



3rd BATTALION
(Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex)
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT
'THE POMPADOURS'



LONDONDERRY: APRIL 1991 – AUGUST 1992

CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
A Company	8
B Company	12
Tour Collage	16 - 17
C Company	18
Battalion Headquarters	22
Intelligence Platoon	25
Signals Platoon	26
Quartermaster's Department	27
Medical Section	28
Motor Transport Platoon	28
Unit Administration Office	29
Band	29
Sport and Adventure Training	30
The Families	32

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FOREWORD

**by the Commanding Officer
Lieutenant Colonel
R. M. Chisnall OBE**

The "Pompadours in Londonderry" is in part a souvenir of our final tour in Northern Ireland. It highlights what has been achieved during a hectic 15 month tour as well as giving a feeling for Battalion life in Londonderry. It is also a detailed record of the Pompadour's last tour as we leave the order of battle on 5th October 1992 and, therefore, the booklet is more than just a souvenir; it marks the end of an era.

Without giving a mass of statistics about workrates and details of finds, it is perhaps worth just highlighting that the tour was a particularly hectic one with a 16 hour day in the harder Republican areas being the norm rather than the unusual and with separation levels at 65%. It is of immense credit to the soldiers that they maintained their operational edge throughout and remained cheerful even with the announcement that the Battalion was to conduct an early Arms Plot move and then merge within 6 weeks of departing Province. An indication of what the Pompadours were required to do can be seen in the half a million car checks and 2,000 patrols carried out by each Company, let alone the numbers of searches, rummages, patrols and vehicle check points.

The level of terrorist activity was high throughout with the enemy concentrating on the Mk 15 coffee jar bomb attacks against foot patrols, and Mk 12 horizontal mortars against vehicles and bases with secondary

devices being ever present. We also encountered a number of particularly nasty, contrived community relations incidents as PIRA fought for the middle ground. Throughout we stuck to our 3 operational strands; enhancing our relations with the RUC whilst improving jointery; continuing with imaginative, proactive military operations and a comprehensive community relations (CR) programme. Concentration on improving all 3 strands in tandem enabled us to keep the terrorist on the "back-foot" whilst making progress in returning the City to normality. Clearly the balance between proactive military operations and CR was a fine one and it was the inherent good nature, flexibility and sheer professionalism of the Pompadours which allowed us to move the security situation forward in Londonderry.

The above was achieved against the back-drop of Options. It is to the immense credit of the Pompadours that they achieved merger without operations being impinged on in any shape or form. A large slice of the credit for this must go to Headquarters Company and, of course, the wives who were particularly supportive throughout. In all areas Pompadours worked tirelessly in the most difficult of circumstances and yet somehow the irrepressible Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire humour shone through.

I do hope that the next few pages will give you a feel for how good it was to be a part of a thoroughly effective and good humoured organization. I also add my thanks to those given by the 100 "stars-worth" of visitors who have come to Londonderry over the past 15 months who thoroughly appreciated the good humoured professionalism of the "Essex Man" and to all of those who supported us throughout the difficult process of merger. All can be justifiably proud of what has been achieved and the role that they have played in it. I can, therefore, think of no better accolade to the Pompadour Officers and Soldiers alike than by quoting the summary to the final Pompadour OPEVAL Report:

"The Pompadours are a professional, well-run unit which is, without a doubt operationally effective and fit for role. The situation in Londonderry is now benefitting considerably from their hard work and maturity as a Resident Battalion. It is regrettable that a premature move denies the TAOR the considerable benefit of their continuity in role."

3rd Battalion
(Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex)
The Royal Anglian Regiment

Londonderry Resident Battalion
April 1991 - August 1992

The Battalion began its build-up training for Londonderry in the winter of 1990. Internal and external courses and cadres culminated in the main Northern Ireland urban training package in March 1991. After a short leave period the Battalion deployed to the Province in April and May 1991.

Londonderry is situated in the north-west corner of the Province astride the River Foyle. The population of 105,000 is predominantly Catholic; most of whom live on the western side of the Foyle. The town centre and the old walled city are both west of the Foyle along with the recognised hard-line Nationalist areas of the Bogside, the Creggan, the Brandywell and the recently emerged Shantallow. Joining the river, both to the north and the south, is the border with the Irish Republic. This creates an enclave within which the main part of the town sits. The area between the town and the border is rolling pasture land, farmed mostly by long standing protestant



LCpl Doughty (RAMC) at A Coy makes sure nobody tries to steal the Craigavon Bridge



I.Cpl Lawrence - B Coy - on the streets again



farmers. East of the Foyle the town sprawls south-east and here one finds modern industry and housing. Close to the river is the Catholic housing estate named the Gobnascale which has a history of taking a tough stance against the security forces.

The main threat against the Battalion was the Londonderry based PIRA. Their continuing policy of targeting the security forces and their bases, combined with indiscriminate attacks against property in the city was always our major concern. The resurgence of sectarian violence in the city added a third dimension to the enemy's activities, and as a two sided conflict this introduced another threat: the Protestant paramilitaries. The enemy's arsenal was vast, and nearly always at hand. The use of various types of mortars, incendiary and blast bombs, and the ever present threat of a shoot gave PIRA flexibility to mount various types of attacks at a multitude of targets. Our long stretch of border and the three recognised border crossing points added to the threat especially as the Republic is often a safe haven for scheming and fleeing terrorists.

