designed to protect the health of the force. With an operational deployment on the horizon, training cannot simply stop. Significant thought is being given to the best and safest way to run the variety of events that need to happen. With Mission Specific Training (MST) just around the corner, internal training has been taking place to prepare Viking soldiers in advance. Numerous driving courses, as well as Team Medic cadres and the Basic Radio User cadre have been run by our NCOs.

We often hear that lockdown is bringing out the best in people, that families are closer now and individuals value the little things more. This is certainly the case for the A (Norfolk) Company 'family', who took action when they heard of two Chelsea Pensioners with Royal Anglian ties who had recently recovered from the coronavirus. After a voluntary whip-round, engagement with RHQ and the Royal Hospital RSM, CSgt Lake and other members of A Coy handed over (at distance) two hampers to

Dougie May and Michael Riley. With a mix of essentials and a few treats, we hope the hampers put smiles on their faces in these challenging times.

At the time of writing, the Vikings are preparing to stand-down from their Op RESCRIPT task and take a few weeks of well-earned leave.



---

## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

---

### Poachers Spearhead the Training of Mobile Testing Units

A small team of four JNCOs from the Poachers have been instrumental in the delivery of the Army's training of Mobile Testing Units (MTUs).

The team have been working solidly for the past four weeks and have so far delivered training to thirty- one Mobile Testing Support Teams. These teams have subsequently cascaded training to ninety- two MTUs across the country, each with a daily testing capacity of over two- hundred people. In total these four young soldiers have helped train over 1,000 military testers which in turn have delivered around 20% of the nation's testing capacity. Corporal Jamie Frost, 28, from Bury St Edmunds said, "there's a big sense of achievement to know we've had this much of an impact in reaching the government's target of 100,000 tests per day." He added "It has been a very quick turnaround, at its peak we were training fifty people per day"



The comprehensive one- day training package covers all elements for the safe running of an MTU and places extra emphasis on the need for our troops to protect themselves, through the appropriate scaling of Personal Protective Equipment. Corporal David Hemmings, 32, from Ely said, "it's just a part of our job, we are expected to deliver training, no matter what its content to a high standard."

Corporal Matthew Freeney, 27, from Peterborough added "It's not everyday you do something like this, none of us thought it would have the impact that it's had."

The latest training has seen forty- eight Army Reserve soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment - known as 'The Steelbacks' - readied ahead of a larger deployed force of one- hundred and twenty. The deployment of the Army Reserve reinforces the great work which has already been achieved in support of Regional Testing Centres across the country and enables "The Poachers" to be released to prepare for upcoming overseas operational deployments to Mali and Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Colonel Will Meddings, who commands the Poachers has said "Corporal Hemmings and his team are a great example of junior soldiers being at the front of the Army's assistance to the fight against COVID 19. I'm proud of their contribution. Hundreds of thousands of tests have been administered across this country by the Army's MTUs, every one of whom are out there due to the training package written and delivered by four young Royal Anglian soldiers, who have been working flat out for over a month."

# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## Testing Times

The last month has been tough time for all the Steelbacks and our families. Right now, we have a Covid Support Force of 150 mobilised Army Reserve soldiers to take over 12 Covid-19 Mobile Testing Units, these are coming online now to takeover tasks being done by the Queens Dragoon Guards and the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment, The Poachers.

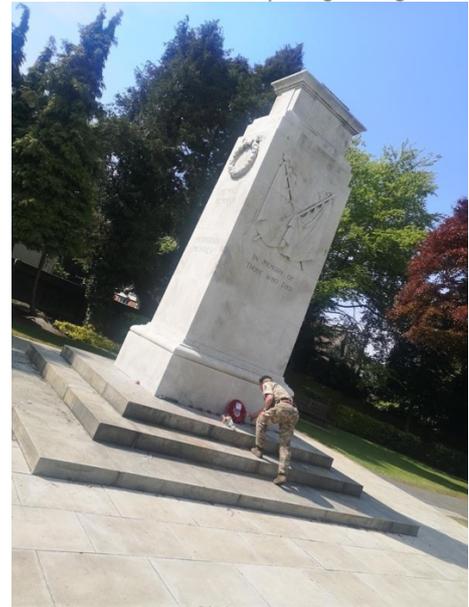
We are proud to be able to serve and do our bit in this fight across the East Midlands and the East of England throughout May and June. At the same time, training and recruiting continues, online wherever possible so that we can adhere to the social distancing to protect our serving Steelbacks, potential recruits, and their families. In everything we do, the Steelbacks' spirit of professionalism and pride in service is evident. Our men and women are definitely making it happen in difficult circumstances, amid the challenges and frictions of this unusual and uncertain mission.