The Battalion's mission was to defeat the terrorist in support of the RUC. To achieve this the Battalion was over 650 men strong, and comprised four rifle companies and Headquarter Company. Due to undermanning the fourth company was supplied by a Roulement company from 1 GREEN HOWARDS based in Catterick.



Above left: The NCOs Cadre march on.

Left: A team leaves Masonic.

Right: Bus Depot bombing – 23 Jan 92.

The Battalion worked on a twelve week, three company roulement with the GREEN HOWARD company always deployed west of the Foyle. Each company spent four weeks in the city (designated the City Company) and was responsible for counter terrorist operations west of the Foyle. This company was based in RUC Shantallow, previously Fort George, and operated from the outstations of RUC Rosemount and the Masonic SF Base. The City Company also ran the three patrol bases on the border which monitored traffic into and out of the Republic. To assist with this enormous task, the City Company Commander also had under his command the GREEN HOWARD company. Directly after a city tour the company had two weeks leave. On return from leave the company took responsibility for counter terrorist operations east of the Foyle (designated East of Foyle Company). This task also included the guarding of Ebrington Barracks, the Battalion's base, and our various quarter areas. The last two weeks of the cycle were spent on pre-operational deployment training before moving back into the City to begin the roulement again.

The Battalion's administrative base was in Ebrington Barracks and we were co-located with 8 Infantry Brigade and its Signal Squadron. The Barracks housed the Battalion Operations Room, Battalion Headquarters, Headquarter Company and also the East of Foyle Company.

The Commanding Officer's philosophy of operations was based on three strands: jointery with the RUC, proactive and imaginative counter-terrorist operations and community relations. Jointery with the RUC took place at all



The SOGP!



Above: C Coy – another budding recruit



Right: PB Buncrana.



The change of CO's – Lt Col Julian Lucey is towed around camp.

levels. Weekly Battalion and Company level planning meetings with the RUC ensured total co-operation and understanding, and it allowed us to develop operations against the enemy whilst at the same time assisting in projecting the RUC within the local community. At the lowest level of operations, all patrols undertaken by the Battalion had at least one member of the RUC present.

The Battalion's interface with the community was probably its most effective weapon. As Londonderry slowly returns to normality after two difficult decades, the enemy's ability to operate from within the community has diminished. The day to day contact between soldier and civilian was recognised early on as a powerful method of reducing PIRA's effectiveness, and the Battalion seized the opportunity and worked hard to ensure that all soldiers were courteous and fair when dealing with the public. We also maintained a close link with the predominantly Catholic Peace and Reconciliation Group, which gave us a feel for the local community and their concerns.

The Battalion's operational effectiveness was mirrored by its successes. Clearly success is not only measured in the quantity of finds and the number of terrorists arrested but also by the number of aborted terrorist operations. The details of the incidents and attacks mounted against the Battalion are listed chronologically on the next page. The Battalion, save minor injuries from bricks and bottles, had no casualties throughout its fifteen month tour.



A Coy



Above: Members of 3 Platoon A Coy and RUCLO.

Left: RUC Liaison at its best!

Below: The Mayor of Hertford gets to grips with the SA80.



Date	Incident	Company
20 Jun 91	Prig Attack on Mobile Patrol	C Coy
29 Jun 91	Find of Explosives	A Coy
29 Jun 91	Murder of DUP Councillor Cecil McKnight	No presence
18 Jul 91	Mk15 Attack on RUC Strand Road	A Coy
4 Jul 92	Find of Mk12 Mortar	A Coy
3 Aug 91	Prig Attack on Rosemount	B Coy
8 Aug 91	Major Weapon Find on the Gobnascale	A Coy
12 Aug 91	Shooting onto Craigavon Bridge	B Coy
15 Aug 91	Mk15 Attack on RUC Strand Road	B Coy
18 Aug 91	Prig attack on Masonic SF Base	B Coy
22 Aug 91	Mk15 Attack on Army VCP	C Coy
26 Aug 91	Mk15 Attack on RUC Mobile	C Coy
23 Sep 91	Find of Weapons at Ballymagroarty	A Coy
8 Oct 91	MK15 Attack on RUC VCP	A Coy
18 Oct 91	Shooting on RUC Strand Road	A Coy
28 Oct 91	Terrorist Engaged by SF	B Coy
8 Nov 91	Mk15 Attack on Joint Patrol	B Coy
21 Nov 91	Mk15 Attack on Army Patrol	C Coy
28 Nov 91	Explosion at White Horse Inn	B Coy
12 Dec 91	Explosion at TA Centre	B Coy
9 Jan 92	Blast Bomb at RUC Strand Road	B Coy
16 Jan 92	Car Bombs in City Centre	B Coy
23 Jan 92	Explosion on Railway Track, Eglinton	A Coy
8 Feb 92	MK15 Attack on Army Patrol	C Coy
13 Feb 92	Find of Explosives	C Coy
21 Feb 92	Find of Mk15 Grenade	C Coy
16 Mar 92	Find of Explosives in the Creggan	A Coy
23 Mar 92	Find of Explosives at Fahan Street East	A Coy
30 Mar 92	Mk15 Attack on Rosemount SF Base	B Coy
9 Apr 92	Mk15 Attack on Army Patrol	B Coy
24 Apr 92	Shooting onto Craigavon Bridge	A/B Coy
29 Apr 92	Shooting onto Rosemount SF Base	C Coy
5 May 92	Mk12 Attack onto Rosemount SF Base	C Coy
18 Jun 92	Find of Mk12 on Foyle Road	A Coy
15 Jul 92	Find of Mk12 and Woodmaster in Brandywell	B Coy



Above: The Mk 12 find – 18 Jun 92.

Below: The Recce Platoon after a visit to the local gardening centre.





In addition to counter-terrorist operations the Battalion has also found itself hosting over 100 visitors throughout its tour. These have ranged from senior political visitors, such as the previous Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Tom King, senior military visitors, such as the GOC (four times), through to Battalion arranged visitors such as the Mayors of Bedford, Hertford and Chelmsford and the outgoing and incoming Colonels of the Regiment. All of these visitors added to the variety of life in Londonderry and have contributed to making the tour a pleasant one.

Married life in Londonderry, with its long, although predictable, periods of separation, suffered enormous strains. Families were regularly separated for at least a month in every three. Although there were no geographical restrictions placed on them, Londonderry and the second quarter location at Ballykelly could sometimes feel cramped and restrictive because most local areas were out of bounds to the soldiers. It is, without doubt, the loyalty and hard work of the families that have enabled the tour to be such a great success.



Left: On the 'ead, Trev!

Right: Visit of the Colonel of the Regiment – Pte Pratt.

A COMPANY

A Company was the first Company to arrive in Londonderry and the first to be operational. Its 6 Waterside and 5 City tours have been marked by outstanding operational successes. These include the finds of 2 separate Mark 12 Mortars; the find, by Private Scott, of a blast bomb on Creggan Heights; the recovery of a second blast bomb following the arrest of 2 terrorists attempting to plant it outside Butcher's Gate; the find of a Mark 15 Grenade; the recovery of 2 further grenades which had been thrown at RUC Strand Road and at an RUC patrol; the recovery of 3 incendiary devices; the recovery of a pistol and radio transmitter in Ballymagroarty and of a rifle, ammunition and radio equipment in the Gobnascale.

These, of course, are the highlights. The other side of our eleven months on operations has been some extremely hard work. Our tours have encompassed some 2,000 patrols, half a million car checks, many false alarms - some minor, some not so minor - aggro, dozens of house and area searches, several hoax devices and a number of stolen and terrorist vehicles. The Company has spent countless hours on cordons for finds, clearances, searches, soft target protection and the inevitable and almost endless succession of both loyalist and republican parades. The guards and



Pte Devan - A Company.



A Company on the City Walls above the Bogside. The smiles of men whose last City tour is almost over.

duties' bill has also been high. Over the eleven months the average private soldier in A Company will have spent some 40 days on patrol and other major operations and some 60 days of his life on duty in a sangar!

Being busy inevitably meant that there was little time (or freedom!) to enjoy the dubious pleasures of Londerry's social life. Sport, too, was very much restricted. However A Company did mount two major Adventure Training expeditions which forged new links with our affiliated regiments. Adventurous Training is defined as "pursuits which introduce the serviceman to danger, hardship and challenge." A Company experienced the danger of New York, the hardship of Bermuda and the challenge of Barbados! Lt David Schwartz organised a diving expedition to Bermuda via New York - which was generously sponsored by a well known drinks company - and Lt Paul Morris led a second party to Barbados.

Back in Londonderry, any list of highlights and names is bound to be incomplete, but members of A Company will remember:

Cpl Doherty's successful recapture of a stolen hearse, after a thrilling, high-speed chase (at 3mph and followed by 200 mourners).



Cpl Lasic, Sgt Tomson, LCpl Riley, 1 Pl A Coy at Fort George.



Craigavon Bridge VCP.

The Waterside's longest day, which began with a shoot on RUC Lisnagelvin, continued with the recovery of a rifle, ammunition and a radio from Gobnascale, got a bit busy with a sectarian murder at Strathfoyle and ended with the Annual Apprentice Boys parade! In the middle of this the CSM was petrol bombed and was heard to agree with the OC, who by now had started smoking again, that "at least things are quieter on the Waterside."

Pte Mackness will certainly not forget the immersion trials of a certain highly expensive item of equipment. Pte Penny immersed himself during a night time Border patrol; as a car approached, he jumped over a wall - which turned out to be the side of a bridge - and fell ten feet into the river beneath. And Cpl Clarke will also remember the difference between an IRA terrorist mounting an illegal VCP and a bunch of schoolgirls holding a gymkhana.

Everyone has their war story. Cpl Jones was assaulted by an irate Derryman and was later commended for nobly refusing to retaliate from his position on the floor. Pte Devan was recruited by PIRA while taking a ride to Fort George escorted by two APVs, four Police Hotspurs and twenty-one Black Taxis! Lt Paul Morris' application to join Sinn Fein was, however, rejected by the Shantallow Sinn Fein Centre.