By living the Regimental Ethos, we the Steelbacks aspire to constantly deliver excellence. We make it happen. By making it happen we have 150 members of the battalion who have mobilised for the Covid-19 support. We currently have 4 MTUs and will have 10 by the end of May which would then have the battalion conducting roughly 10% of England's mobile testing. As well as this we are getting a strong turnout on the virtual training evening run by the companies where NCOs have come up with some innovative ways of conducting lessons. A special mention should go to Pte Skeels, who short toured her overseas employment to assist in the government's Covid-19 taskings. Always keen to assist her fellow Steelbacks with physical and moral support additional to this she has produced some amazing virtual training.

As part of the VE 75 Commemoration, the Officer Commanding of 4 (Lincolnshire) Company, used the opportunity to carry out his daily physical activity to visit the Town's War Memorial and lay a wreath on behalf of the Royal Anglian Regiment for all those lost in the WWII conflict in Europe.

As part of the 3rd Battalion, members of 4 Company were due to be taking part in a Joint-Service parade in Lincoln' High Street on 8 May but this was cancelled. Soldiers of the Company are currently mobilised and preparing to support national and local efforts as part of a Covid Support Force. This should not, however, detract from the need to remember all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom so many years ago.



## Association News



### VE Day Celebrations at Home and in the Community

Unfortunately a great number of our Association events have been postponed this summer and one of the most significant has been VE Day. The Battalions did a great job of supporting it both on social media and in their own quiet ways but our Association members have also been active with a couple of the best photographs sent in selected for publishing in the Royal Anglian News.

Firstly we have Jim Freeman who also wins first prize in best dressed and best equipped garden according to Lt Col Goodin our Regimental Secretary.

### Wreath Laying in Whittlesey

In Cambridgeshire VE Day was marked by the laying on wreaths on behalf of both The Royal Anglian Regiment, Cambridgeshire Regiment and Association.

Photo courtesy of Robert Windle.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Suffolk Regiment's Dunkirk Letters delivered 80 years late

In Regimental history, the part the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Suffolk played in the evacuation of Dunkirk is well known, not least because we are told the Minden Flash was introduced there as a tactical recognition flash. The Regimental family may also have heard about the letters written by members of the Regiment from Dunkirk, which were recently delivered, 80 years late. The full story was told in the Times of 23 May 20, which can be found at this link <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-52812539>. The article cites Harry Cole writing to his mother in a village near Ipswich, while he was waiting to be evacuated by the navy. He never made it off the beach, but the letter has recently been delivered to the joy of his family. Harry Cole's letter was among many in a postal van thought to have been lost, but a bundle of letters were found by a passing German officer and taken home as a souvenir. After 30 years in his attic he took the letters to the British Embassy, from where they were passed to the Suffolk Regiment Museum in Bury St Edmunds.

The Museum's wonderful volunteer staff were eventually able to identify Harry Cole's family and passed on his letter to his surviving brothers, Derek and Clement. The Regimental family is hugely grateful to the staff of our museums for all the wonderful work they do, which is such an important part of our Regimental Commemoration, particularly during these WW2 commemorations.

To mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the evacuation from Dunkirk, staff at Suffolk Archives have put extracts from this and other letters together in an online display. Clare Wallace, the Curator told the Times, "The Dunkirk letters hold an important place within the Suffolk Regiment archive. These men had been through great hardships during the war and unfortunately some never made it home from Dunkirk. It is striking however that their personalities and humour still shine through these letters. I am delighted that Suffolk Archives have been able to reunite one of the letters with the soldier's family."

Suffolk Archives' fascinating online display is well worth viewing and can be seen at: <https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/displays-online/with-love-from-dunkirk/>

RHQ circulated eight Regimental Bulletins in March which are also on the Regimental Website:

- Bulletin 32-20 RHC Update
- Bulletin 33-20 Benevolence Fundraising
- Bulletin 34-20 Death of Major AHV Gilmore MC
- Bulletin 35-20 Battlefield Tour Notice
- Bulletin 36-20 Death of Michael Giles Welford
- Bulletin 37-20 Death of Peter Denny
- Bulletin 38-20 RHC Update
- Bulletin 39-20 Death of Thomas Wysocki

## Diary Dates

With the current unprecedented disruption due to COVID-19 the The Royal Anglian Regiment has cancelled or postponed all upcoming events, please look out for the next edition of Royal Anglian News where updates and new dates for all events will be posted.

### COVER PHOTO

Maj Mitch Pegg, of the 3rd Battalion, lays a wreath at the Grimsby Cenotaph on VE Day.