A Coy pass Ebrington Barracks.





Pte Mulherne A Coy tries to memorize the 'phone number again.

A Coy on patrol in Creggan.





LCpl Clarke on camera.

Maj D. J. Clements briefs A Company . . . and friend!



The IRA did score one success against the Company, using their latest weapon, the Mk12 Traffic Light. Pte Roddis, while driving at 10 mph on a totally deserted road in perfect visibility, was badly shaken when a cunningly sited Mk12 Traffic Light, appeared from nowhere and scored a direct hit on his vehicle!

So that was Londonderry. A very busy, highly successful, often frustrating, but most happy tour. A Company were determined to go out on a high note and have certainly succeeded.

CSM A gets stuck in!



B COMPANY

B Company were the last of the rifle companies to arrive in Londonderry at the end of May. A period of training in camp had put them in good stead for the first month West of Foyle. The first incident, an abandoned car on the Foyle Bridge, put everyone on their metal and it was a good "shakeout." Much of the time was spent getting to know the area and following on the good work that A Company had started.

The second POD period of training gave people time to hone their new skills prior to the first City tour.

The first City tour took place over the August marching period. The Apprentice Boys did their turns and twirls as did Sinn Fein marking the anniversary of internment. It all passed off peacefully due in part to the work put in by all 16 Capbadges deployed into RUC Shantallow. As part of their celebrations PIRA launched two PRIGs, one at Rosemount (hit the screens) and one at Masonic (dropped short). 5 Platoon thought World War Two had started late on Sunday, Lt Wright and Sgt Smith following up quickly from their beds. It was causing a great deal of puzzlement as to what had happened until the OC discovered the strike hole by putting his foot in it whilst explaining on the radio to the CO what had happened.





Left: B Coy city patrol.

Above: "Unload."



LCpl Edwards' team at Rosemount.



Life for the Company began to settle into the routine of the cycle and by Christmas everyone knew their roles and the areas of work. Relationships with the locals and the RUC flourished at different levels and the New Year was approached with confidence and a greater understanding of the problems.

PIRA put us to the test early in January. A large car bomb outside the Strand Road RUC Station caused a lot of damage to the shopping area in Clarendon Street. Injuries to the locals would have been incurred had it not been for the prompt actions of the Mortar Platoon and especially LCpl Lawrence and Pte Paine in evacuating them from their houses. More bombs during the next couple of days including elaborate secondaries meant that tension and adrenalin was running high. On one particular day three devices and a hoax kept cordons on the street for up to 10 hours. The month finished quietly however with the peaceful passing of the 20th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday march.

The April City tour proved quiet with the exception of election night. Again provoking the troops was the aim of the game for the local youth. Not to be intimidated took great patience and humour and as a result Sinn Fein gained nothing from us that could be used in the political game of vote catching.

The Battle of the Boyne Celebrations were the last major events for the Company. The normal clearances and the repetitive but vital patrolling in support of the RUC meant that it passed off peacefully. The tour finished on a high with the find of a Mk12 mortar and a sniper rifle, a good result for all the hours of patrolling that have gone on in the last 15 months.



Right: OC B Coy – looking for trouble.



Below left: 'ow do you spell "sugar"?'

Below: LCpl Main and Pte Sanger keep those lines of communication open.





*Above: B Coy's Mk 12 find and Woodmaster in the Bradywell.
Below: Now listen . . . !*



The Company's time in Londonderry has been marked by a change round of a lot of personnel. Over 50% of the Company have moved, new recruits coming in and old faces leaving. CSgt Okopskyj left for 6 R ANGLIAN, Sgt Dellar for 7 R ANGLIAN. Capt Green swanned off to JCSC as did Lt Wright to BATUS. Lt Moore went to Bramscote to do something (?) and all were replaced by various "starts" from elsewhere. As the Rifle Company with the greatest number of pads we have suffered greater separation than most. That hasn't stopped the plethora of births and pregnancies. A couple of marriages in the Company both locally and back in England have caused celebrations and a GOC's commendation for Pte Kelly proved that B Company men are never off duty (he carried out a citizens arrest in Battersea whilst on leave!).

B Company have also filled a lot of places in various Battalion sports teams. The CSM, WO2 Pallant does well for his age in the cross country team, LCpl Wilcox does even better as does Cpl Whittle and Sgt Smith. The Battalion rugby team would have been hard pressed without LCpls Green and Lawrence, Ptes Austin and Rice. Cricket improved with Sgt Brown, Ptes Pinner and Humberstone.

The Company's efforts in Military skills proved well founded in coming second in the Province shooting competition and winning, by a lot of heads, the Battalion Terrorist Recognition competition (where's our prize IO?).

The last 16 months has seen a lot of hard work by the Company. They have also seen some good results both on and off the streets. We will look back on Londonderry with some fond memories and some not so fond. It has been a good tour.

Below: Pte Finn.







C COMPANY

Exciting, dangerous, challenging, tiring, humorous and routine are all words that can be used to describe periods within C Company's tour of duty as part of the Londonderry Resident Battalion. The time in Londonderry has seen periods of intense activity interspersed with routine duties, and the duty cycle of City (or West of Foyle), leave, Waterside (or East of Foyle), reserve/training and back into the City has become second nature. Similarly patrolling, sangar duties, vehicle checks and mounting specific operations have become the way of life. The Company Order of Battle has seen many changes, and although an operational strength of 90+ has normally been maintained, some 140 soldiers have actually served within C Company in its 15 months in Londonderry.

C Company started to prepare for deployment to Northern Ireland in January 1991. By the time the Company had completed its formal training package, it was keen to deploy to Londonderry to get on with the job. We were the first Company in the Battalion to deploy West of the River Foyle and into the City. Most people found it different to what they had expected, notably that many of the people were friendlier than had been made out previously, and that the hills were a lot steeper than had been anticipated! The first City tour was a useful settling-in period and a number of incidents took place. There was a sectarian murder soon after our arrival, followed by an attack on a mobile patrol in the City Centre. This latter attack was the first time that many in the Company had come into close contact with the real dangers of operating in Northern Ireland. Later in the deployment a number of suspect devices were discovered and dealt with, and 8 Platoon reacted well to their first "contact" (one of their APVs back firing!) Throughout the first tour the threat to the Patrol Bases (PBs) on the border was high and security was made all the more difficult as soldiers from 7 and 9 Platoons at the PB Buncrana had to live in tents; hardly the ideal protection. The month long City deployment was followed by a couple of weeks leave, and this was to be the pattern of the rest of the time in Londonderry.

After leave, C Company deployed to its first "Waterside" or East of Foyle duties. Based in Ebrington Barracks life was much quieter and a little more settled. The Waterside deployment was the chance to get into a routine, although the two day "weekend" was not always at the end of the week. The first tour was quiet, although Corporal Dufosse and his VCP on the Craigavon Bridge were shot at from the area of the Gobnascale. At the end of the first Waterside duty, during which the soldiers got used to spending their time split amongst patrols, guard and sangar duty and rest, the Company became



C Coy City Patrol.



Battalion reserve and prepared for its next City deployment. At the end of the two week Pre Operational Deployment (POD) training period, during which time the company spent five days at Ballykinler and, amongst some good training, had a highly enjoyable and memorable beach barbecue, the overall Battalion duty cycle was complete and C Company returned to the City.

In general terms the pattern of operations and duties established in the first three months in Londonderry were to continue for the rest of the tour. Perhaps the most notable and dangerous incident was the Mark 12 mortar attack at Rosemount in May 1992. Privates Beer and Baldwin were most fortunate. During the attack 8 Platoon showed great calm and control – their reaction was textbook! During an earlier deployment Private Magee also survived a near-miss when a Mark 15 coffee-jar bomb landed at his feet but failed to explode. During our time in Londonderry the Company became worryingly familiar with the Mark 15 and had to deal with a number of incidents involving this simple but nonetheless lethal weapon. In addition there has been all sorts of “minor aggro” and all the Company have had some experience of being the targets of youths armed with stones and bottles. Every City tour saw its own level of suspicious activity, but perhaps the most imaginative and seemingly dangerous was an elaborate hoax involving two large beer kegs “wired-up” under the Templemore Road. In another incident Private Fay found what seemed to be a device attached to a telegraph pole. ATO was deployed although the whole thing was caused by British Telecom being behind with their repair work.

Left: CSgt Brooks looking up to his OC.



Above: Mk 12 attack on Rosemount – 5 May 92.

The cornerstone of City tours was the patrol activity and the mounting of specific operations. Much depended on the particular threat, for example early on a lot of time was spent patrolling the rural enclave and reinforcing the 3 PBs. It was during this that a multiple from 8 Platoon on patrol near the border thought it was their lucky day when they saw a man carrying a rifle out of a car; the policeman got the shock of his life when the multiple descended upon him. On the other hand the nature of the threat sometimes demanded a high profile presence in the City Centre to deter a commercial bombing campaign, and latter deployments tended to look closely at the Creggan, Bogside and Brandywell. Time was also found to mount specific operations, trying to create the conditions within which the war could be taken to the terrorists. These were generally large scale, and although they may not have seemed any different to the private soldier in the team, when looking at the bigger picture they succeeded in deterring terrorist activity during periods of particularly high threat.

Thankfully Waterside tours were a little less intense, and gave a chance to re-charge batteries. That said, they were also useful for maintaining patrol skills and tactics. Throughout the tour each Waterside had a few moments of excitement, although incidents were generally low-key, thus reflecting the level of threat. Perhaps of note was the EOD action taken on a suspicious package wrongly delivered to Ebrington Park Quarters - it turned out to be a limited edition china plate in transit to the Regimental Medical Officer! For all of the quietness, however, the Waterside duties were no less important – as through them the “home base” was kept secure.

Despite operations life had to carry on, and a lot of soldiers in the Company managed to get away on a number of other activities. People found time to get away on both career and adventure training courses, and Lieutenant Astley, Sergeant Wolfe and Corporal Roach managed to spend some time in France with the Battalion Ski team. CSM Rouse organised and ran a sail expedition that turned out to be a little tougher than expected and Colour Sergeant Brooks improved his golf handicap. Lieutenant Astley (away again!), Sergeant Hill and Corporal Jolly all went off to help another Battalion adventure train in Kenya. A highlight was the Company Halloween Party. A great deal of effort was made to dress up and despite strong competition Corporal Dufosee won the prize for his unusual Hobgoblin costume. The evening also saw Corporal Taylor arrest the OC's wife (Mrs Rosemary Macdonald) and handcuff her to himself until she could dance no more.



Above: CSgt Brooks explaining to Brig Inf how he shapes his beret.

Below: Lt Astley briefs . . . !





Above: Hello . . . what's going on here then?

It was a varied and interesting year and a quarter. There were periods of inactivity, and sangar duties in the middle of the night were always difficult. On the other hand C Company has had its own fair share of incidents and successes. Perhaps the most notable success was that, like the other Companies, most of the City and Waterside tours were relatively quiet with little, if any, overt terrorist activity or threats to life or property. That the terrorists had been concerned for their own security and safety and decided to wait for another day was the most significant indication of the professional and dedicated way in which our duties were carried out in Londonderry.

Below: C Coy explosives find – 13 Feb 92.



BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Battalion Headquarters ran both the operational and administrative nerve centres. The Commanding Officer, Operations Officer (Captain Simon Etherington) and a select operations staff maintained control of the complete TAOR. When things hotted up the Commanding Officer deployed with his Rover Group made up of a motley crew taken from the Provo Section and the Gymnasium staff, overseen by the RSM (WO1 Twell).

The main task of the operations staff was the co-ordination of the many Battalion operations that occurred during the tour. Notably the Battalion oversaw two summer marching seasons, the twentieth anniversary of Bloody Sunday and a General Election. All of these passed without incident after a great deal of joint planning in conjunction with the RUC. The greatest achievement, however, must be the overseeing of the rebuild of the northern and southern patrol bases on the border and the Masonic Security Base. This enormous task was carried out literally in the local PIRA's backyard. The addition of an extra company's worth of troops from the Welsh Guards added to the complexity of command and the whole operation, which lasted over 8 weeks required a great deal of careful planning and co-ordination. It also gave the Commanding Officer a warm feeling as the "train set" was over 800 strong!



Left: AG visits and meets the Rover group.

Right: So what will you do in AFCENT?

Right: Easy life.



Far right: The Rover Group.





Administratively the Battalion was in the safe hands of the Adjutant (Captain James Harris) and the Chief Clerk (Colour Sergeant Hallybone). The Adjutant was also designated the Community Relations Officer, his task being the collation and action of all complaints. By far the most difficult of his tasks was the handling of the merger with 1 and 2 ANGLIAN. This delicate and time consuming task was, naturally, the number one priority within the administrative chain. In everyones case the transition has been a smooth one.

As a Resident Battalion individual and collective training is still vitally important and this was maintained initially by our Second-in-Command Lieutenant Colonel Bill Mooring. Colonel Bill was replaced by Major Ian Liles in December 91. Both also had a great deal of influence in the day to day running of Battalion Security.

Mid tour the richly deserved news broke that Lieutenant Colonel J D Lacey was awarded the OBE for the pivotal part he played in training and settling the Pompadours into Londonderry.





Above: Pte Eiffert with his GOC's commendation.



Left: Now Adj - I am sure it's magazine off first . . . !

Right: Pte Ramm - best drill student on the NCO's Cadre.



The IO briefs the Mayor of Hertford at the wall



INTELLIGENCE PLATOON

The Intelligence Platoon under Captain Howard Newson and CSgt Waterman started training in the middle of 1990. The platoon's expertise had to be up and running by the time they deployed - this included an in-depth knowledge of the local terrorist (TR) and the ability to collate, interpret and disseminate information gathered.

The Brigade and RUC intelligence gatherers depended upon the Battalion spotters and collators to maintain and update the daily movements of the local terrorists. The West and East of Foyle Companies do not deploy multiples on the ground without a full intelligence brief from the platoon so the emphasis is very much on hard work and professionalism.

To achieve this level of expertise, the Platoon were based full time in RUC Shantallow and lived and breathed intelligence gathering. Whereas a rifle company soldier could expect to spend one-third of his time in the City, the platoon spent over eighty percent of its time west of the Foyle.

It was a successful tour. Not only did the platoon maintain the correct level of intelligence gathering throughout the tour, they also expanded their field into new areas of expertise.

SIGNAL PLATOON

The Signal Platoon, under command of Captain Nicholas Baker, started preparing for the tour in late 1990. The Platoon had to create numerous CPXs to practise the Battalion Watchkeepers/Signallers reaction and their interaction with the company operations set ups. The Platoon also had to build up an extensive knowledge of Cougar radio and all its ancillaries.

On arrival in Londonderry the fixed communications system was inefficient. The Platoon set out to change this with the help of 8 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn. The finished product is a full, all-informed netting system that is able to cope with the operational traffic from over 180 C/S simultaneously.

Since this re-engineering, the remainder of our more sensitive equipment has been evaluated and changed, resulting in large amounts of number crunching on specialist equipment tables.

It has been a successful tour. Not only did the Platoon expand their field of specialist knowledge, they also produced an effective communication system that has undoubtedly made control of operations far simpler wherever you are located within the TAOR.

Below: Sgt Oxby and Pte Watts – “Who’s in charge here?”





Above: Capt Baker – The RSO at work!

Below: CSgt Norman – “You want what?!”



QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

The QM's Department was initially commanded by Major Bill Burford. However when he left for 7 R Anglian at the end of 1991, Captain Mac McGowan took over and saw us through to the end of a difficult and administratively testing fifteen months. Continuity was maintained by the QM(T), Captain Bob Potter, and by both the RQMS (WO2 Brett) and TQMS (WO2 Cavaliero).

The crew had a very demanding job. Not only was the infrastructure in Ebrington Barracks falling apart at the seams and with little money to throw at it, the G4 staff also had to maintain the outstations and oversee the complete rebuild of all three patrol bases (PBs). The latter task involved a large civilian workforce living within the already administratively overstretched PBs and the movement of tons of equipment and stores along predictable and dangerous routes.

The upkeep of Ebrington was like painting the Severn Bridge. The barracks has changed little in over 100 years and it is in desperate need of modernisation. To keep ahead of things a barrack manager was appointed (Cpl Urand) whose task was to co-ordinate the PSA and local civilian workforce. RUC Shantallow, the major SF Base west of the Foyle was also in a poor state of repair and the appointment of a Base Manager (formerly Sgt White GREEN HOWARDS) went some way to alleviate the problem.

The Battalion Messes and dining room fed 8 Infantry Brigade and other units, as well as the Battalion. With limited chefs, many of whom were deployed to feed the troops in forward bases, the ACC attached personnel had a particularly hectic and demanding time. Thankfully, as always, the standard of cooking was excellent.

Overall it was a busy time for the Department. Both "main" and "tech" were, at times, stretched to the limit and all of the QM personnel deserve a pat on the back for maintaining the Battalion whilst on operations, coping with the preliminaries for merger and yet having a sense of humour!



The QM's Department - 27 July 92.



Above: The Mayor of North Bedford.

Below: The QM wins the prize for the most prolific sign maker in camp.



MEDICAL SECTION

Administratively, the Medical Section was commanded by CSgt Moffat. Our doctors included Major Grahame Howe and latterly Captain Simon Mitchell. The medical emergencies have, thankfully, been few. However, in preparation for a possible torrid time all members of the Section were very well qualified. To assist, the Section had three WRAC girls and a civilian nurse.

To react to any emergency the Section maintained two ambulances; one military and one civilian. It was sports and minor injuries that came to the fore and although it is an extravagant claim, every casualty that entered the medical centre came out alive!

The Section maintained first aid skills across the Battalion throughout the tour, and we are all certain that should an emergency have occurred then the Doctor and his crew would have been quickly on hand to administer life-saving first aid.

The Medical Centre – Cpl Mutch is the unwilling donor!



Some of the MT – (l to r): Pte Chamberlain, Pte Marshall, Lt Wilcox, LCpl Minskip, CSgt Dale.



MECHANICAL TRANSPORT (MT) PLATOON

The MT was commanded by Lieutenant Jeff Wilcox, ably assisted by CSgt Dale. The Platoon was over 30 strong and included a small but compact Light Aid Detachment. The task of any MT is to keep the Battalion on the road. In Londonderry this was not an easy task. The MT had numerous military and civilianised vehicles under command.

Operationally, both types of vehicles are important. The "green" vehicles were constantly in demand both east and west of the Foyle and any poor maintenance could lead to vehicles being stuck in dangerous locations. The civilianised vehicles were vital. The Platoon was on call twenty-four hours a day and vehicles were often despatched to far off locations in the middle of the night.

All, however, remained in good heart for the duration of the tour. One highlight was winning the Northern Ireland Driving Competition, which was open to all units in the Province. The MT's own road traffic accident rate, an undeclared administrative barometer, always remained low.

The MT had a good tour. So often the unsung heroes in peacetime, it was widely appreciated that they continuously provided a sterling service whilst working within the finest of margins.

UNIT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

What could be more important than leave and money? A difficult question but one which the UAO continually failed to get wrong. Under the watchful eye of our long standing Paymaster, Major Simon Dixon, the Battalion's monetary affairs went along with very few glitches.

Initially managed by Sgt Ward, and latterly by SSgt Cross WRAC, the movement cell worked tremendously hard to get people where they wanted to go, and when they wanted to get there. This included the booking of Hercules aircraft for rifle company block leave flights, in conjunction with Chinook helicopters. Towards the end of the tour the moves became more complex with the requirement for a large scale move.

Financially, the Paymaster found himself at the centre of the merger discussions as the Battalion affairs began to get wound up. As one of the few units to get it right first time, we owe him and his staff a huge vote of thanks. As for the mundane issue of the monthly pay packet? No problem!

Loads money!

Farewell Cocktail Party.





BAND

As one of only two military bands in Province (at the end of the tour we had the only one!), the Band had a difficult time. Having left Colchester, where not only did the Band play for the Battalion but also at many civilian events, the Band found itself loaned out across the Province with little chance of any light entertainment. When in barracks, they performed their share of Headquarter Company duties, and so, overall, time for practice was limited.

Able led by the Bandmaster, WO1 Parkinson, the Band retained their cheerful disposition along with their very high standard of professionalism in both military skills as well as music. Their performances always received compliments and the Messes were thankful for their ability to entertain them in style.

In March, they deployed to our recruiting counties on a KAPE tour. This was thoroughly successful and reports of good humoured trombonists with feet in plaster came flooding back. We are in no doubt that they have helped tremendously with the vital recruitment drive.

Unlike the rest of the Battalion, the Band's future post-Northern Ireland is still unclear. We all hope that this will be sorted soon and that the Band remains a Battalion asset and are available to play when they are needed.

SPORT AND ADVENTURE TRAINING

The Gym staff, led by SSgt Wilson, had the unenviable task of keeping the Battalion fit whilst the Battalion did its best to avoid the gym by staying at RUC Shantallow or by generally being very busy. It is against this background that it is surprising that any amount of good quality sport or adventure training was achieved at all.

On the sporting front the Battalion performed with credit in many disciplines. The Battalion won the Northern Ireland Major Units Hockey championship against very tough opposition. It was runners-up in the equivalent rugby competition. It was in Cross-Country, however, where the Battalion excelled. Led by the RSM (WO1 Andy Twell) the Battalion team won the Northern Ireland Major Unit League and Championships. It then went on to come 5th in the Army Championships – an outstanding result in spite of an almost impossible workload which made any form of training a luxury. Of note was Pte Thomas, one of the gymnasium staff, who was third in the juniors and he was selected for the Combined Service team and subsequently won his Colours.

Additionally, the RSM entered a team into the Cyprus Walkabout and nearly created sporting history! The team, comprising Sgt Ryan, Cpl Watson and Pte Thomas were narrowly beaten into second place after a gruelling two day race.



Maj Liles gives everything in the pursuit of a hockey medal.



Annual WO's and Sgt's Mess vs Officers Football – result not known.



The Cross-Country Team.



Cyprus Walkabout – Presentation of Boots by Brig Almonds, 2nd place overall, beaten by 7 RHA. We will be back next year '93.

Right: Cpl Paul – before the Winter Olympics.



*Below: A Coy's Scuba trip –
Pte Chappel on a dive*



A win would have meant that the Battalion would be one of only very few teams to retain the title and, more importantly, it would have been the RSM's 4th – a record!

The adventurous among us scaled some heights during the tour. Captain James Harris was one of the leaders of a Regimental expedition that tried incredibly hard to canoe around South Georgia. The story of the expedition is one of hardship and courage best savoured in the bar with a warm bed beckoning! Lieutenant David Schwartz led an A Coy team on an arduous trip to New York and Bermuda to sample the local water in scuba-diving gear. Lieutenant Ian Astley managed to escape to the French Alps with a small team to enter the Army Downhill Ski Championships. Their creditable thirteenth place (out of thirty) deserves a mention.

It would be wrong to mention sport and not cover the details of our finest athlete, Cpl Paul. Although he has not been with the Battalion for operations, he has excelled as an international athlete and as an international bobsleigher. In athletics he has captained the British Team (in lieu of Linford Christie), and he has always been in the top ten of British sprinters. As a member of the British Bobsleigh team he represented his country in the two and four man bob in the Winter Olympics and was so very close to a medal in both events.

A Flextrack in a white out – South Georgia Regimental Expedition.



THE FAMILIES

As with any resident tour, the families are an integral part of the Battalion and their welfare is as important as any other considered factor.

In Londonderry the families faced a particularly difficult and demanding time and this meant that not only did they need to be as robust as possible but also our system for maintaining the high standard of their welfare needed to be faultless.

The resilience of the families was outstanding and this eased the pressure on the Families Office and the Wives Club. However, under the diligent eye of Captain Ted Dexter ably supported by his wife Helen, the Families' welfare never looked in danger of becoming a problem. The Unit Families Officer was helped enormously by a very competent crew; Cpls Thorpe and Howard maintained their sense of humour in adversity and deserved particular mention.

The Wives Club was a thriving concern. Visits to Belfast were a firm favourite. The continuous roller coaster of parties was topped up by the final Farewell "Do" when nearly all of the wives gathered under one roof and drank the Battalion's health. This party was a great success as a result of the money raising Spring Fair which raised over £500 for a memorable farewell. Blessed with good weather, the main attractions were throwing wet sponges at Major Roland Ladley (goodness knows why!) and the childrens' fancy dress competition. A good day was had by all.

It cannot be stressed enough, however, that the strength and compassion of the families, even when faced with difficulties of the forthcoming merger, has been an inspiration to many husbands. The families positive attitude has greatly assisted in the overall operational ability of the Battalion. Many thanks to the power behind the throne!



"Children in the Bubble"



"The Farewell Party"



Lt Tom O'Driscoll putting his back into it . . . !



